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The Influence of Dispositional Greed on Creativity: A Conservation of Resources Perspective

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The Influence of Dispositional Greed on Creativity: A Conservation of Resources Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Although historical literatures view greed as an important factor affecting work effort and innovation, scholarly research examining such influences remain scant. Drawing from the principles of conservation of resources theory (COR), I predict dispositional greed will be negatively associated with individual creativity. In addition, I examine the potential for creative identity to weaken this negative relationship. The proposed model was tested among 161 matriculated students at a large Northeastern University. My results indicate no direct relationship between greed and creativity. Rather, my results indicate that the negative relationship between greed and creativity exists only when creative identity is low and becomes non-significant at higher levels of creative identity. I conclude with a discussion of how my findings impact current research and drive future directions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary objective of this project was to examine the underlying drivers of individual behavior and derive implications for workplace application. As someone who is interested in affecting and studying how people work together and individually within organizations, this was intriguing to me and something that I could apply to the work I plan to do for the rest of my career as an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist. Specifically, I conducted a study to examine certain elements that I expected to affect how motivated people would be in a task that I gave them.

The specific factors that I was interested in testing were greed, creative performance and creative identity. To give some background on the different constructs that I tested and how they impact the workplace, I can recount some of the previous knowledge I used to develop my study. Greed has been shown to have both negative and positive impacts on individuals and organizations as a whole. On one side, greed can help individuals by pushing them to work harder and perform better. This can positively impact an employee's place and rank within a company as well as lead to greater success for the company as a whole. On the other hand, greed can be harmful and a negative influence on a company and individual. Greed can cause an individual to push their own needs and desires above others, thus causing careless harm to those around them. This can clearly impose costs on others who need to work together in order to succeed.

The other aspect that I examined is creative performance. Creativity has been largely seen as a positive influence on individuals and organizations. As creativity often produces the most innovative and unique work, individuals that produce novel and useful ideas are highly sought by companies. Although creativity is highly valued in our society it often requires a lot of effort and resources, such as time and energy.

In terms of my study, I measured greed using a short survey that asked participants to rank how accurately a series of statements reflect their own feelings. These statements identified key elements seen in greedy individuals. After scoring their responses, individuals were shown to have varying amounts of greed. Similarly, I measured creative identity with a questionnaire survey. Participants were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements that highlighted the importance of creativity to their sense of self. Similar to greed, this placed individuals into varying levels of creative identity.

After these two surveys, the individuals were given a common task that measured creative ability. They were presented with three seemingly unrelated words and asked to decipher the one word that related to all three in some way. For example, if given CRACKER/FLY/FIGHTER, the participants would need to think of the word FIRE as the related word because it can be used in conjunction with the three other words. The questions ranged from very easy to difficult. Participants had a set time to complete questions and received a monetary reward commensurate with the difficulty of the question. Harder

questions were rewarded with more money than easier questions. Each participant had the opportunity to earn up to five dollars.

Before testing this study, I predicted the relationships among the study variables. I predicted that individuals with higher (versus lower) levels of greed would have lower performance on the creativity task, and thus earn less money. This was because I did not expect greedy people to be willing to spend effort in answering the questions with such a minor reward given, which in this case was the possibility of five dollars. Due to the difficulty of the creative task, they would have needed to spend a lot of time and energy evaluating and correctly responding to the prompts. This expectation of mine was actually not shown in the study. The relationship between greed and performance on the task, although negative in terms of direction, was not statistically significant.

My second prediction for the study concerned the scores people received based on their levels of creative identity. As mentioned, creative identity measures the degree to which being creative is important to one's sense of self. I predicted that when highly greedy individuals also had a lower creative identity, they would have even lower performance on the creativity task. I used COR theory to justify this relationship, arguing that greedy individuals with lower creative identities have fewer personal resources from which to draw on, thus making them even less likely to perform well on the creativity task. Although creative identity did, in fact, interact with greed to significantly predict creativity, the hypothesized negative relationship between

greed and creativity existed only when creative identity was low, and became non-significant at higher levels of creative identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Greed has a deep history in academic writing, having been, paradoxically, viewed as both a driving force for inefficiency and instability as well as economic gain and innovation (Wang & Murnighan, 2011). Following recent work by Seuntjens, Zeelenberg, Ven and Breugelmans (2015), I focus here on dispositional greed, defined as "a tendency to always want more and never being satisfied with what one currently has" (pg.1). According to this perspective, greed is a stable personality characteristic marked by insatiability (Seuntjens et al., 2015). As such, individuals high on greed tend to have a chronic dissatisfaction with their current level of resources, and seek to maintain the resources they presently have.

Unsurprisingly, greed has often been viewed as a destructive force for organizations (Haynes, Josefy & Hitt, 2015). In an environment where solely pursuing one's own successes leads to disruption of another's goals and outcomes, this can lead to a negative impact on an organization (Wang & Murnighan, 2011). By focusing only on one's own benefit, the individual can often cause others a loss of resources through disregarding their thoughts and needs (Mussel & Hewig, 2016). Yet, while this research has often considered the negative influences of greed on *others*, few studies have considered the detrimental impact of greed on one's *own* outcomes.

I contribute to the literature on greed by examining its association with creativity, defined as the development of new and useful ideas (Amabile,

Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996). Although, greed has been viewed as an important driver of competition and innovation (Kluger, 2014), such motivations are also associated with inefficiency and dysfunction in the workplace (Haynes, Hitt & Campbell, 2015; Wang & Murnighan, 2011). Drawing on conservation of resource theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), I theorize and empirically test the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity. COR emphasizes the tenets of resource conservation and acquisition (Hobfoll, 1989). Individuals perform in a way to maintain and conserve their resources while sometimes choosing to invest their resources with the hope of acquiring more. These resources are measured in terms of the value that they provide to individuals or how likely a resource can aid in reaching a goal (Schlenker, 1987). I suggest that although greedy individuals are likely to view the potential benefits of creativity (e.g., status, performance, wealth; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003) as desirable, they likely lack the willingness to devote the substantial resource investment required to conceptualize novel and inventive ideas.

Although I suggest that high-greed individuals are likely unwilling to expend the necessary cognitive resources to act creatively, having a reservoir of resources may help to offset this negative relationship (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015). According to COR theory, individuals often draw on personal resources (e.g., conditions, identities, energies, etc.), when overcoming obstacles or pursing desired goals (Hobfoll, Geller, & Dunahoo,

2003). In this regard, I consider creative identity, which refers to the degree to which individuals view being creative as an important element of their sense of self (Jaussi, Randel & Dionne, 2007). Individuals with higher (as opposed to lower) levels of creative identity are found to behave more inventively and likely to produce more novel ideas. I contend that the resources derived from a creative identity helps counteract the resource-conservation motives of greedy individuals. The hypersensitivity to resource loss that greedy individuals exhibit when needing to invest their resources may be evident in creative behavior. This investment varies in degree depending on how difficult creative thinking is to the individual. Therefore, I examine the moderating role of creative identity in lessening the negative relationship between dispositional greed and creativity.

My study advances the literature in several ways. First, previous research has focused predominantly on the detrimental impact greed can have on others (Haynes et al., 2014; Wang & Murnighan, 2011) and thus has neglected the potential for such motivations to undermine one's own outcomes. The present study cuts new theoretical ground by examining the potential for one's dispositional greed to negatively predict one's creative performance. This also adds to the creativity literature by shedding further light on the "resource greedy" nature of creativity behaviors (Harrison & Wagner, 2016, p.843). Second, because research on dispositional greed has only recently garnered attention (Seuntjens et al., 2015), few studies have uncovered the

boundary conditions that may help suppress the negative impact of greed. I contribute to this line of inquiry by further examining the moderating role of creative identity in lessening the negative impact of dispositional greed on creativity. My proposed research model appears in Figure 1.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In the following section, I investigate and outline extant research on the constructs of interest in my study. I will first review previous work on greed. I will begin with a historical view of greed, including a discussion of its original conceptualization and significance as well as a discussion of how it has been measured. I then review recent work on the construct of dispositional greed. Next, I review research on creativity including its antecedents as well as the ways in which it is often measured. Finally, I review research on creative identity. I begin by discussing it in relation to creative performance and distinguish it from other forms of identity. I then briefly describe the trait and state like qualities of creative identity, and then describe the various forms of creative identity that might manifest.

Dispositional Greed

The concept of greed has existed for centuries. Greed comes from the Old English Word Græd (Seuntjens et al., 2015), having been traditionally defined as an overindulgent hunger or desire for more than is necessary or typical (Merriam Webster, 2013). Despite its long-term existence and discussion in ancient writings, only recently has the topic of greed received attention in the work of academic scholars.

In ancient philosophy, greed is viewed as both a productive and destructive motive-driven behavior (Postema, 2006). For example, greed can serve as a driving force, capable of motivating individuals to perform better and reach goals quicker (Wang & Murnighan, 2011; Seuntjens et al., 2015). This view suggests that greed can serve as an important driver for economic gain, one that motivates individuals to perform at high levels and develop new innovations. For example, Adam Smith viewed greed as a force that positively impacts economic growth in a society (Kurz, 2015). Instead of viewing greed as solely self-beneficial, he recognized the potential positive impact of greed on society as a whole. Indeed, according to Adam Smith, "it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest" (Smith, 1776, pg.2). However, Adam Smith also recognized the possible harm of greed and accounted for this danger by emphasizing the importance of rules and regulations in society that can help prevent its harmful impact (Wight, 2005).

Despite the potential for greed to promote healthy competition, encourage innovation, and help drive the entrepreneurial spirit, greed can also be detrimental to organizations and society as a whole. Indeed, several researchers have discussed the destructive aspects of greed, one in which such motivations impose costs on or otherwise deprive others of valued resources in a never-ending drive for personal gain (Wang, Malhotra, & Murnighan, 2011). In an effort to satisfy one's own desires, greed can result in a disregard for the needs and interests of others. Prior research supports this assertion, demonstrating the potential for greed to negatively impact others' outcomes while positively enhancing one's own outcomes (Haynes et al., 2015). For example, Haynes et al. (2015) studied how CEO greed can impact firm performance. They found that CEOs who exhibited greater levels of greed – as indicated by a compensation-based proxy – had a detrimental impact on shareholder wealth when compared to less greedy CEOs. However, others' studies have noted that a moderate-level of greed may be necessary to improve firm performance (Haynes et al., 2015).

In other ancient writings, many scholars and religious leaders also see greed as a negative force. Performing an action that is not meant to benefit the whole community can have a harsh impact on others and therefore is condemned in many religions. As a result, religions often tie this proclivity to greed with immorality (Newhauser, 2000). This serves to show how negative notions of greed can influence the way that society views this type of behavior.

Consistent with the destructive view of greed, scholars have associated higher levels of greed with meanness, defined as a motivation to seek pleasure and satisfaction without thinking of others (Mussel & Hewig, 2016). In other words, individuals who are greedy are often perceived as mean. The Triarchic Questionnaire, created by Mussel & Hewig (2016), also supports this finding. The relationship and correlation between meanness and greed, found through its testing on an individual, gives another explanation for the negative perceptions and attributions often ascribed to greedy individuals.

To demonstrate the uniqueness of greed as a legitimate construct, it is first important to distinguish greed from related constructs. One of the most difficult aspects of defining and conceptualizing greed has been setting it apart from rational self-interest. Gilliland, Steiner, and Skarlicki (2014) propose that, "greed is perceived when individuals perceive others as seeking more than they deserve and more than they need, while the perceiver and/or many others are losing" (pg.2). Individuals with high greed put their own interests above and beyond any other individuals' desires and needs due to, in part, their self-interest (Schmidt, 2015). For example, Wang and Murnighan (2011) differentiate greed from self-interest by defining greed as being a form of excessive self-interest. They note, however, that "what constitutes "excessive" may depend on observers' idiosyncratic interpretations and/or their own acquisitive tendencies" (Wang & Murnighan, 2011, pg.1).

Greed is also related to several other constructs. Maximization, envy, and materialism all relate closely with the concept of greed (Pepper, Gosling & Gore, 2015). Recent work has evaluated the relationship these constructs have with greed. For example, Seuntjens et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study in which they asked participants to list exemplars of greed. The results confirm that, while distinct in its own right, self-interest is the most similar construct to greed. Acquisitiveness, stinginess, and materialism were also highly related to greed (Seuntjens et al., 2015). Importantly, however, this study supports the notion that greed, while related to these constructs, is a distinct construct.

From my historical review, it becomes apparent that the majority of work on greed has conceptualized the construct as either a fleeting psychological state or, more commonly, as a behavior (e.g., Bruhn & Lowrey, 2012; Wang et al., 2011). Yet, considering the root word of greed, the construct appears to be closely tied to *insatiability* and the *persistent drive* to attain more. In line with this perspective, recent work has begun to view greed as a stable personality characteristic. Defined as "the dissatisfaction of never having enough, combined with the desire to acquire more", dispositional greed focuses on individuals' underlying *motivations* to acquire more, rather than the subsequent *behaviors* stemming from this motivation (Seuntjens et al, 2015, pg.12).

Dispositional greed is conceptualized as an individual difference variable. Importantly, because such tendencies involve an individuals' underlying psychological desires, as opposed to behavior, the construct and motivation lies outside of morality (Seuntjens et al., 2015). In other words, with dispositional greed serving as a motivational force, it cannot be looked at in regard to being immoral or moral. This is because dispositional greed does not qualify as an action but rather a tendency (Seuntjens et al., 2015).

In addition, the construct of dispositional greed eliminates many of the relational uncertainties found in greed research. Because many aspects of greed are looked at in relation to others perception, it is often difficult to determine what is, and what is not, greed (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015). Dispositional greed, however, is not contingent on others' perceptions. Dispositional greed is by definition an underlying motivation separate from other social forces (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015).

Measuring Greed. One greed measurement tool used in greed studies is the scale developed by Mussel et al. This scale relates greed to financial risky decision and the tendency to take chances in order to gather more (Mussel, Reiter, Osinsky & Hewig, 2014). This scale differs from the rest in that it not only captures an individual's desire for more, but also his or her tendencies to impose costs on or deprive others of resources.

Mussel et al. (2014) also attempted to establish a biological basis for capturing dispositional greed. If found, differences in activity in regions of the

brain can be used to measure how much trait-greed an individual may or may not have, outside of the current self-report methods currently used. To do so, Mussel et al. used an electroencephalogram machine to read signals from the brain (Mussel et al., 2014). A high signal indicated higher activity in the region. In individuals with high-trait greed, feedback related negativity was lesser than normal. Feedback related negativity refers to the event related potential often seen in an EEG test following losses or error feedback when compared to a win or positive feedback (Cohen, Elger & Ranganath, 2007). In individuals with low-trait greed, their feedback-related negativity was above the average (Mussel et al., 2014). Biological differences in individuals with different trait patterns of greed can be used to provide further evidence of the existence of dispositional greed.

Although dispositional greed is fairly new, several measures have emerged to measure the construct. For example, using a Likert scale, Krekels and Pandelaere (2015) had participants rank 25 close synonyms in their relation to greed. Using the results and responses to other surveys the Dispositional Greed Scale (from here on referred to as the DGS1) was created (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2014). This survey, the DGS1, highlights greed's similarities yet exposes its differences compared to other closely related terms. This measurement can be used to measure the levels of dispositional greed within an individual and their insatiable drive to acquire more.

According to Seuntjens et al. (2015), using a prototype approach to measuring dispositional greed gives the most reliable and valid interpretation of greed. Using a collection of individual's interpretations of greed ensures that the definition remains valid (Seuntjens et al., 2015). A prototype analysis also allows for the relationship to similar words to be identified. Measuring the frequency with which individuals associate different words with greed allows the definition to incorporate all facets of the characteristic. Resulting from this analysis, Seuntjens et al. (2015) developed what is known as the Dispositional Greed Scale (from here on referred to as the DGS2).

Gap in the Research. With the importance of greed, it is important that the research continues developing in order to learn more about it. There is still very much to be answered about dispositional greed and its causes as well as effects. This most likely comes from the fact that only recently has there been a measure to test levels of dispositional greed in individuals (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015). With new and developing measures the research on greed is expected to increase. Recently there is an increased interest in the impact that high trait greed can have on the way that the individual makes decisions (Mussel & Hewig, 2016). This move towards research on greed will open the door to even more questions regarding greedy behavior and its implications.

Greed is an important topic to study because of the impact it has on a society. The way that organizations function is greatly affected by the levels of greed present in the employees (Wang & Murnighan, 2011). For example,

it is often suggested that the actions and opinions of prominent political figures throughout history have been driven by greed (Gilliland & Anderson, 2011). Increased productivity can also be a product of greedy individuals who are looking to achieve more while improving their circumstances (Seuntjens et al., 2015). Understanding the nature and impact of greed can hopefully allow organizations and individuals to improve the behavior and performance of organizational members (Bruhn & Lowrey, 2012). More research done on greed opens a large opportunity to impact human behavior in a beneficial way to society. This can be done by altering the way that a company selects employees. By incorporating the DGS into the hiring process companies may be able to screen for candidates that would be a better fit within the company. Because research has shown that high dispositional greed causes a malign work environment this would be very helpful in increasing workplace productivity (Haynes et al., 2015).

Creative Performance

Creativity refers to the "production of novel and useful ideas" (Amabile et al., 1996, pg.2). For example, within organizations, creativity involves developing new products or services, generating alternative processes, or instituting new procedures (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). Creativity is generally viewed as valuable and beneficial to organizations. Indeed, creative ideas serve as the driving force behind innovation, an increasing necessity for organizations seeking to remain relevant in an always improving dynamic

global economy. A company with very creative employees is often able to set themselves apart from the competition and offer superior goods and services (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016). One study suggests that managers should look into ways to hire more creative employees and encourage creativity within the work environment in order to improve company performance (Tierney & Farmer, 2011). This is becoming a more crucial facet in the selection of employees to work for a company. With ways to predict creativity levels, companies are more able to predict an employee's future and success within their company (Grant & Berry, 2011).

Creative behaviors are valued because they result in more innovation and thus, an increase in desired outcomes (Grant & Berry, 2011). As a result, individuals also tend to incur benefits, rewarding their creativity. For example, high levels of creativity will advance an individual to be central to the work environment and company as whole (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016). This causes the individual to gain prestige from managers and admiration from employees (Goncalo, Flynn & Kim, 2010).

The ways in which creativity is measured may differ depending on whether the research is a field study or experimental in nature. For field study research conducted within organizations, scholars tend to obtain supervisor-rated perceptions of their employees' creativity. These perceptions are gathered and evaluated by collecting rated responses to questions that gauge the creativity levels in the employees. For example, organizational researchers

might ask supervising managers to rate the extent to which their employee(s) "took risks in terms of producing new ideas in doing job" (Tierney, Farmer & Graen, 1999, pg.7). Other measures used included novel ideas developed and application of existing materials in novel ways. The ranking of these items on this creativity scale then results in an assessment of the level of creativity present in the employee (Tierney et al., 1999).

For studies using an experimental design or a student survey sample, creativity is typically measured based on individuals' performances on various creative tasks. One commonly used task is the idea generation task. This asks individuals to come up with as many different new ideas from one group of items as possible. Coming up with more ideas serves as a way to assess the individual's fluency in creative thinking (Smith, Ward & Schumacher, 1993). Another common method used to measure creativity is the remote associates test (RAT; Mednick, 1962). This test takes three seemingly unrelated words and asks the individual to come up with the one word that relates to all three. Measures range in difficulty from easy to very hard (Mednick, 1962).

With creativity serving as a crucial element in society and organizations, recent research has explored and deepened the knowledge on the forces that help and hinder creativity. One of the factors that have recently been attributed to contributing to creativity is social forces (Smith & Shalley, 2003). Social forces are situational factors that stem from the impact of managers, supervisors, and other individuals in the work place. For example,

when managers foster a competitive environment in the work place, creativity can be driven higher, due to its association with higher rated performance (Tierney et al., 1999). Similarly, giving employees more independence and promoting risk taking are some ways that businesses can increase creativity (Smith et al., 2003). These methods to promote creativity all impact how an individual will perform and demonstrate their creative skills. Motivation from supervisors to perform creatively benefits organizations and continues to build success (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016).

When individuals behave creatively this action stems largely from three different elements: expertise, creative personality and intrinsic motivation (Amabile et al., 1988). Although creativity may be stimulated in an organization through programs like training and development, it may be difficult to develop in a person who lacks the forces described by Amabile (Ford, 1996). In other words, even in the presence of situational factors that encourage creativity, individuals who possess the inner drive to be creative are typically more likely to develop creative ideas (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Thus, creative identity within an individual is a key factor influencing one's proclivity to perform creatively.

Creative Identity

One particularly important individual difference variable with the potential to greatly impact not only one's creative effort, but also in turn their creative performance, is creative identity. Creative identity refers to the

"overall importance a person places on creativity in general, as part of his or her self-definition" (Jaussi et al., 2007). Prior research has demonstrated that higher levels of creative identity are associated with a greater generation of potentially novel and useful ideas (Farmer, Tierney & Kung, 2003). Creative identity is dependent on the environment that one is in and their external relationship with others. As creativity is, as a whole, socially based, the environment in which one resides does impact, to some extent, how much or little they identify themselves as creative. Individuals inherently measure the valuableness of an attribute based on what relevant others believe is most rare (Ditto & Jemmott, 1989). As a result, individuals may overestimate their own creativity if they believe it is a very valuable quality to have.

Because of the close tie that rarity has to creative role identity, higher levels of creative identity are associated with views of oneself as unique or 'special' (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2014). The high demand for creative individuals in the workforce and its relation to self-interest drives its negative perception in society. When an individual performs in a superior way that receives praise from supervisors, this can cause envy from others as well as an increased self-confidence in the individual. This can result in a negative perception of those with high levels of creative performance (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2014). The impact of the negative hue placed on creativity is that it alters the way individuals identify creatively. If an individual believes they stand out from the crowd in some ways, they may view themselves as creative

while also accounting for this through an increased confidence (Riley & Burke, 1995).

Creative identity has both state and trait-like qualities. For example, experimental research has demonstrated that creativity can be manipulated (Vincent et al, 2016). In addition, in prior studies, people were shown to alter their creativity after undergoing large changes in life. For example, when starting a new job, the creative role identity before starting the job was significantly different than when actually in or done with the job (Randles & Ballantyne, 2016). This is because some levels of work require different levels of creativity, with a more demanding job bringing out more of a creative side of an employee.

Previous experience with creativity can also impact an individual's perception of their creative identity. Typically, individuals assess the value of an attribute based on the perceptions of rarity from those around us (Ditto & Jemmott, 1989). In other words, when relevant others assess an attribute as uncommon or rare, the value assigned to the attribute tends to increase. As a result, individuals may overestimate their ability to develop novel ideas when others around them believe such behaviors are a valuable quality to have (Randles & Ballantyne, 2016).

There are also different types of creativity that an individual can identify with. One type of creative identity that a person may have is design convergence talent. This has to do with spatial intelligence. Such identities

are common among interior designers and architects (Jung & Chang, 2016). Team-based creativity is another type of creativity that is defined as the ability to perform well with others. Someone who identifies as a team based creative individual is probably in a team based role or managerial position (Blazhenkova, 2016). These different types of creativity exemplify how variable and wide ranged creative identity can be.

Summary

Prior research done on dispositional greed has given the background needed to further investigate the topic and its relationship with creativity. The research on dispositional greed shows that individuals scoring high on the Dispositional greed scale are more likely to engage in self-serving activities that will garner more resources for oneself. Similarly, individuals with a high creative identity are expected to perform better on a creative task. Combining these two variables will allow researchers to look at the relationship between the two and add valuable information to the current research. In the next section, I explain and examine my use of COR theory to explore the relationships between the constructs I have discussed.

THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Originally conceptualized as a motivational theory of stress, COR theory posits that all individuals have an innate drive to preserve and acquire resources in order to avoid stress and support well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). In relation to the theory, stress is defined as "a reaction to the environment in which there is the threat of a net loss of resources, the net loss of resources, or a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources" (Hobfoll, 1989, pg.516). Individuals are likely to minimize resource loss when faced with stress and conversely, develop a resource surplus when without stress. The underlying principle of COR theory is that people are motivated to protect or conserve current resources (i.e., resource conservation) and acquire new resources (i.e., resource acquisition). Due to a lack of resources being a primary form of stress, individuals are motivated to conserve these resources in order to prevent stress (Hobfoll, 1989).

In order to explore and define other aspects of the theory it is useful to define resources. Resources are wide ranging and include objects, characteristics, conditions and energies that are either valued directly by the individual or serve as a way to attain these valued items (Hobfoll, 1989). The value of these resources varies across individuals according to the perception of the relative utility of the resource (Gorgievski, Halbesleben, & Bakker, 2011). Resources have been further defined in relation to goal accomplishment. The value that a resource has increases for an individual as

the perception of its helpfulness in achieving a goal increases (Halbesleben, Neveu, Underdahl & Westman, 2014).

Looking at self-determination helps to explain the appraisal of resources. This means that motivation ranges from a-motivation, or a total lack of ambition, to intrinsic motivation, with factors of extrinsic motivation affecting the continuum (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Satisfaction of the ultimate goal of intrinsic motivation is determined through the presence of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Another factor explaining variation of resource value is cultural values. The values of a culture greatly impact the values of the individual which impact the value of a resource (Morelli & Cunningham, 2012). This relationship explains the similarities and differences of resource value seen in many cultures.

These influences on the value of resources aid in the understanding of what conservation and acquisition are and what motivates them. The act of conserving resources is motivated by the aversion to losing resources. This is governed by loss salience meaning that the experience of losing resources is more harmful than the experience of gaining resources (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999). The discomfort experienced during resource loss is what drives the individual's conservation of these resources, thus avoiding possible loss (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). It has been suggested that the threat or fear of losing carries more weight than actual loss, also called the negative dominance effect (Bilgin, 2012). An example in which this is clearly seen is when

resource gains are compared to resource loss. If an individual loses their job, briefly before finding a new job, they will feel more accomplished and successful than compared to getting a new job before experiencing the loss of their previous job.

The overall acquisition of resources is categorized by an exchange of less valued resources for higher valued resources. For example, individuals dedicate time and energy in order to obtain money and power. This exchange involves some risk and includes an acquisition of highly valued resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Because of the inclusion of risk in acquisition, when individuals are not under significant stress they are more likely to try and acquire resources. This is done to develop a surplus that can offset the risk of a future loss of resources (Schlenker, 1987). A surplus often leads to a lessening of stress and overall positive feelings, specifically a lack of vulnerability (Rappaport, 1981).

A common method of acquiring resources is resource investment. For resource investment, individuals dedicate a certain resource in order to protect against loss or another resource, recover from a loss of a resource and to gain a resource (Hobfoll, 1989). The relationships often seen in the workplace include high investment in resources when an individual has more resources, less investment with less resources as well as a greater protection of resources when resources are scarce (Rappaport, 1981).

Investment of resources is often seen in instances of coping. For example, in the workplace, lower job performance and exhaustion was found to lead to greater investment in behaviors like interacting with managers and supervisors (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). This gives evidence to the notion that individuals look to offset risk of loss of resources. Other evidence supports the idea that coping mechanisms that do not lead towards a return on investment, lead to psychological distress (Caplan, 1964). This is shown in times of giving support, when support was a scarce resource within an individual. These individuals had high levels of stress due to a lack of resources (Hobfoll & London, 1986).

As can be seen throughout the above discussions, COR theory holds important implications for employee motivation in the workplace (Halbesleben et al, 2014). For example, this can be seen in situations of employees putting in additional effort beyond their role, such as through voice and helping behavior. When given the choice of whether or not to speak up in order to receive some valued resource in return, employees were less likely to voice their opinion when their resources were already low, in situations like abusive supervision (Whitman, Halbesleben, & Holmes, 2014). Investigating how to manipulate these factors can aid in increasing employee engagement in the workplace. Another interesting application of COR Theory in the workplace is respites. A research study argues that the replenishment of resources experienced during time off offsets the slight loss of resources experienced by

a lack of time in the office (Westman & Eden, 1997). This resource investment pays off in the overall increase of resources for the company (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005).

In viewing creativity through a COR lens, resources are one of the driving factors of creative behavior (Amabile et al., 1988). Seen as an investment-type behavior, individuals that put resources into acting creatively do so with the hopes of receiving a greater return of resources (Tierney et al., 1999). As it is associated with creative behavior, this return of resources include praise and economic success (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016). Any alterations that could affect the resources acquired or the resources invested in creativity, would be central to measuring an individual's response.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Dispositional greed and creative performance

Given its role in enhancing innovation and promoting a competitive advantage (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016), employee creativity is highly valued in organizations (Tierney & Farmer, 2011). Previous research has examined specific factors, such as an individuals' personal characteristics, in predicting and understanding their level of creative behavior (Grant & Berry, 2011). For example, Sung and Choi (2009) found that levels of openness and extroversion had a significant positive impact on individuals' levels of creative performance. In the present study, I examine dispositional greed as an important individual difference capable of impacting individual's creative performance. Specifically, I draw on COR theory to contend that dispositional greed will be negatively related to creativity.

At first glance, it might appear that dispositional greed would be positively associated with creativity. Indeed, because of the value and rarity associated with creative behavior, individuals who demonstrate high levels of creativity often garner increased status and respect (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). Moreover, creativity often leads to increased performance and output and thus, promotion within a company (Tierney & Farmer, 2011). Such outcomes should be particularly desirable to dispositionally greedy individuals, given their insatiable appetite for additional outcomes and resources (Seuntjens et al., 2015). The benefits associated with creative behavior notwithstanding, I

contend that creativity incurs a number of costs that ultimately reduce greedy individuals' ability and willingness to conceptualize novel and useful ideas.

In particular, greedy individuals may be unwilling to expend the resources necessary to be creative. Prior research suggests that creative behaviors often require considerable resource investment (Tierney et al., 1999). Indeed, conceptualizing a novel idea requires considerable time and effort spent on a task. In fact, from a COR perspective, creativity may require significantly greater investment of resources than other behaviors in the workplace. In support of these assertions, several scholars have suggested that creative behaviors are "resource greedy", as they exhaust one's cognitive and emotional resources throughout the process of idea generation and conceptualization (Harrison & Wagner, 2016, pg.843). Given that one's effort in conceptualizing a novel idea is not guaranteed to generate a return on investment, such behaviors pose a potential risk (Harrison & Wagner, 2016).

Due to the large investment and dislike of spending one's resources, I expect dispositional greed to have a negative relationship with creativity. For greedy individuals, the potential benefits derived from creativity may not outweigh the resource investment required. Specifically, greedy individuals are hyper-sensitive to spending their own resources and are often careful in how they invest them. Seuntjens et al. (2015) affirms this notion, stating that, for those highly greedy, "to be able to acquire more than one currently has, it is of course also important to keep what one already has" (pg.15). This need to

retain and prevent consumption of their resources is likely to lead to a hesitancy in resource investment. Furthermore, greedy individuals are likely to have a short-term focus (Haynes et al., 2015), and thus may be unwilling to devote the time needed to work through the creative process. As a result, I suggest that dispositional greed will be negatively related to creativity.

> *Hypothesis 1: Dispositional greed will be negatively related to creativity.*

The role of creative identity

Creative identity indicates the extent to which an individual views creativity as an important and central element of their self-view (Jaussi et al., 2007). Although it does not necessarily indicate an individuals' true creative ability, it does indicate how confident an individual is in their own creative ability, whether accurate or not (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016). If an individual is high in their creative identity, it follows that they are motivated to engage in behaviors that support the identity, thus seeking out behaviors associated with creativity (Sung & Choi, 2009). From a COR perspective, this suggests that having a strong creative identity may provide a reservoir of resources from which individuals can draw when approaching a situation requiring higher levels of creativity. Building on this notion, I expect creative identity to moderate the negative relationship between dispositional greed and creativity.

Thus far, I have argued that dispositional greedy individuals, due to their strong hyper-sensitivity to resource loss, will be unwilling to spend the

resources needed to perform creatively. Yet, the presence of a pool of resources from which to draw may lessen greedy employees' unwillingness to devote their time and energy to the creative process. Prior research supports the view that personal resources can provide individuals with the means to navigate potentially stressful or resource-exhausting situations. For example, when individuals experience situations that exhaust their resources, the presence of personal resources such as trait optimism can help lessen the extent of burnout they experience in response to such stressful situations (Riolli & Savicki, 2003).

Similarly, I contend that when greedy individuals view being creative as central to their sense of self, the presence of such personal resources provides them the ability to engage in creative behaviors without having to invest as much resources (as those low on creative identify) in the creative process. Therefore, I expect creative identity to lessen the negative relationship present between dispositional greed and creativity.

> *Hypothesis 2: Creative identity moderates the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity, such that this negative relationship becomes weaker in the presence high (vs. low) creative identity.*

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

Participants for this study included one hundred and sixty one students from a large university in the northeastern United States (M_{age} = 20.03 years, *SD* = 2.40; 52.02% Female). Participants received course credit for their participation in the survey. The survey was conducted on-site in a behavioral lab. Upon entering the behavioral lab, participants were seated at a cubicle and began the survey. All participants completed study measures in the same order. Specifically, after providing study consent, participants completed questionnaire items for dispositional greed and creative identity. Next, they were provided instructions for the creativity task. Participants then completed items for intrinsic motivation on the creative task. Finally, participants provided basic demographic information before completing the survey.

Measures

Dispositional greed. Dispositional greed was measured using the Seuntjens et al. (2015) Dispositional greed scale (α=.80). This 7-item survey was recorded using a 5-point Likert scale. Sample items from this scale include: "My life motto is "more is better"" and "It doesn't matter how much I have. I'm never completely satisfied." Participants had the option of responding from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree".

Creative Identity. Creative identity was measured using the 3-item creative role identity scale (α=.72) introduced by Farmer et al. (2003). Sample

items from this scale include: “I do not have any clear concept of myself as a creative employee” and “To be a creative employee is an important part of my identity”. Participants had the option of responding from “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree”.

Creativity. Participant’s creativity was measured using twenty problems from the remote associations test (RAT; Mednick, 1968). Use of the RAT to measure creativity is consistent with prior literature (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016). In an attempt to capture the potential benefits associated with employees’ creative performance (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003), participants were informed that their performance on the creative task would determine their final payout (up to $5). Problems from the RAT varied in difficulty and were assigned increasingly larger payouts relative to their respective difficulty level. Specifically, the payout for the problems were as follows: easy items = $0.10, medium item = $0.20, hard item = $0.30, and very hard item = $0.40. Average payout was $1.26 with a SD of $.78.

Control variables. I controlled for intrinsic motivation in the creative tasks using the 3-item scale (α=.96) adapted from Amabile (1985). Sample items from this scale include: “I enjoyed the opportunity to work on the word task and the idea generation task.” and “I derived satisfaction from working on the word task and the idea generation task.” Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements and had the option of responding from “1=strongly disagree” to “7=strongly agree”.

RESULTS

Reported in Table 1 are all means, standard deviations, alphas, and inter-correlations of model variables. As illustrated in Table 1, scales for dispositional greed, creative identity, and intrinsic motivation all produced acceptable reliability. Further, intrinsic motivation correlated significantly with creativity ($r = .38$, $p < .01$). Intrinsic motivation also correlated significantly (at the .10 level) with creative identity ($r = .12$, $p < .07$). Finally, creative identity correlated significantly (at the .10 level) with creativity ($r = .12$, $p < .07$).

Analytic Strategy

The proposed model was tested using hierarchical regression analysis in SPSS. Following Aiken and West's approach, I first mean-centered the independent variable (dispositional greed) and moderator variable (creative identity). To control for alternative explanations for participants' creativity, I included intrinsic motivation in Step 1 of the analysis. In Step 2, I entered all main effect variables (i.e., dispositional greed and creative identity). Step 3 involved entering the interaction term (i.e., dispositional greed X creative identity). Finally, for the moderation effect, I followed the approach laid out by Aiken and West (1991) to test the significance of the simple slopes.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted that dispositional greed would be negatively related to creativity. As illustrated in Model 2 of Table 2, the hierarchical

regression analysis results indicate that dispositional greed was not significantly associated with creativity ($\beta = -0.89$, $p = 0.23$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that creative identity would moderate the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity, with the expectation that this relationship would be weaker in the presence of high (vs. low) creative identity. As illustrated in Model 3 of Table 2, creative identity had a significant moderation effect on the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.02$). The moderation effect is further plotted in Figure 2. Consistent with the approach outlined by Aiken and West (1991), I further examined the significance of this moderation effect by conducting a simple slope t-test analysis. The results from this test demonstrate that the simple slope for creative identity computed at one standard deviation below the mean was statistically significant ($b = -.301$, $t = -2.372$, $p < .02$), whereas the simple slope computed at one standard deviation above the mean was not statistically significant ($b = .101$, $t = .886$, *n.s.*). These results indicate a statistically significant moderating effect only for conditions where creative identity is low. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Variables

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.	Dispositional greed	3.08	.69	-	-.07	-.07	.06
2.	Creative Identity	3.67	.79	-.07	-	.12†	.12†
3.	Creativity	1.26	.78	-.07	.12†	-	.38**
4.	Intrinsic Motivation	3.66	.91	.06	.12†	.38**	-

Note. N = 161.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Results of hierarchical regression analysis

	Creativity		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control variables			
Intrinsic motivation	.38**	.39**	.38**
Independent variables			
Dispositional greed		- .09	- .01
Creative Identity		.07	.06
Moderator variables			
Dispositional greed X creative identity			.17*
R^2	.14	.16	.19
Adjusted R^2	.14	.14	.17
Change in R^2		.01	.03
F change		.30	.02

Note. N = 161.
† $p < .10$
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Figure 1. *Proposed Research Model of the Influence of Dispositional Greed on Creativity*

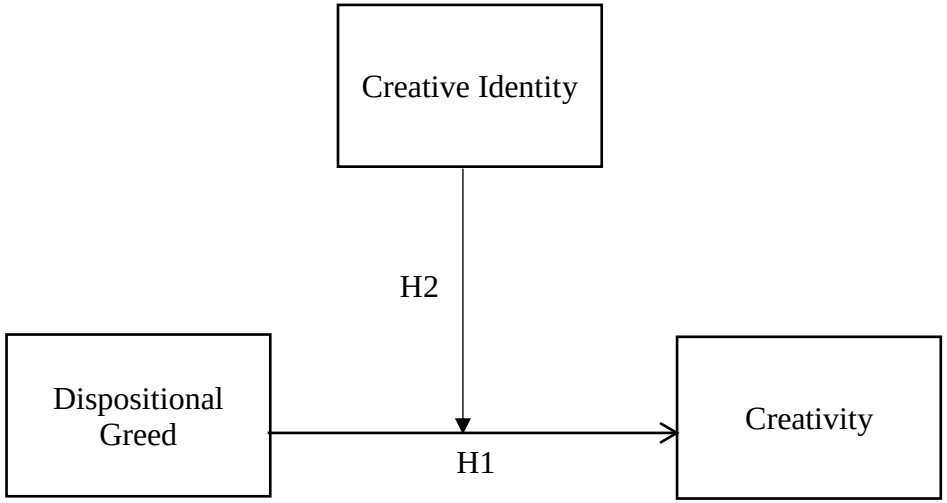
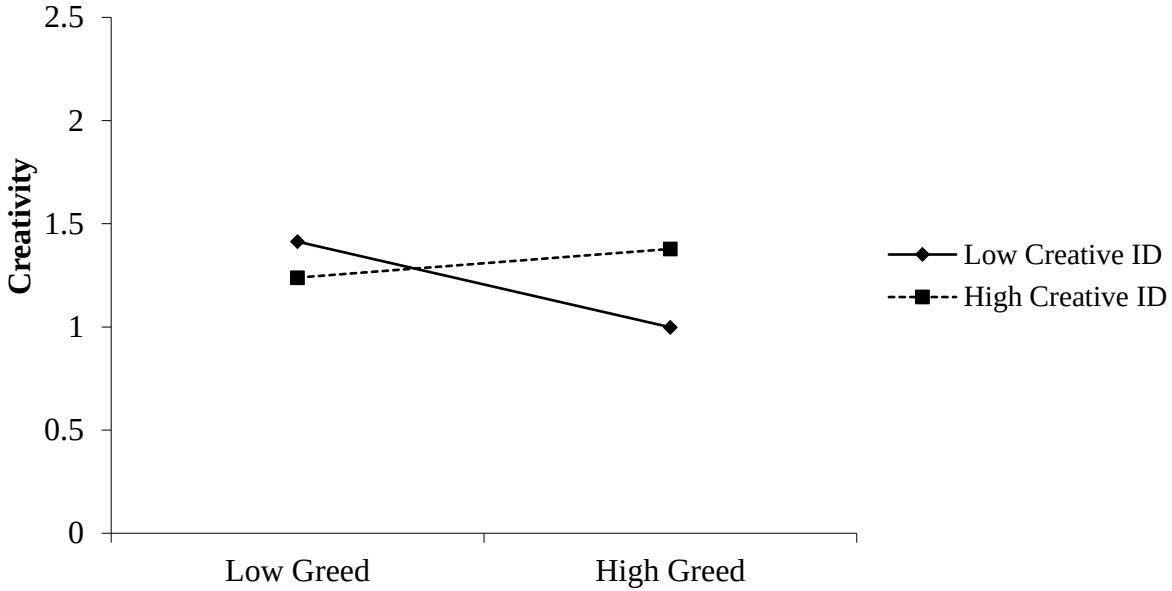


Figure 2. *The Moderating Effect of Creative Identity on the Relationship between Dispositional Greed and Creativity*



Discussion

This study provides a unique application of the constructs of dispositional greed, creative identity, and creativity using a COR perspective. The study explains how, and in which way, these elements impact creative performance of the individuals. Overall, the hypothesized relationships were largely unsupported. However, interesting interactive effects emerged holding implications for both theory and practice. Below, I discuss the primary implications of my study.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of my study contribute to the field in several ways. One way that this study builds on the current research is that it explores the impact that dispositional greed has on the focal actor. With the construct of dispositional greed being new to research, there is room for further exploration and expansion on the research currently covered (Seuntjens et al., 2015; Mussel et al., 2014). Prior to this study, most research on greed had been done on how greed impacts organizational and group level outcomes (Haynes et al., 2014; Insko, Schopler, Hoyle, Dardis, & Graetz, 1990) or the effects of greed on the welfare and outcomes of others (Seuntjens et al., 2014). For example, Haynes et al. (2014) studied CEO greed and looked at how it negatively impacts performance of a firm. They concluded that a greedy individual in a CEO role has a detrimental role on the firm. Seuntjens et al. (2014) also looked at dispositional greed impacting others. Using an ultimatum game

scenario, they demonstrated that greed resulted in a cost to others, as greedy individuals tended to keep more for themselves while allocating less resources to others.

My study extends this literature by focusing on the potentially detrimental impact greed has on oneself. Drawing from a COR lens, I theorized that greedy individuals are likely to avoid expending resources, and thus, be less likely to devote the time and energy needed to engage in creative behaviors. Specifically, I focused on the tenet of resource conservation to form the hypothesis that dispositional greed would be negatively related to creativity. Although the direction of the relationship was as predicted, the relationship did not reach statistical significance.

Second, I extend research on greed by examining the potential boundary conditions that alter the extent to which greed impacts individual outcomes. I predicted that creative identity would lessen the negative impact of dispositional greed on creativity. Despite the lack of a significant relationship existing between dispositional greed and creativity – and by extension the hypothesized moderating effect of creative identify on this hypothesized relationship – my results did uncover a joint interactive effect for dispositional greed and creative identity on individual's creativity.

These results warrant further discussion. Although I hypothesized that greed would negatively impact creativity, the negative relationship only existed when greedy individuals also lacked a strong creative identity. One

explanation for these surprising results comes from trait activation theory. Trait activation theory (TAT) suggests that certain traits become evident only in the presence of specific conditions (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Depending on the environment that the individual is in, the behaviors that portray a specific trait may or may not be active (Tett & Burnett, 2003). For example, in a specific job or position that requires high amounts of knowledge and continual learning, a personality trait like intellect is likely to be activated (Mussel & Spengler, 2015. In another position that does not require as much deep thought and evaluation, intellect may not be activated in the same individual (Mussel & Spengler, 2015). In reference to our study, the creative identity levels of the participants could have played a role in whether or not their greedy tendencies where activated. For example, a TAT perspective would suggest that when greedy individuals are faced with a situation where they need to be creative, low levels of creative identity (reflecting a lack of a pool of resources from which to draw) may activate their self-protecting tendencies (i.e., resource conservation) thus ultimately impacting their performance on the task. Conversely, within situations requiring a level of creativity, having a creative identity on which to rely may suppress one's greedy tendencies, thus offsetting the negative effect between greed and creativity. If the conservation behaviors of some greedy individuals were affected by trait activation theory, specifically in reference to creative identity, this can explain the findings of a lack of a direct relationship between greed and creative performance.

Further Directions and Limitations

In order to expand on the research done in this study, there are several areas that can be further explored. To improve upon this research certain elements can be modified to further explain the findings. One evident limitation present in the study is the depth to which the topic was explored. While I reasoned that greedy individuals would have a lower level of creativity due to COR theory, I did not test the underlying mechanisms that were driving this relationship. To improve upon this, future research should test these possible factors that underlie the relationship between greedy individuals and their resource conservation. Although I theorized that resource conservation was responsible for the relationships between my constructs of interest, a more explicit test of such mechanisms based on COR theory would be beneficial. For example, future researchers can examine whether *persistence* mediates the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity. This refers to how continuously the participant dedicates effort to the task (Grant et al., 2007). If the individual gives up briefly after trying the task this would indicate a lack of persistence. This would affect the creativity score and thus influence the results of the study.

In addition, future research could examine whether absorption plays a mediating role between greed and creativity. Absorption refers to the level in which one's attention is drawn to engaging experiences or other stimuli (Benning, Rozalski & Klingspon, 2015). Absorption often causes an

individual to lose their sense of self due to a strict dedication to the task. This can cause the greedy tendencies of a dispositionally greedy individual to influence the performance on the task. For example, greedy individuals are going to be distracted by extrinsic outcomes, making it more difficult to become fully immersed in the creative task (Rothbard, 2001).

Second, my use of a student sample constitutes another limitation for the study. Although the present study was theorized and developed from an organizational perspective, the implications of my study may not be entirely generalizable. I encourage future researchers to examine these relationships among an employee sample. This would rid the study of possible constraints that follow from using university students.

Third, I only looked at creative identity as a moderator of the relationship between dispositional greed and creativity. While there was a moderating effect under conditions of low creative identity, there was no effect under conditions of high creative identity. For future research, it would be interesting to look at other possible moderators. One possible moderator to explore is the amount of money offered to participants. It would be interesting to see if the lack of a great amount of money offered would explain the lack of a direct relationship between greed and creativity. If greedy individuals were being offered a sufficient reward that could compensate for the amount of resources they expended on the task, perhaps the relationship between their greedy tendencies and their creative performance could be further offset.

Lastly, the present study was conducted using cross-sectional data. As a result, I am unable to establish causation among my study variables. I encourage future scholars to conduct longitudinal designs for the proposed relationships.

Conclusion

Research on dispositional greed and specifically its relationship with creativity is still not very plentiful. In order to better understand dispositional greed, creativity and their interaction, more studies similar to this should be performed. Specifically, it would be interesting to look at other potential boundary conditions that interact with greed and creativity. In line with my study, it would be interesting to continue focusing on creative role identity and its potential to serve as a pool of resources from which greedy individuals can draw from when engaging in creative behaviors. I hope that this study encourages others to explore the field more in depth in the future.

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