

## THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY FOR ACHIEVING PERFORMANCE IN MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract:** The present paper aims to illustrate the role that creativity holds in achieving a higher level of performance, whether we speak about micro level enterprises, small or medium sized organizations. The first part of the paper highlights theoretical aspects in defining creativity, as well as stating the main barriers that can occur, while the second part consists in a case study based on a recently drafted survey, applied on a representative sample of individuals, consisting in employees from various fields of activity.

**Keywords:** creativity, management, performance, employees

**JEL classification:** D23, J24, M19

### 1. Theoretical background on the issue of creativity

The issue of creativity has become a central theme of research in the field of management even since the mid-twentieth century, however, until today there hasn't been established a general consensus on the main aspects that define it as a concept. It is also important to note that the oldest concerns regarding creativity originally have developed during Antiquity, when Plato and Aristotle were the first who showed interest in this concept.

The 1950s were characterized by analogy between the notion of creativity and the following ideas:

- Inspiration;
- Talent;
- Giftedness;
- imagination.

Jaoui (H. Jaoui, 1990) addresses the notion of creativity in terms of the "ability to achieve genuine and effective combinations based on existing elements and believes that everyone can be creative", the issue of creativity being considered both a mental and social process, but also a human attribute (Totolici), which involves generating new ideas, new concepts, or the establishment of new joint traditional concepts.

As a result, although it is still a vague concept, the defining element of creativity lies in generating new ideas. The term "creativity" was discussed by various authors in literature, the proof consisting in over 100 interdisciplinary definitions. It can be expressed as the intellectual ability to enunciate an idea, to propose a new way of solving a problem, by combining various information (Bibu et al, 2008, pp.

249-253).

Creativity can be thus stated on the one hand as a broad concept, defined as a "combination of qualities that generates the new" (set such by Allport, 1937), regardless of the field of interest (Gavrilă, Lefter, 2004, pg. 167), whether we speak about the scientific area, the economical one, about social or technical aspects, while other representatives in literature define this term as "the faculty to introduce the world a new thing" (Levi Moreno), as well as a "substantial contribution to improving all facets of human activity "(Gavrilă, Lefter, 2004, pg.167). It is seen both as a conjugated activity "of all psychic functions of a person (at intellectual, emotional and volitional level), conscious and unconscious, native and acquired, of biological, psychological and social order, involved in introducing original and valuable ideas (Moraru I, 1995) or even "a process of raising awareness to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies and so on; identification of difficulties or seeking solutions to the shortcomings of assumptions: testing and re-testing these hypotheses and possibly a modification and re-testing of them; finally the communication of the results" (Torrance, 1966). Regardless of the approach or the scientific definitions previously given, it is certain that new ideas are the basis for creativity (Dănăiață et al, 2004, pp. 298-301) as a psychological process, regardless if we explain it at individual or group level, or as an intrinsic or extrinsic proces (Bibu et al, 2008, pp. 249-253). Creativity can thus be referred to as a complement to scientific research, for a positive outcome of the work developed and objectives set out in the organization, through a "combination of well known elements, in order to produce new ideas and solutions" (Laswell), being considered as a multidimensional concept, manifested in various fields.

Over time there were developed many and varied means of investigation for understanding and measurement of the ability, intelligence, emotional reactions, attitudes, materialized in the form of tests, questionnaires, observation files and other tools, creativity identifying itself as "the capacity to identify new linkages between elements that apparently are not connected", but which, in fact, imply the existence of a set of activities, ideas or processes which are unique, unusual, or at least different.

Whether we speak about creativity in the perspective of process, in which case this concept is based mainly on intuition (Goldsmith in Moore, 1975), revealing the novelty of some relationships, whether we treat the concept of creativity in accordance with the peak of Maslow's pyramid, there can be identified a main variety of creativity types, involving on one hand "the combination of structures already known" (Drăgănescu) or the assimilation of new ones, on the other hand, taking into account both the individual that performs the act of creation, and the result gained or the ongoing process.

**Table 1: Main characteristics of creativity**

Creativity as a proces	Creativity as a product	Creativity as a topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- combination of known elements in a new structure</li> <li>- characterized by originality</li> <li>- expressed through visual images, sounds,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- represents value for society, an element of novelty</li> <li>- includes inventions, scientific theories, rationalism, methods of inevstigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a conglomeration of factors, behaviours, skills</li> <li>- determines the creative potential</li> </ul>

representations, signs, words.		
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source: information processed by authors, after Băloiu et al  
 ( <http://www.biblioteca digitala.ase.ro/biblioteca/carte2.asp?id=119&idb>)

The concept of creativity is therefore treated from the perspective of different disciplines, both psychology and sociology or cognitive sciences, stated in direct connection with the field of creative arts, which does not deny its fundamental character regarding the field of exact sciences or the technology.

But the process of creativity can not take place without a strong motivation of those involved, assuming also a wide openness to accepting new and innovative ideas. At the core of the creative process is however the information, requiring a good knowledge of the market (Totolici). Whether we address the issue of creativity as a state, skill or process (according to Webster Dictionary, 1996), these three aspects come to complement each other in order to define creativity as the "ability to do, in other words, to produce something new, whether offering a new solution to a problem or proposing a new method, a new device, a new artistic object or form "(according to the British Enciclopedia).

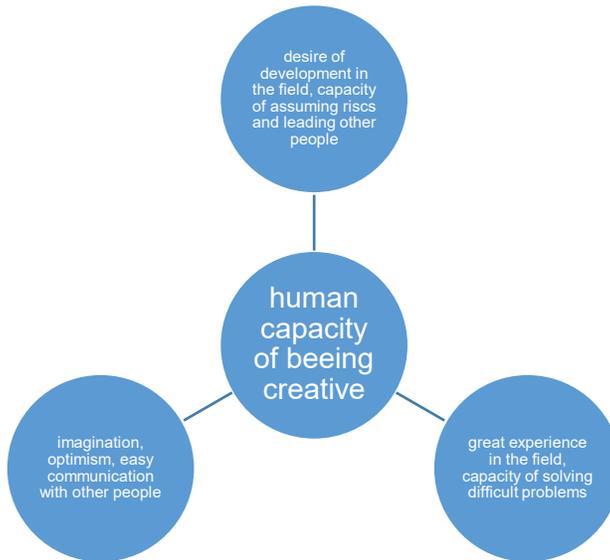
We speak of creativity from the following perspectives:

**Table 2: Perspectives on creativity**

Haefele	The ability to accomplish valuable innovations from social point of view
Feier	The ability to develop new and original elements
Rupert	Non-traditionally thinking process
Roth	Material, spiritual and organizational neoformations
Pop	Specific human activity, concerned with the improvement of life, relationships, social institutions, according to the objectives and aspirations of individuals.
Căpâlneanu	Human behaviour, intended to focusing of instincts, intelligence, skills, thinking, memory, will.

source: processing made by authors, according to literature

The notion of "IQ" was introduced by W. Stern, as an indicator calculated by dividing the intellectual age (determined by test results) to the chronological age. The scope for creativity is wide, the human factor holding a strong role, while creativity is considered an essential attribute of individuals.



**Figure 1** – The human capacity of being creative  
source: processing made by authors

## 2. Creativity jams

Sidney Shore inventoried three types of creativity jams: emotional, cultural and perceptual (Jaoui, 1990):

**Table 3** Creativity jams

Emotional jams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the fear of risk;</li> <li>• The distrust regarding superiors, colleagues, collaborators;</li> <li>• the apparent desire for security of the "known" and the "obvious";</li> <li>• resistance to change;</li> <li>• excessive reliance on the opinions of others;</li> <li>• lack of competence to submit a sustained effort in order to carry out the process of solving a problem, from of identifying it, until its settlement.</li> </ul>
Cultural jams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conformity to social models, the desire of belonging;</li> <li>• accent on statistical evidence;</li> <li>• practical nature;</li> <li>• a poor ability to transform or modify ideas;</li> <li>• excessive emphasis on reason;</li> <li>• conformism.</li> </ul>
Perceptual jams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inability to distinguish between cause and effect;</li> <li>• the difficulty to break a problem in its components;</li> <li>• the difficulty to distinguish between the facts and the problems;</li> <li>• identifying pseudo-solutions to problems;</li> <li>• the inability to define things;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited point of views;</li> <li>• denial of creation capacity.</li> </ul>
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source: Jaoui, 1990

### 3. Methodology and findings

The research method applied consists in a survey based on a questionnaire and it mainly has the advantage of providing a good opportunity to explain the research objectives and also ensuring anonymity of the respondents.

The survey on which the present paper is based on, was conducted on a sample of 600 individuals, employees or representatives of companies (small and medium sized enterprises in various fields of activity: agriculture, trade, services, tourism, industry, constructions) from Resita and Timisoara, in the month of November 2015, aiming at the following:

- Assessing the level of creativity within organizations;
- Identifying the managers' attitude on the issue of creativity;
- Assessing the importance of creativity in promoting staff;
- Establishment of a linkage between creativity and innovation.

The present research was based on the following hypothesis:

H1. The efficiency of an organization depends largely on the level of creativity of staff;

H2. Staff creativity entails a higher level of prestige;

H3. Creativity is an issue that will gain more important valence in the future than today.

The results obtained from the analysis of the answers given by the individuals interviewed, indicate that the majority of them (40%) consider the creativity of staff as a key element that ensures the efficiency of the organization, while a rate of 6.67% states an opposite opinion. This aspect is considered to be especially important in the field of services, where 40% of respondents indicate as important the aspect of creativity, this view being shared also by a percentage of 50% of representatives of organizations from the field of construction.

The percentage decreases in the field of trade, as well as the transportation area of activity - 30%. Creativity is considered essential for small businesses, where 46.67% of respondents believe that this feature brings numerous benefits for the organization, while medium-sized enterprises indicate the same conclusion at a rate of 62.86%.

Regarding the possibility to implement their own creativity, the respondents revealed the following conclusions:

**Table 4** The possibility of applying personal creativity

Grade	1		2		3		4		5	
	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>600</b>									
	36	6,00%	52	8,67%	153	25,50%	195	32,50%	164	27,33%

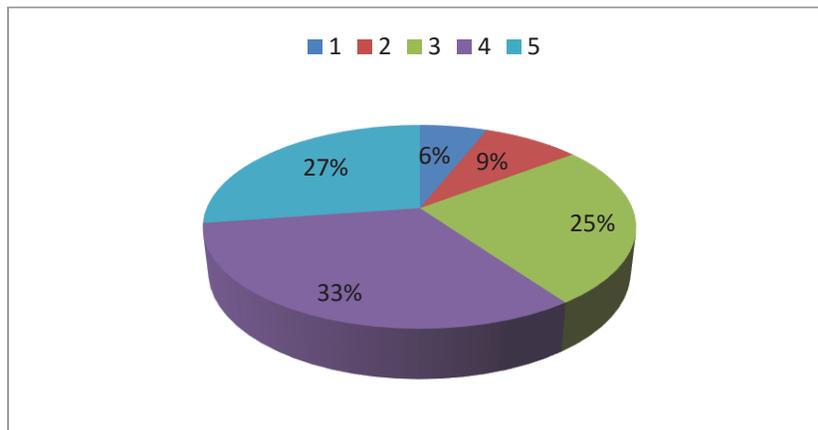
1 – very low level, 3 – intermediate level, 5 – very high level

source: processing made by authors

Regarding the criteria of creativity, it can be stated as a necessity in any business. However, not in few cases, management does not encourage the creativity of

employees, who are limited in their possibility to bring a personal contribution to their work.

Still, even in these conditions, 359 of the 600 respondents believe that in the enterprises where they develop their activity, they have the opportunity to apply at a large or very large extent their personal creativity, while the rest of those surveyed indicate either an average level of possibility for personal involvement or a very low level, evidence of this being the 14.67% of individuals who associated this criterion minimum grades, of 1 and 2.



**Figure 2** The possibility of applying personal creativity  
1 – very low level, 3 – intermediate level, 5 – very high level  
source: processing made by authors

Indicator	$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^m (x_i * n_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^m n_i}$	Mo	$\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 * n_i}{\sum n_i}$	$\sigma = \sqrt{\sigma^2}$	$v = \frac{\sigma}{\bar{x}} * 100$
Level/value	3,67	N=4 / f=195	1,3	1,14	31,06

Although the coefficient of variation acquires a level that exceeds the originally agreed as optimal, we believe that results verify in statistical terms, and the explanation lies in the fact that, in terms of staff, the opportunity to implement their own creativity is subject to a various number of elements, from which we can analyze at least the following conclusions.

**Table 5** The possibility of applying personal creativity – according to the size of the enterprise

Grade		1		2		3		4		5	
Frequency		Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
<b>Microenterprises</b>	<b>203</b>	13	6,40%	26	12,81%	54	26,60%	57	28,08%	53	26,11%
<b>Small enterprises</b>	<b>194</b>	11	5,67%	9	4,64%	49	25,26%	73	37,63%	52	26,80%
<b>Medium sized enterprises</b>	<b>203</b>	12	5,91%	17	8,37%	50	24,63%	65	32,02%	59	29,06%

1 – very low level, 3 – intermediate level, 5 – very high level  
source: processing made by authors

## Conclusions

The possibilities for implementing creativity are conditioned not so much by the size of the organization but by the field of activity and the hierarchical level at which a respondent is located within the enterprise; consequently, whether we speak about microenterprises, or small and medium-sized organizations, the grades from 3 to 5, awarded by the individuals, based on the evaluation grid of the creativity intensity in the organization, indicate similar percentages, varying around an average of 28%. We still consider prevailing the grade 4, since among all three possible scenarios, we recorded here the highest rate of response.

The lower level of homogeneity is due to the dispersion of responses, thus:

- agriculture is characterized by the fact that all employees in this field have given average grades to maximum, the highest rate being the one corresponding to the grade 4 - 40%; we believe that this assumption is acceptable, creativity can be seen in the depiction of a mix of activities to which the employee can bring a personal contribution;
- industry can be associated by analogy to science, but it is necessary to take into account the fact that the sample of respondents included in its structure both representatives of the manufacturing industry and those of light industry, and also categories of staff that cover several hierarchical levels. We speak therefore of a different distribution of responses, represented by the fact that a worker in the clothing industry can demonstrate a lower level of creativity at work, precisely because of the mechanization processes and the large number of operations carried out, while a tailor conceiving a single clothing item can develop his own ideas in a creative way. On the same model in the heavy industry, a welder has a smaller "palette" of activities, and it is not possible to demonstrate widely his personal creativity, while a turner can create a wider range of objects, for the creation of which he can bring his personal contribution, from a creativity point of view.
- Trade and services are considered the main areas where creativity can prevail, this being demonstrated by the large number of respondents who awarded grades of 4 and 5 (57 and 37 respondents from 164, 54 and 68 respectively respondents from 170), while 47 in the field of trade and 33 subjects in the field of services assigned an intermediary grade (3) as representative for this issue.
- construction is the only field of activity where the share of low grades (1 and 2) exceeds 30% of the responses, 24 respondents out of 74 considering that they are offered very little opportunity to apply personal creativity in the development of the activities developed at the workplace.

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