



REVISTA INCLUSIONES

HOMENAJE A MARÍA NOEL MÍGUEZ

Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales

Volumen 7 . Número Especial

Abril / Junio

2020

ISSN 0719-4706

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STUDY ON THE CREATIVITY OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS

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Fecha de Recepción: 28 de enero de 2020 – **Fecha Revisión:** 09 de febrero de 2020

Fecha de Aceptación: 29 de febrero de 2020 – **Fecha de Publicación:** 01 de abril de 2020

Abstract

The article presents the results of a study on the creativity of the entrepreneurial business in Bulgaria. The aim is to clarify the specifics of creativity of the entrepreneurial business and to identify its main problems. The assessment of creativity of the entrepreneurial business is based on the results of a survey of 58 representatives of the entrepreneurial business in Bulgaria. The theoretical aspects of creativity are examined. Based on a survey, the main problems related to the creativity of the entrepreneurial business in Bulgaria have been identified.

Keywords

Creativity – Entrepreneurial business – Motivation – Innovativeness

Para Citar este Artículo:

Kyurova, Vyara. Study on the creativity of the entrepreneurial business. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num Especial (2020): 355-366.

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Introduction

An important role for the growth and competitiveness of each country's economy is played by the development of the entrepreneurial business. In addition, the existence and effective functioning of the entrepreneurial business is a prerequisite for "enhancing the material and spiritual potential of society, creating a favorable ground for the practical realization of the abilities and talents of each individual"¹. In this context, one of the essential issues of theoretical and practical importance is taking adequate action from the entrepreneurial business to achieve success and long-term survival in a market environment characterized by the entry of more and more new economically active individuals as a result of the market process, which increases competition. Creativity is an important entrepreneurial tool for tackling this business issue. In addition, creativity is a key strategic tool that allows you to take the competitive advantage².

The need for creativity of the entrepreneurial business today arises both from the rapid development of technologies that cause changes in production models and dynamics of market processes, as well as from the rapidly evolving processes of internationalization and globalization. At the same time, whereas a change in the economy has been identified recently, moving from knowledge based activities to creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and imagination³, creativity appears to be a key factor to business adaptability and competitiveness in today's rapidly changing business environment⁴. What is more, at present creativity appears more important than ever before, with it being seen as a critical success factor for business⁵. It has also become more of a required organisational resource and a desirable core competence⁶. Along with this, creativity is defined as one of the key ingredients to successfully compete especially in dynamic context⁷. It is evident that it contributes to the sustainable development of entrepreneurial businesses and plays an important role in enhancing competitiveness. Creativity allows the entrepreneurial business to make the best use of the opportunities created by the environment. This means the opportunity for the entrepreneurial business to effectively manage change.

Creativity of the entrepreneurial business is an important prerequisite for the creation of new products or services, as well as for influencing the constantly changing consumer preferences and interests. Moreover, the continuous development of new products and the search and acquisition of new markets contributes to expanding the

¹ G. A. Yakovlev, *Organizatsiya predprinimatelskoy deyatel'nosti* (Moscow: INFRA-M, 2010), 3.

² J. A. McLean, "Place for creativity in management", *The British Journal of Administrative Management* Autumn (2009): 30-31.

³ H. Van Den Broeck; E. Cools and T. Maenhout, "A case study of arteconomy: building bridges between art and enterprise: Belgian businesses stimulate creativity and innovation through art", *Journal of Management and Organization* Vol: 14 (2008): 573-587.; A. Oke; N. Munshi and F.O. Walumbwa "The influence of leadership on innovation processes and activities", *Organizational Dynamics*, num 1 Vol: 38 (2009): 64-72.

⁴ S. Vithayathawornwong; S. Danko and P. Tolbert, "The role of the physical environment in supporting organizational creativity", *Journal of Interior Design* num 1-2 Vol: 29 (2003): 1.

⁵ M. Basadur and P.A. Hausdorf, "Measuring divergent thinking attitudes related to creative problem solving and innovation management", *Creativity Research Journal* num 1 Vol: 9 (1996): 21-32.

⁶ T. Kent, "Creative space: design and the retail environment", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* num 9 Vol: 35 (2007): 734-745. Emerald Group Publishing Limited

⁷ J. Zhou, "New look at creativity in the entrepreneurial process", *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* num 1 Vol: 2 (2008): 1-5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/sej.38>

influence and taking leadership positions in the entrepreneurial business. In addition, the creation of new products or services contributes to the long-term development of the business and to its better market positioning⁸.

The purpose of this article is to look at the specifics of the creativity of an entrepreneurial business and to outline its main problems. In order to achieve this goal, a survey was conducted of 58 representatives of entrepreneurial businesses in Bulgaria. The study was conducted between September and November 2019. The method of direct survey was used to collect the information, in which the respondents themselves fill in the questionnaire. Statistical methods were used to analyze and evaluate the results obtained in the study.

Problem definition

The literature review has shown considerable interest by various authors in elucidating creativity. It is caused by the increasing practical importance of creativity for the development of entrepreneurial businesses in an uncertain and dynamically changing environment. Today, in order to progress, it is necessary for entrepreneurs not only to possess the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out entrepreneurial activity, but above all to be creative. This is supported by some authors who point out that creativity is a system of knowledge and skills⁹ needed for solving different problems and increasing organizational effectiveness¹⁰. It is obvious that knowledge and skills are some of the crucial modern resources for entrepreneurship. What's more, Baumol¹¹ emphasizes that entrepreneurs are „persons who are ingenious and creative in finding ways that add to their own wealth, power, and prestige“. At the same time some authors¹² claim that creativity is a key competency in small and medium sized enterprises. In our opinion, an entrepreneur's tendency to think creatively is an important basis for the formation of key entrepreneurial competences that provoke active entrepreneurial action. Bridge, O'Neill and Cromie argue that creativity should be perceived as an entrepreneurial attribute¹³. In their conceptions of the essence of creativity, some authors place emphasis on ability. For example, Mumford, Robledo and Hester generally define creativity as the ability of a business to generate new and useful ideas¹⁴. At the same time, some authors add that the creation of these new and useful ideas is specifically related to products, services, processes, managerial practices as well as competitive strategies¹⁵. The reasoning of

⁸ Bl. Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, "Innovation activity of family business in south-west planning area", *Entrepreneurship Issue 2 Vol: IV* (2016): 203-210.

⁹ M. Basadur; T. Basadur and G. Licina, "Organizational development", in: *Handbook of organizational creativity*, ed. M. D. Mumford (London/Waltham/San Diego: Academic Press/Elsevier, 2012), 667-703.

¹⁰ J. D. Houghton and T. C. DiLiello, "Leadership development: The key to unlocking individual creativity in organizations", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal Vol: 11* (2010): 230–245.

¹¹ W.J. Baumol, "Entrepreneurship: Productive, Unproductive and Destructive", *The Journal of Political Economy* num 5 Vol: 98 (1990): 893-921.

¹² D. Carson; S. Cromie; P. McGowan and J. Hill, *Marketing and Entrepreneurship in SMEs. An Innovative Approach* (UK: Prentice Hal, 1995).

¹³ S. Bridge; K. O'Neill and S. Cromie, *Understanding Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, second edition (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press Ltd., 2003).

¹⁴ M. Mumford; D. Robledo and K. S. Hester, "Creativity, innovation, and leadership: Models and findings", in *The Sage handbook of leadership*, eds. A. Bryman; D. Collinson; K. Grint; B. Jackson and M. Uhl-Bien (Washington: Sage, 2011), 405-421.

¹⁵ W. Choi; N. Madjar and Y. Yun, Perceived organizational support, goal orientation, Exchange ideology and creativity. *Proceedings of Academy of Management* (Montreal, 2010).; Y. P. Gong; J.

Dayan, Zacca and Di Benedetto is in the same vein. The authors argue that the creativity of entrepreneurs should be understood as their ability to create new combinations of hitherto independent elements in order to form an improved or new product / service, process or practice, which adds value over what existed previously in the marketplace or in the production environment¹⁶. On their part, Markevičiūtė and Jucevičius¹⁷ draw attention to the fact that creativity is a personal ability to produce original ideas and to apply them in different contexts of organizational value creation. We believe that the views of the authors cited are complemented by an interpretation of Stegmeier's creativity. According to him, it is the ability to approach the situation at hand with a fresh perspective, and link together previously unrelated or uncombined concepts, to generate new and unexpected ideas that solve a problem or capture an opportunity¹⁸. For their part, on a substantive aspect, Friday and Okpara view creativity as an ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device¹⁹.

The basic idea of creativity in the theoretical writings of some authors is that it is a process. For example, Williamson views creativity as a process that can be facilitated by ways of working and thinking²⁰. On his part Baer defines it as the first stage of an innovation process²¹. In addition to these insights, Stein introduces another touch - business relevance. By creativity, the above cited author understands a process that results in novelty which is accepted as useful, tenable, or satisfying by a significant group of others at some point in time²². Apart from this, other authors have argued that creativity should be considered as a component of entrepreneurial process that encourages the entrepreneur to catch/create opportunities from which benefit the competitive advantage²³.

C. Huang and J. L. Farh, "Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of creative self-efficacy", *Academy of Management Journal* Vol: 52 (2009): 765-778.; M. Klijn and W. Tomic, "A review of creativity within organizations from a psychological perspective", *Journal of Management Development* Vol: 29 (2010): 322-343.; J. Zhou and R. Ren, "Striving for creativity. Building positive contexts in the workplace", in *The Oxford handbook of positive scholarship*, eds. K.S. Cameron and G. M. Spreitzer (Oxford/New York: Oxford Press, 2012), 97-109.

¹⁶ M. Dayan; R. Zacca and A. Di Benedetto, "An Exploratory Study of Entrepreneurial Creativity: Its Antecedents and Mediators in the Context of UAE Firms", *Creativity and Innovation Management* num 3 Vol: 22 (2013): 223-240. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/caim.12036>

¹⁷ Imantė Markevičiūtė and Giedrins Jucevičius, "The role of creativity in organizational value creation: creative competencies in different organizational context", *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos* num 30 Vol: 2 (2013): 46.

¹⁸ D. Stegmeier, *Innovations in office design: The critical influence approach to effective work environments* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008): 72.

¹⁹ Dr. Friday and O. Okpara, "The value of creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship", *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability* Issue 2 Vol: III (September 2007).

²⁰ B. Williamson, "Creativity, the corporate curriculum and the future: a case study", *Futures* Vol: 33 (2001): 541-555.

²¹ M. Baer, "Putting creativity to work: The implementation of creativity ideas in organizations", *Academy of Management Journal* num 5 Vol: 55 (2012): 1102-1119

²² M. I. Stein, "Creativity and culture", *The journal of psychology* Vol: 36 (1953): 311-322.

²³ B. D. Goss; C. B. Jubenville and F. G. Polite, "Applying an advertising creativity model to the NFL's black quarterbacks and postmodern sport marketing practices", *Marketing Management Journal* num 1 Vol: 17 (2007): 65-81.; I. Fillis and R. Rentschler, "The role of creativity in entrepreneurship", *Journal of Enterprising Culture* num 1 Vol: 18 (2010): 49-81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1142/S0218495810000501>; J. Fortwengel; E. Schüßler and J. Sydow, "Studying Organizational Creativity as Process: Fluidity or Duality?", *Creativity and Innovation Management* num 1 Vol: 26 (2016): 5-16. <http://dx.doi.org/doi10.1111/caim.12187>

In clarifying the problem of creativity, some authors look at it from the standpoint of innovation, which in our view is a key function of the entrepreneurial process. In this sense, Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin view creativity as a subset of innovation, defining it as “the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex social system”²⁴. According to Zhou and Ren creativity is generation of new and useful ideas that concerns products, services, managerial practices, business models and competitive strategies²⁵. Amabile’s reasoning is in the same vein. The author views creativity as the generation and implementation of novel, appropriate ideas to establish a new venture (a new business or new program to deliver products or services)²⁶. At the same time, he believes that these ideas can be related to the products or services themselves, to the identification of the market for the products or services, to the ways of producing or delivering the products or services, or the ways of obtaining resources to produce or deliver the products or services²⁷. Cropley has a particular understanding of creativity. He believes that creativity should be taken as the production of relevant and effective novelty²⁸. On their part, West and Richards treat creativity as the generation of ideas for new and improved ways of doing things²⁹. Unlike the authors cited, Baron believes that creativity means creating something new that is based on exploring different information resources³⁰.

When considering this issue, it is necessary to take into account that creativity can also be viewed in terms of interaction. For example, Hunter, Bedell, and Mumford believe that creativity needs to be seen as arising from the interaction between the individual and the situation, facilitated by an appropriate environment or climate³¹. Another notion of creativity defines it as “the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context”³². The position of Plucker and Makel is that creativity should be seen as an interaction between the talents, the process and the environment, through which a visible, new and useful product is created³³.

²⁴ R. W. Woodman; J. E. Sawyer and R. W. Griffin, “Towards a theory of organizational creativity”, *Academy of Management review* num 2 Vol: 18 (1993): 293.

²⁵ J. Zhou and R. Ren, “Striving for creativity. Building positive contexts in the workplace”, in *The Oxford handbook of positive scholarship*, eds. K.S. Cameron and G. M. Spreitzer (Oxford/New York: Oxford Press, 2012), 97-109.

²⁶ T. M. Amabile, “Entrepreneurial creativity through motivational synergy”, *The Journal of Creative Behavior* Vol: 31 (1997): 18-26. doi10.1177/014920630102700609

²⁷ T. M. Amabile, “Entrepreneurial creativity through motivational synergy”, *The Journal of Creative Behavior* Vol: 31 (1997): 18-26. doi10.1177/014920630102700609

²⁸ A. J. Cropley, *Definitions of Creativity in Encyclopaedia of Creativity* (London: Academic Press, 1999).

²⁹ M. A. West and T. Richards, *Innovation in: Encyclopaedia of Creativity* (London: Academic Press, 1999).

³⁰ R. A. Baron, *Entrepreneurship. An evidence-based guide* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2012).

³¹ S. T. Hunter; K.E. Bedell, and M.D. Mumford, “Climate for creativity: a quantitative review”, *Creativity Research Journal* num 1 Vol:19 (2007): 69-90

³² J. A. Plucker; R. A. Beghetto and G. Dow, “Why isn’t creativity more important to educational psychologists? Potential, pitfalls, and future directions in creativity research”, *Educational Psychologist* Vol: 39 (2004): 90.

³³ J. A. Plucker and M. C. Makel, “Assessment of creativity”, in *The Cambridge handbook of creativity*, eds. J. C. Kaufman and R. J. Sternberg (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 48-73.

Amabile's vision of the essence of entrepreneur creativity is also of interest. According to him, entrepreneurial creativity requires a combination of intrinsic motivation and certain kinds of extrinsic motivation — a motivational synergy that results when strong levels of personal interest and involvement are combined with the promise of rewards that confirm competence, support skill development, and enable future achievement³⁴. An important emphasis put by Stenmark is that motivation (quality of work, financial rewards, challenging goals, accountability, job satisfaction) is one of the important factors for increasing entrepreneurial creativity³⁵. It is obvious that entrepreneurial creativity is strongly influenced by motivation.

We believe that the viewpoint of Phan, Zhou and Abrahamson substantially summarizes the opinions cited. They consider entrepreneurial creativity as a complex phenomenon that includes cognitive processes, individual motivation, knowledge and personality, individual and team decision making, and social and economic influences³⁶.

The literature review makes it possible to conclude that there is multidimensionality in the views on the creativity of the entrepreneurial business, which allows distinguishing its characteristic aspects.

In our view, the creativity of an entrepreneurial business can be seen as a combination of competencies that stimulate entrepreneurial thinking, so that ideas become reality and the motivation and innovative behavior of that business and its ability to create and realize new and useful ideas mainly related to products or services, how they are manufactured, how to retain market share, or to capture a new market. They are an important way of ensuring long-term success and competitive advantage, as well as adapting to changes in the business environment.

Assessment of the creativity of entrepreneurial business

For a more complete and accurate identification of the problem, we consider it necessary to present a profile of the respondents. The survey results show that out of 58 representatives of the entrepreneurial business, 89.4% are men and 10.6% are women. They are divided into the following age groups (Table 1):

| Age, years | Respondents, % |
|---------------|----------------|
| Up to 29 | 2.1 |
| Over 30 to 39 | 28.6 |
| Over 40 to 49 | 39.7 |
| Above 50 | 29.6 |

Table 1
Distribution of respondents by age - %
Source: authors' own research

³⁴ T. M. Amabile, "Entrepreneurial creativity through motivational synergy", *The Journal of Creative Behavior* Vol: 31 (1997): 18-26. doi10.1177/014920630102700609

³⁵ D. Stenmark, "Organizational creativity in context: Learning from a failing attempt to introduce IT-support for creativity", *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction* num 4 Vol: 1 (2005): 80-98.

³⁶ P. Phan; J. Zhou and E. Abrahamson, "Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in China", *Management and Organization Review* num 2 Vol: 6 (2010): 175-194. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2010.00181.x>

The data in Table 1 shows that the respondents aged 40-49 years prevail (39.7%), followed by the respondents from the age group of over 50 years old.

The characteristics of the entrepreneurs are complemented by the educational degree they have acquired. Most of them are university graduates (Table 2). There are no respondents with primary education. The share of respondents with secondary and specialized secondary (vocational) education is relatively low.

| Educational degree | Respondents, % |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Higher | 76.4 |
| Secondary | 11.2 |
| Vocational | 12.4 |

Table 2
Distribution of respondents by educational degree - %
Source: authors' own research

As already stated above, motivation has impact on entrepreneurial creativity. In this regard, the results of the respondents' self-assessment of their motivation to be creative are presented in Table. 3.

| Motivation for creativity | Respondents, % |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| yes | 71.6 |
| rather not | 11.7 |
| no | 13.8 |
| I cannot judge | 2.9 |

Table 3
Distribution of respondents according to their motivation for creativity - %
Source: authors' own research

The analysis of the results shows that the largest share is of the respondents who state that they are motivated to be creative. Nevertheless, not a small proportion of respondents (25.5%) say that they are rather not motivated or have no motivation for creativity at all. The main reason for this is the lack of management practices aimed at promoting the creativity of the individual employee or the work teams.

It is important to identify the respondents' attitudes towards developing creative behavior and exploring the creative needs of the business. In this regard, it is noted that a small proportion of respondents (39.7%) believe that it is not necessary to develop creative behavior among employees and managers. At the same time, a considerable part of the surveyed enterprises (47.1%) have adopted the approach of not exploring creative needs. Therefore, they also have a lack of a developed and operating clear strategy for organizational creativity. However, a significant proportion of respondents (51.6%) highly value the benefits associated with a clear knowledge of responsibilities, which they believe stimulates creativity in the organization.

It is noteworthy that 87.2% of the respondents believe that creativity helps them to grow their business successfully. According to them, it helps to improve products, to improve innovation, to achieve lower costs, to increase sales and, last but not least, to the importance of shortening the delivery time of products to the market.

The analysis of the ability of an entrepreneurial business to adapt to changing conditions is directly related to the evaluation of its creativity. In this context, the survey data show that a large proportion of respondents (64.9%) claim to have the capacity to adapt to the ever-changing dynamic of the business environment. In addition, a considerable part of the respondents (39.8%) stated their willingness to take a risk when a change in the environment occurred. According to them, knowledge of both current and potential users and competitors stimulates their creativity.

Considering that creativity is a key factor for innovation, it was found out that not a small number of respondents (58.7%) confirm their ability to introduce technological changes and approve the quality of products or services produced. Nevertheless, 41.3% of those surveyed identified the search for new ideas as a waste of time and money. In this respect, the question of their entrepreneurial experience in this respect is important. The analysis shows that a small proportion of respondents (12.4%) have excellent training to create products or services. The share of entrepreneurs (53.6%) who evaluate their innovation experience as good is predominant.

Further analysis reveals that almost all respondents (95.3%) believe that there is a strong link between innovation culture and the implementation of innovation. In support of this is Losane's³⁷ view that the innovation culture is the ability of the business to identify, implement and develop new products, regular processes that become everyday for the business.

At the same time, 87.4% identify the innovation culture as one of the significant factors influencing the successful management of ideas, the achievement of long-term business success and a major way of adapting to the competitive environment. Furthermore, as important factors that influence the improvement of creativity in the enterprise and which the entrepreneurial business has to consider, if they want to achieve long-term success, the respondents determine the organizational climate (75.4%), team freedom (58.3%), effective change management (69.4%) and management style (89.7%). The results of the survey reveal that the main problems faced by the entrepreneurial business in terms of creativity are: lack of management practices to encourage staff creativity; lack of creativity-motivated entrepreneurs; the under-appreciated role of creative behavior; insufficient assessment of the creative needs of staff; lack of a developed strategy for organizational creativity; insufficient assessment of the need to develop creative behavior; insufficient appreciation of the role of innovation; staff who are undertrained in terms of innovation.

Conclusion

The theory proves that creativity of entrepreneurs is of great importance for the effective operation of the entrepreneurial business in modern conditions. The creativity of the entrepreneurial business contributes to creating a favorable climate and achieving good communication, which, according to experts, plays a key role in the world of business and organizations³⁸. The better the communications between business entities – managers, suppliers, customers, institutions, competitors, etc. are, the faster they will build

³⁷ L. Losane, "Innovation Culture – Determinant of Firms' Sustainability", *International Journal of economics and management engineering* num 10 Vol: 7 (2013): 2755.

³⁸ A. Kyurova, "Communication as a managerial tool for the processes in organizations", *Entrepreneurship Issue 2 Vol: V (2017): 67.*

and maintain their market positions, and the companies will build a better positive image³⁹. In addition, creativity is a prerequisite for stimulating innovative behavior and making full use of the innovative potential of managers and employees. It enables the creation of a unique product, which in turn provides a competitive advantage for the business. Practice shows that special attention should be paid to the factors that influence the creativity of this business. Their knowledge will allow to achieve effective and long-term business results, proper business management and changes occurring in the business environment.

In this business creativity is not yet sufficiently implemented as an important tool for making the right management decisions regarding new product creation in order to better meet the ever-changing needs of consumers and the proper positioning of businesses in the market.

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³⁹ L. Ivanova, "The vital role of telephone communication", *Revista Inclusiones* num Esp Vol: 6 (2019): 223.

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