Creativity Research Achievements in the Top Academic Journals for the Business Administration Research Field

Thoranit Lilasetthakul [1]
Chunhua Chen [2]

Abstract:

This paper summarised research achievements relevant to creativity, focusing on those that have been published in the top journals in the field of business administration over the past years. The contents of this paper include the influence factors of individual creativity, theories and models of creativity, and creative climate and work environment, as well as creativity training. Knowledge of creativity can be considered an important tool used for an organisation to better understand the structure of a creative work environment and an influence mechanism for each creativity influence factor within an organisation. In this way, a firm can correctly facilitate developing the creativity levels of employees, resulting in the acquisition of a competitive advantage over other firms operating in the market.

Key Words: Creativity, Climate for Innovation, Innovative Behaviour, AEC

[1] Ph.D. Candidate, Major in Corporate Management, Faculty of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, PRC. E-mail: toranitz@gmail.com
[2] Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, PRC.

สรุปผลงานวิจัยในด้านความสร้างสรรค์ในวารสารวิชาการชั้นนำของวงการวิจัยด้านบริหารธุรกิจ

ธรณิศ ลีลาเศรษฐกุล
ชุนฮัว เฉิน

บทคัดย่อ:

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ได้สรุปผลงานวิจัยในด้านความสร้างสรรค์ที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ในวารสารวิชาการชั้นนำระดับนานาชาติของวงการวิจัยด้านบริหารธุรกิจในช่วงหลายปีที่ผ่านมา โดยเนื้อหาของงานวิจัยได้รวมไปถึงงานวิจัยปัจจัยต่างๆ ที่ส่งผลกระทบถึงความสร้างสรรค์ในระดับบุคคล ทฤษฎีบทและโมเดลที่เกี่ยวข้อง บรรยากาศสร้างสรรค์ในที่ทำงาน และการฝึกอบรมเพื่อพัฒนาความสร้างสรรค์ ทั้งนี้ความรู้ในด้านความสร้างสรรค์ จัดเป็นเครื่องมือสำคัญสำหรับองค์กร ให้สามารถเข้าใจถึงองค์ประกอบของบรรยากาศสร้างสรรค์ และกลไกในการส่งผลกระทบของปัจจัยต่างๆ ภายในองค์กรที่มีต่อความสร้างสรรค์ ซึ่งจะทำให้องค์กรสามารถนำไปใช้ในการพัฒนาระดับความสร้างสรรค์ของพนักงานในองค์กรได้อย่างถูกต้อง และในที่สุดจะนำมาซึ่งความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขันเหนือคู่แข่งในตลาดได้

คำสำคัญ: ความสร้างสรรค์/ บรรยากาศสร้างสรรค์/ พฤติกรรมสร้างสรรค์/ ประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน

1. Introduction

The ASEAN Community (AC) officially started on the 31st of December 2015. The implementation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) also began on the same day. One of the ultimate aims of the AEC is to raise the collective spirits of member countries, to promote the group's bargaining power in the world market, which will allow the implementation of a free trade area in the South-East Asia region. In addition, intra-ASEAN mobility of professionals will also be possible, which means professionals and skilled labourers (e.g. engineering, architecture, nursing, accountancy) in the member countries will be able to look for jobs in any other member country with fewer obstacles than before. Naturally, people who are more capable in both professional skills and communication skills will have more competitive advantages and eventually have a better chance to be recognised as well as gain easier and faster career benefits than others.

Since Thailand is one of the member countries of the AEC, this raises concerns for Thai people as to whether Thailand is really ready for the upcoming changes.

According to the results of an English proficiency survey conducted by EF Education First between 2011 and 2015 of countries and territories where English was not the mother tongue, Thailand managed only 42nd place out of 44 sampled countries in 2011, 51st /52 in 2012, 55th /60 in 2013, 48th /63 in 2014 and 62nd /70 in 2015. In other words, Thailand's English proficiency was considered "very low", ranking near the bottom in five consecutive sampled years. This occurred despite the highest average percentage of total government expenditure dedicated to education among all sampled countries (during 2010-2013) (EF, 2015). In addition, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) Report in 2015 for 162 countries around the world, Thailand was ranked 10th with the

score of 7.279 out of 10, which was the highest score among all AEC countries (Institute of Economic and Peace, 2015). This fact may have a major negative impact on the country's image and could result in a serious disadvantage to Thailand's economy, especially in terms of the tourism industry.

With such competitive weaknesses, it would be very difficult for Thailand to compete with other countries in the region. Thailand should instead attempt to acquire competitive advantages over rivals. One way to acquire a competitive advantage is to encourage creativity in the people of Thailand. Therefore, this paper summarises the academic research achievements that have been published in the top journals in the field of business administration (those that acquired a rating of both grade 4+ and A+, based on rankings by the Association of Business Schools in 2015 and Australian Business Deans Council in 2013) on the topic of creativity. This information can serve as a guideline and fundamental knowledge for those interested in the research topic of creativity.

2. Research Achievements in Creativity

Professor Amabile provided the definition of creativity as the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain (Amabile, 1996). In order to make an idea a creative one, two conditions are required: 1. the new idea must not be the same as an existing one and 2. the new idea must be able to facilitate the user to achieve the goal. On the other hand, innovation means to successfully make use of a creative idea in an organisation. From this perspective, creativity could be considered to be the origin of innovation.

Since creativity is one of the important keys for a firm to acquire competitive advantage and become successful in the market, more and more researchers have become interested in creativity research. Research achievements involved with the topic of creativity

that have been published in the top journals and can be divided or grouped according to the research focus of each paper, as follows:

1) Theory and Model Proposing

Many researchers have proposed theories and models related to the topic of creativity over the past several years. In 1993, based on the interactionist model of creative behaviour developed by Woodman and Schoenfeldt in 1989, Woodman and team developed a theoretical framework for understanding creativity in a complex social setting. The researchers believed that we must examine the creative processes, creative products, creative persons, and creative situations in order to fully understand creativity in a social context (Woodman, 1993).

In 1996, Cameron M. Ford of Rutgers University defined creativity as a domain-specific, subjective judgment of the novelty and value of an outcome of a particular action. With this definition of creativity, he then proposed the theory of individual creative action in multiple social domains. Ford emphasised that creative action will not be undertaken intentionally, regardless of any favourable conditions, as long as the individual's habitual actions (familiar actions) remain more attractive. As a result, innovation managers have to consistently empower the individual processes that support creative action while concurrently trying to hold the temptations that draw people toward habitual actions at bay (Ford, 1996).

In 1999, based on articles reviewing literature on the topic of multilevel theories, Drazin and team proposed a model that emphasised how individuals, communities, and organisational systems could create meaning that would impact the direction and flow of creativity in organisations: A process model of Creativity over Time. This multilevel sense-making model of creativity consisted of four concepts, including: individual sense-making; inter-subjectively shared frames of reference; a collective structure

that represents a negotiated belief structure between parties that have different frames of reference; and a shift in the negotiated belief structure that results from crises. The model suggested that, when an organisation has to take part in a large-scale project, it may have to experience different potential stages/crises that happen over time. The organisation has to react accordingly to deal with each stage/crisis by shifting its interest toward technical staff (with higher technical creativity) or project management staff (with higher management creativity) (Drazin, 1999).

However, this model was later criticised by Ford in 2000. Ford made several suggestions, including that researchers should define creativity as a socially constructed assessment and emphasise both sense-making processes and sense-making outcomes. In addition, researchers should specify all relevant stakeholders and domains, as well as adopt a mental dialogue metaphor as a way of investigating the multilevel sense-making processes that affect organisational creativity (Ford, 2000). Consequently, Drazin and team replied to Ford's comments the same year on their process model of creativity over time and confirmed the validity of their model (Drazin, 2000).

2) Creative Performance and Innovative Behaviour

According to the definition of creativity and innovation provided by Amabile in 1996, we can perceive the relationship between creativity and innovative behaviour as a prerequisite factor and the outcome. From this perspective, many researchers have studied the relationship between creativity and the innovative behaviour of employees in order to better understand the mechanisms that can further improve the performance of creativity and the innovation of employees, with a focus on exploring the influence factors involved with these two factors and their past relationships.

In 1994, Susanne G. Scott and Reginald A. Bruce used the structural equation analysis method to test the model of the relationship

between leadership, individual problem-solving style, work group relations, and innovative behaviour. The research result showed that innovative climate perceptions mediated the relationship between leader-member exchanges and innovative behaviour (Scott, 1994)

In 1996, Greg R. Oldham and Anne Cumming conducted their research on employees from two manufacturing facilities to identify the relationship between the characteristics of organisational context (job complexity, supportive supervision, and controlling supervision) and employees' creative performance (patent disclosures written, contributions to an organisation suggestion programme, and supervisory rating of creativity). The research result indicated that employees' creativity performance could be maximised when they had appropriate creativity-relevant characteristics, worked on complex, challenging jobs, and were supervised in a supportive, non-controlling working environment (Oldham, 1996)

In 2007, Audia and Goncalo conducted an analysis of patenting in the hard disk drive industry to examine the effect of past success in creative endeavours on the subsequent tendency of people choosing between the exploration and exploitation type of creativity. The research results confirmed that people tended to choose to continue developing the perceived successful creativity after having experienced success (exploitation type) rather than generating new methods of creativity (exploring type). This effect of past success tends to be more pronounced among people who work alone compared to others who collaborate within a team. In addition, they also found that this effect of past success could be moderated by the influence of organisation norms (Audia, 2007).

Lastly, in 2008, Cattani and Ferriani examined the role of social networks in shaping individuals' ability to generate a creative outcome. Using data from the Hollywood motion picture industry

over the period 1992-2003, research results suggested that the relationship between individual creative performance and coreness is inversely U-shaped, with creative performance higher for individuals who occupy an intermediate position between the core and the periphery of their social network. In addition, the relationship between individual creative performance and team coreness is an inverted U-shape, in which individual creative performance will be highest for a moderate level of team coreness (Cattani, 2008).

3) Creative Climate and Work Environment

Since employees' creativity is a key factor that can facilitate a firm to acquire a competitive advantage over competitors, many researchers have been interested in exploring the factors that can influence the creativity level of employees during their working process. Researchers believed that the work environment could influence the creativity level of employees both directly and indirectly. Thus, they conducted their researches to identify these influence factors in the work environment with the belief that their research achievements could be used as references for firms that aim to construct their work environment to provide support for the creativity of their employees.

In 2000, Christina E. Shalley and team conducted a survey of 2200 individuals to examine the degree to which work environments are structured to complement the creative requirements of jobs. The results indicated that the level of creativity required in a job was positively associated with the amount of autonomy, complexity, and demand in that job. In contrast, organisation control was negatively associated with high creativity requirements. In addition, the characteristics of an individual's work environment moderated the relationship between levels of job-required creativity and psychosocial outcomes. The results also indicated that having a work environment that complements job-required creativity has a

positive effect on job satisfaction and negative effect on intentions to leave (Shalley, 2000).

In 2006, Elsbach and Hargadon perceived that creative output among professionals had become disappointing due to high workload pressure. Therefore, the researchers proposed a framework of work design that focused on the design of entire workdays, suggesting that workdays should be designed to enhance creativity among overworked professionals by alternating between bouts of mindful work, which is cognitively challenging and high-pressure work, and bouts of mindless work, which is the work that is low in both cognitive difficulty and performance pressures (Elsbach, 2006).

Despite the intangible characteristics of creativity, many researchers have attempted to develop an instrument for measuring creativity levels of employees. The most commonly used instrument for measuring the psychological context of creativity in an individual was created in 1996 by Teresa M. Amabile, a professor and director of research at Harvard Business School. Based on the assumptions that the social environment can influence creative behaviour in both level and frequency, and that creativity can occur both within the organisation and outside the organisation, Teresa M. Amabile and team developed an instrument for assessing various work environment dimensions likely to have an impact on individual creativity: KEYS.

KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity, is a self-reporting questionnaire that emphasises measuring the individuals' perceptions and the influence of the perceptions on the creativity of their work. The fourth version of KEYS consists of 5 main dimensions of work environment, including: 1) Encouragement of creativity (Organisational encouragement; Supervisory encouragement; and Work group supports); 2) Autonomy or freedom; 3) Sufficient resources; 4) Pressures (Challenging work; and Workload pressure); and 5)

Organisational impediments to creativity. In addition, the researchers added two work performance criteria into KEYS, including: 1) Creativity and 2) Productivity. After testing the validity of the instrument, the study found that KEYS should be applicable to any level of work environment since it assesses the psychological perceptions of the work environment, regardless of the level within an organisation (Amabile, 1996).

In 1999, Teresa M. Amabile and Regina Conti conducted a study on the work environment for creativity by using the KEYS instrument at a large high-technology firm, before, during and after a major downsizing. The results confirmed the validity of the instrument and showed a significant decline in the level of creativity and productivity during the period of organisational downsizing, but modest increase after downsizing (Amabile, 1999).

4) Creativity Training

In addition to attempts to discover the influential factors of creative performance and innovative behaviours for employees, some researchers also believed that creativity training would be able to help improve the creativity level of employees. For example, Mac Crimmon and Wagner conducted research in 1994 to investigate the effect of computer-based procedures for idea generation on the individual's solution alternatives. The results indicated that the use of the programme lead to the development of significantly more creative alternatives than did a control treatment. This effect can amplify improvements in the performance of more creative individuals (Mac Crimmon, 1994).

3. Conclusion

We can see from previous literature that, during the past several years, many researchers have developed models and theories related to the topic of creativity. These theories and models can

serve as useful references for researchers in the future since the theories and models were systematically proposed and presented in the top papers . However, more empirical studies and solid results are required in order to further confirm the effectiveness and validity of these theories and models.

In addition, many researchers during the past years have discovered various influential factors of creative performance and innovative behaviour in employees. These influence factors can be derived from the employees themselves as well as the work environment within an organisation. Therefore, it is very important that the organisation construct a work climate and environment that can support employees' creativity within the organisation, as well as provide an adequate amount of creativity training for their employees in order to help maximise creative potential.

In summary, research achievements on creativity have become an important research focus in the field of business administration during the past several years. This is because such research achievements on the topic of creativity can help us to better understand the different aspects of creativity, the influence factors of creativity, the varied impacts of creativity, and the different prerequisites of creativity. We hope that knowledge of creativity can be of use to Thai firms, serving as a fundamental guideline for firms on how to construct their work environments to better support creativity within the organisation, which will encourage employees to be creative, and will, in turn, compensate for weaknesses and further facilitate firms to acquire a competitive advantage over competitors in the AEC market.

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