

CREATIVITY IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP DOMAIN

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of reports such as the Global entrepreneurship monitor (Foxcroft, Wood, Kew, Herrington & Segal 2002) and the World competitiveness report (2003), indicating that South African small businesses lag behind their counterparts worldwide with entrepreneurship, the research questions driving this study were:

- What is unique about creativity in the entrepreneurship domain i.e., can creativity as a concept be uniquely delimited in order to contribute towards the development of the concept of entrepreneurial skills?
- What are the perceptions among South African small business owners of their own creativity and their application of it?
- What are the implications of the above for the development of entrepreneurs?

A literature study of the entrepreneurship theory pointed to a number of unique concepts considered as crucial to venture growth, namely, sustained opportunity exploitation and maximisation which could be regarded as the “creative” activities of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial process was investigated to establish the entrepreneurial tasks and processes underlying opportunity exploitation and venture growth maximisation.

Apart from depicting activities such as opportunity identification, development and refinement of the business concept, assessment and acquiring of the necessary resources and implementation, the literature seemed vague and referred more often to skills required for the above tasks, such as entrepreneurial skills and management skills. It was established that entrepreneurial skills include, inter alia, creativity, visioning, risk taking and role modelling.

The creative process activities were linked with those of the entrepreneurial process to establish whether there are unique entrepreneurial applications of creativity. The following “creative acts” were identified as critical in the entrepreneurship domain:

- “creation of a business/opportunity”,

- “synthesis” i.e., the putting together of systems/resources and even opportunities, and
- “modification” i.e., the adapting, changing of processes, etc., to realise growth.

The current situation pertaining to entrepreneurship training and development was investigated to establish whether the above was addressed in the existing training models and learning contents of the domain. It was concluded that despite great advancement having been made in the training and development of creativity and innovation in the entrepreneurship domain, the experiential element of applying the activities of creation, synthesis and modification in order to obtain sustained venture growth is difficult to address in formal learning programmes.

Against the background of research (Jung, Ehrlich, Noble & Baik 2001:42) that found that there were positive relationships between an individual’s level of self-efficacy and performance, South African small business owners’ perceptions of their own creativity, their businesses’ innovativeness and their implementation orientation was tested empirically.

It was found that South African small business owners perceived themselves to be creative and their businesses to be reasonably innovative but that there was a negative relationship between these two perceptions and the implementation orientation. The high esteem of own creativity and innovation versus a lower implementation orientation is indicative of a need to develop experiential training programmes focused on the implementation of creative activities i.e., commercialisation of products and application of innovation in businesses.

In view of the high esteem South African small business owners have of their own creativity, the question is posed as to whether they would be willing to undergo training because they might think they do not need training in this field.

In view of the difficulties of incorporating experiential learning content in formal training programmes it is proposed that the possibility of integrated learning be investi-

gated and developed to include business information centres, networking, linkages, mentoring and tutoring.

EKSERP

Teen die agtergrond van verslae soos die Global entrepreneurship monitor (Foxcroft, Wood, Kew, Herrington & Segal 2002) en die World competitiveness report (2003), wat daarop dui dat Suid-Afrikaanse kleinsake eienaars agter hulle wêreldeweknieë staan met betrekking tot entrepreneurskap, was die navorsingsvraag onderliggend aan hierdie studie:

- Wat is uniek aan die konsep 'kreatiwiteit' in die entrepreneurskap domein, m.a.w. kan kreatiwiteit as konsep uniek afgebaken of begrens word ten einde 'n bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van die konsep 'entrepreneuriese vaardighede' te maak?"
- Wat is Suid-Afrikaanse kleinsake eienaars se persepsie van hulle eie kreatiwiteit en die toepassing daarvan in hulle besighede se innoverendheid?
- Wat is die implikasies van bogenoemde vir die ontwikkeling van entrepreneurs?

'n Literatuurstudie van die entrepreneurskapteorie het 'n aantal unieke konsepte uitgewys wat krities is vir besigheidsgroei, nl. volgehoue geleentheidsbenutting en groei maksimering wat as die "kreatiewe" aktiwiteite van die entrepreneur gesien kan word. Die entrepreneurskap proses is ondersoek om vas te stel watter entrepreneurskap take en prosesse is onderliggend aan geleentheidsbenutting en besigheidsgroei maksimering.

Buiten die aanduiding van aktiwiteite soos geleentheidsidentifisering, die ontwikkeling en verfyning van die besigheidskonsep, beoordeling en verkryging van die nodige hulpbronne en implementering, was die literatuur vaag en is daar meer na vaardighede vir hierdie take verwys, bv. entrepreneurskap vaardighede en bestuursvaardighede. Die literatuurstudie dui daarop dat die domein die volgende as entrepreneurskap vaardighede erken: kreatiwiteit, risikoneming, visie ontwikkeling en rol modellering.

Hierna is gepoog om die aktiwiteite van die kreatiewe proses met die van die entrepreneurskap proses te verbind op soek na helderheid oor unieke leerinhoud vir

entrepreneuriese toepassing van kreatiwiteit. Die volgende “kreatiewe” aktiwiteite is geïdentifiseer as krities vir die realisering van entrepreneurskap:

- “die skep van ‘n geleentheid / besigheid”,
- “sintese” of die samevoeging van stelsels en hulpbronne, en
- “modifisering” oftewel die aanpassing, en/of verandering van prosesse ens. ten einde groei te bewerkstellig.

Die literatuurstudie is verder uitgebrei na entrepreneurskap opleiding en ontwikkeling ten einde vas te stel hoe bestaande modelle, leerinhoud wat ervaring en toepassing behels, inkorporeer. Daar is vasgestel dat ten spyte van vordering op hierdie gebied die ervaringsgedeelte van toepassing moeilik in formele opleidingsprogramme aangespreek kan word.

In die lig van navorsing (Jung, Ehrlich, Noble & Baik 2001:42) wat bevind het dat daar ‘n positiewe verband bestaan tussen individue se assessering van hulle eie bekwaamheid met betrekking tot ‘n spesifieke taak en prestasie toets die empiriese gedeelte van die studie vir gapings tussen Suid-Afrikaanse kleinsake eienaars se persepsies van hulle eie kreatiwiteit, hulle besighede se innoverendheid en hulle implementeringsgesindheid.

Daar is bevind dat Suid-Afrikaanse kleinsake eienaars hulleself as kreatief beskou en hulle besighede innoverend, alhoewel tot ‘n mindere mate as hulle eie kreatiwiteit. Daar was egter ‘n negatiewe implementerings gesindheid. Die hoë selfvertroue ten aansien van eie kreatiwiteit en innovasie teenoor die laer implementeringsoriëntering dui op die noodsaaklikheid van dringende aandag aan ervaringsopleidingsinhoud ten aansien van besigheidskepping, geleentheidskepping, die samevoeging van stelsels en hulpbronne en modifisering of die aanpassing, en/of verandering van prosesse ens. ten einde groei te bewerkstellig.

Die vraag word egter gevra of kleinsake eienaars gewillig sal wees om opleiding ten aansien van kreatiwiteit te kry, in die lig van hulle hoogskatting van hulle eie vermoëns ten aansien van kreatiwiteit en besigheidsinnovering.

Aangesien ervaring moeilik in formele opleiding geïnkorporeer word, word voorgestel dat daar wyer gekyk word na geïntegreerde ontwikkeling wat ook besigheid-inligtingsentrums, netwerke, skakels met besigheidsgelentehede, mentorskap en konsultering insluit.

INDEX

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Success	2
1.1.1	The contribution of innovation and creativity to entrepreneurial success	3
1.1.2	The role of training and development in the success of entrepreneurs	5
1.2	Purpose of this research	7
1.3	Importance of the study	9
1.4	Research Plan	9
2	ENTREPRENEURSHIP THEORY AND CREATIVITY	11
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	The Entrepreneurship Subject Domain	12
2.2.1	Systematic theory development	12
2.2.1.1	Mainstreams of Entrepreneurial Research and its development	13
2.2.1.2	Entrepreneurship Defined	16
2.2.2	Authoritarian and professional organisations	17
2.2.3	A professional culture	18
2.2.4	Entrepreneurship as a career	18
2.3	Various perspectives of Entrepreneurship	18
2.3.1	Personal traits perspective of Entrepreneurship	19
2.3.2	Process perspective of Entrepreneurship	20
2.3.3	Behavioural/Activities Perspective of Entrepreneurship	20
2.4	Entrepreneurs versus small business owners	23
2.4.1	Innovation	24
2.4.2	Potential for growth	24
2.4.3	Strategic objectives	26
2.5	Key Concepts of the Entrepreneurship Domain	27
2.6	Entrepreneurship theory and creativity	28
2.7	A summary of the literature reported	29
2.8	Content analysis of Entrepreneurship definitions	31
2.8.1	Questions asked and constructs used	31
2.8.2	Texts to be examined	32
2.8.3	Units of analysis	32
2.8.4	Recording	33
2.8.5	Data Collection	33
2.9	Testing the results of the content analysis quantitatively	35
2.10	Chapter Conclusion	37
3	THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS	39

3.1	Introduction	39
3.2	Characteristics of the Entrepreneurial Process	40
3.3	Entrepreneurial process models	40
3.4	Elements of the entrepreneurial process	46
3.4.1	The Entrepreneur	47
3.4.1.1	Entrepreneurial skills/capacity	48
3.4.1.2	Business skills	52
3.4.1.3	Possessing the will or tenacity to do it (motivation)	53
3.4.2	The Opportunity	57
3.4.3	Resources	59
3.4.4	Organisation	60
3.4.5	Conclusion: models focusing on elements	61
3.5	Activities of the Entrepreneurial Process	61
3.5.1	Business idea development	61
3.5.2	Resource configuration	63
3.5.3	Implementation through Business establishment	64
3.5.4	Survival and growth	66
3.5.5	A summary of activities and tasks in the entrepreneurial process	67
3.6	Chapter Conclusion	68
4	CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION	72
4.1	Introduction	72
4.2	Various perspectives on Creativity	73
4.2.1	Trait perspective	73
4.2.2	Managerial perspective	74
4.2.3	Entrepreneurial perspective	74
4.3	Dimensions of Creativity	76
4.3.1	General dimensions of creativity	76
4.3.2	Dimensions of creativity in business	77
4.4	The Creative Process	78
4.4.1	Elements/Components of the Creative Process	79
4.4.2	A Framework/Model of the Creative Process	79
4.4.3	Phases/stages of the Creative Process	81
4.4.3.1	Problem/Question/Challenge – The Preparation phase	82
4.4.3.2	Discovery phase (Incubation phase)	84
4.4.3.3	Eureka stage (Insight/Illumination phase)	84
4.4.3.4	Crystallisation phase/Evaluation phase	84
4.4.3.5	Implementation stage/Elaboration phase	84
4.4.4	Creative techniques	85
4.4.5	Key Concepts of Creativity	85
4.4.5.1	Create	85
4.4.5.2	Thinking	85
4.4.5.3	Purposefulness	86
4.4.5.4	Change	86
4.4.5.5	Imagination	88
4.4.5.6	Knowledge	88
4.4.5.7	Problem Solving	89

4.4.5.8	Improvement	89
4.5	Content analysis of definitions	89
4.5.1	Texts to be examined	90
4.5.2	Questions asked and constructs used	90
4.5.3	Units of analysis	90
4.5.4	Categories of responses	91
4.5.5	Coding scheme	93
4.5.6	Data Collection	94
4.5.7	Recording	94
4.5.8	Conclusion: Creativity	98
4.6	Innovation	99
4.6.1	Innovation defined	101
4.6.2	Characteristics of Innovation	103
4.6.3	Key Concepts of Innovation	105
4.6.3.1	Knowledge	105
4.6.3.2	External Focus	105
4.6.3.3	Change	106
4.6.4	The Innovation Process	106
4.6.4.1	Phases/Stages of the Innovation Process	107
4.6.4.2	Idea generation	107
4.6.4.3	Championing	108
4.6.4.4	Implementation	108
4.6.4.5	Gate keeping	108
4.6.4.6	Coaching	108
4.6.5	Elements of the Innovation Process	108
4.6.5.1	Understanding users' needs	108
4.6.5.2	Marketing and Sales	108
4.6.5.3	Communications	109
4.6.5.4	Effective manufacturing	109
4.6.5.5	Management	109
4.6.6	Activities of the Innovation process	111
4.7	The combination of the concepts "creativity" and "innovation" in the Entrepreneurship Domain.	111
4.8	An Evaluation of the work done	113
4.8.1	Creativity	113
4.8.2	Innovation	114
4.9	Chapter Conclusion	115
5	CREATIVITY AND THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURS	116
5.1	Introduction	116
5.2	Learning, Training, Education and Development	117
5.3	Entrepreneurial needs	119
5.3.1	Societal Level Needs	120
5.3.2	Organisational Level Needs	121
5.3.3	Individual Level Needs	122
5.3.3.1	Problem analysis	123
5.3.3.2	Creative Problem solving	124
5.3.3.3	Creative decision-making	124

5.4	Entrepreneurship programme models	125
5.4.1	Pedagogic objectives	126
5.4.2	Emerging models for Entrepreneurship Programmes	128
5.4.3	Content	134
5.4.4	Learning Styles	137
5.4.4.1	The Convergent Style	138
5.4.4.2	The Divergent Style	139
5.4.4.3	The Assimilation Style	139
5.4.4.4	The Accommodation Style	139
5.4.4.5	Creativity and Learning Styles	139
5.4.5	Teaching methods	140
5.4.5.1	Problem-posing methods	145
5.4.5.2	Classroom versus Experiential learning	145
5.4.5.3	Role models/Mentoring	147
5.4.5.4	Whole brain teaching	148
5.4.6	Problems experienced with the development of entrepreneurs	149
5.5	Creativity as subject content in Entrepreneurship programmes	150
5.6	Chapter Conclusion	150
6	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	152
6.1	Introduction	152
6.2	Research Problem and Hypotheses	152
6.2.1	Concepts and Constructs	153
6.2.1.1	Entrepreneurship	153
6.2.1.2	Creativity	154
6.2.1.3	Activities of the Creative Entrepreneurial Process	155
6.2.1.4	Innovation	156
6.2.2	Relationships between the concepts	157
6.2.3	Hypotheses	158
6.3	Research design	158
6.3.1	Sampling design	159
6.3.1.1	The Relevant Population and Sampling frame	159
6.3.1.3	Sample Size	160
6.4	The Measurement Instrument/Questionnaire	162
6.4.1	Demographic information	163
6.4.2	Concepts measured	164
6.4.2.1	Perception of creativity	164
6.4.2.2	Measuring “innovative behaviour”	164
6.4.2.3	Measuring an implementation orientation	166
6.5	Data collection	166
6.6	Data processing	167
6.6.1	Descriptive Statistics	167
6.6.2	Factor Analysis	167
6.6.3	Variance Analysis	168
6.7	Validity	169
6.7.1	Content validity	169
6.7.2	Criterion validity	170
6.7.3	Concurrent validity	170
6.7.4	Construct validity	170

6.7.5	Convergent validity	170
6.8	Chapter Conclusion	171
7	FINDINGS	172
7.1	Chapter purpose	172
7.2	Reporting the Empirical Results	172
7.2.1	Research methodology (Chapter 6)	172
7.2.2	Descriptive results	173
7.2.2.1	Response rate	173
7.2.2.2	Demographic information	174
7.2.2.3	Factor Analysis	175
7.2.3	Kruskal-Wallis	182
7.2.3.1	Pairs-wise comparisons of factors with independent variables	183
8	CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	194
8.1	Entrepreneurship theory (Chapter 2)	194
8.2	Entrepreneurial Process (Chapter 3)	195
8.3	Creativity and Innovation (Chapter 4)	196
8.4	Entrepreneurship training and development (Chapter 5)	197
8.5	Empirical research (Chapters 6 and 7)	198
8.6	Implications for Training and Development of entrepreneurs	201
8.7	Limitations of the study	202
8.8	Potential further research questions	203
8.9	Recommendations	203
9	LIST OF REFERENCES	206
	ANNEXURE A	227

INDEX OF TABLES

Table 1.1:	<i>Number of articles found on “entrepreneurship”, “creativity” and “innovation”</i>	4
Table 2.1:	<i>The Mainstreams of Entrepreneurial Research (Chu 1998:9)</i>	16
Table 2.2:	<i>The characteristics of an entrepreneur versus the average small business owner (De Clerq, Crijns & Ooghe 1997:7)</i>	23
Table 2.3:	<i>Content analysis of definitions of entrepreneurship</i>	33
Table 2.4:	<i>Search terms linked with referential units</i>	36
Table 2.5:	<i>“Innovation” as search term linked with referential units “opportunity finding” and “opportunity exploitation”</i>	37
Table 3.1:	<i>Tasks in the entrepreneurial process linked to creative skills adapted from Gibb 1998:22</i>	69
Table 4.1:	<i>The Process approach to creativity according to Fillis and McAuley (2000:10)</i>	81
Table 4.2:	<i>Approaches to stages of the creative process as reported by Morris and Kuratko (2002:107)</i>	81
Table 4.3:	<i>Content analysis of definitions of creativity</i>	94
Table 4.4:	<i>Attributes of innovative people</i>	100
Table 5.1:	<i>Obstacles experienced by entrepreneurs (Source: Adapted from Foxcroft, Wood, Kew, Herrington & Segal 2002:32)</i>	120
Table 5.2:	<i>Model with three dimensions of entrepreneurial performance training adapted from Van Vuuren and Nieman (1999:3)</i>	129
Table 5.3:	<i>Topics dealt with in entrepreneurship education in the USA adapted from De Clerq, Crijns & Ooghe (1997:15)</i>	135
Table 5.4:	<i>Didactic model versus enterprising model (Duechneaut 1997:6)</i>	140
Table 7.1:	<i>Gender</i>	174
Table 7.2:	<i>Social heritage/culture based on language</i>	174
Table 7.3:	<i>Business role</i>	174
Table 7.4:	<i>Years business management experience</i>	174
Table 7.5:	<i>Business size</i>	175
Table 7.6:	<i>Business life cycle phase</i>	175
Table 7.7:	<i>Rotated Factor loadings, Cronbach Alpha and Eigenvalues</i>	177
Table 7.8:	<i>Item analysis</i>	179
Table 7.9:	<i>Statistical significant differences from median on scale.</i>	180
Table 7.10:	<i>Factor Correlations</i>	180
Table 7.11:	<i>Test for goodness of fit</i>	181
Table 7.12:	<i>Pairs-wise comparison of “perception of own creativity” with independent variables</i>	184
Table 7.13:	<i>Pairs-wise comparison of: “Perception of business’ innovativeness” with independent variables</i>	187
Table 7.14:	<i>Pairs wise analysis of Implementation-outcome orientation with independent variables</i>	190

INDEX OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1:	<i>Reinforcing loop resulting in a growing firm adapted from Janszen (2000:7)</i>	1
Figure 1.2:	<i>Number of articles on entrepreneurship in Proquest Database containing the keywords “creativity” and “innovation”</i>	4
Figure 1.3:	<i>Research Plan</i>	10
Figure 2.1:	<i>Layout of Chapter 2</i>	11
Figure 2.2:	<i>Articles in the Proquest database (2002) on Entrepreneurship containing “opportunity finding”, “opportunity exploitation” and “business creation”</i>	36
Figure 3.1:	<i>Layout of Chapter 3</i>	40
Figure 3.2:	<i>Model of the Entrepreneurial Process (Brazeal & Herbert 1999:34)</i>	42
Figure 3.3:	<i>A model of the Entrepreneurial process (Bygrave in Carlock 1994:28)</i>	44
Figure 3.4:	<i>Olson’s entrepreneurial process (Ulrich 1998:4)</i>	45
Figure 3.6:	<i>Compilation of activity-based entrepreneurial process as deduced from literature study</i>	46
Figure 3.7:	<i>A model for entrepreneurial motivation, as adapted from Naffziger et al. (1994:33)</i>	56
Figure 4.1:	<i>Chapter purpose/content</i>	73
Figure 4.2:	<i>How creativity occurs at the entrepreneurship interface (Fillis & McAuley 2001:13)</i>	80
Figure 4.3:	<i>A simple model of the entrepreneurial process: the respective roles of change, creativity and Innovation (Brazeal & Herbert 1999:34)</i>	81
Figure 4.4:	<i>The difference between creativity and innovation adapted from Couger (1995:18)</i>	112
Figure 5.1:	<i>Chapter purpose</i>	117
Figure 5.2:	<i>Creativity, Innovation and Opportunity finding model (Antonites 2003:204)</i>	133
Figure 6.1:	<i>Chapter Layout</i>	152
Figure 6.2:	<i>Variables of entrepreneurial behaviour and performance adapted from Gbadamosi (2002:97)</i>	154
Figure 7.1:	<i>Chapter purpose/layout</i>	172