# Study of the Impact of Managers' Attitudes Towards Creativity in Terms of Taking up Creative Activities

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## Abstract:

**Purpose:** This article deals with the issues of managers' attitudes towards creativity and their impact on the development of creative organizations. The scientific aim of the article is to explain and extend the conceptualization in the field of creative activities performed by managers and the relationships that occur with the relevant characteristics determining the development of creative activities.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The consideration formed the basis for the formulation of the research hypothesis: There is a relationship between the selected attitudes of managers and creative activities. To verify such a hypothesis, the results of survey study conducted among among managers working in creative organizations who acquire knowledge in educational institutions were used.

Findings: The results of the research showed the existence of significant relationships between the selected characteristics that determine appropriate attitudes toward creativity and the performance of creative activities. It turns out that a manager who performs creative activities is characterized by only selected attitudes from among the many presented in this article.

**Practical Implications:** The obtained research results are of particular importance for the development of appropriate attitudes of managers towards creativity in organizations. The indication of guidelines that may change this state of affairs and the developed research allowed us to identify of areas whose improved functioning could affect their more effective development and meet the requirements of competitiveness in the form of a greater number of new ideas generated.

Originality/value: The obtained research results showed which organizational conditions are most conducive to the development of creativity. The results obtained will allow organizations to focus on these elements in order to achieve better results in the form of more innovations.

**Keywords:** Creative activities, organization, creativity, innovations.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a fundamental change in the approach to the issue of creativity in management. It is now argued that although having knowledge is important, then its creative processing and use is even more importan. Therefore, a special role is assigned to managers and their approach to managing creativity in organizations. Hence, both theoreticians and practitioners of management agree as to the role of creativity and knowledge, as a sources of development of economic entities, which is the subject of the interest of this article.

In order to show a certain area of science and analyze it, the article distinguishes two trends. This part deals with the issue of the role of creative managers in the organization and analyzes the aspects of possible attitudes of managers towards creative activities undertaken in the organization. The second trend, study one, focuses on the research carried out with the use of the proprietary research questionnaire, which includes issues related to the identification of managers in terms of creative activities undertaken in a creative organization.

Then, the study searched for dependencies between these research contexts in order to determine whether there were any dependencies between them. The article also establishes a comprehensive theoretical framework for managers and creative organizations in which the allocation of creativity plays an important role. Thus, the appropriate research methods used allowed for the verification of the assumed hypothesis and research goal.

The aim of the article was to consider the cognitive, theoretical-methodological, and empirical issues of creativity and to determine the scope of influence that of them determines the development of a creative organization, including the role of managers and management in the above-mentioned process. In connection with the above, the following hypothesis was posed: There is a relationship between the selected attitudes of managers and creative activities. The results of the research make it possible to present recommendations for managers of creative organizations indicating to what extent and in what areas they must consistently work on creating conditions conducive to the creation of creativity to support their development.

# 2. Creative Managerial Leadership Style

The vagueness of the boundaries between managerial and leadership functions in contemporary organizations often causes the concepts of leader and manager to be used interchangeably. There is an agreement in the literature that leadership and management are fundamentally different but related to each other (Kotter, 1990; Furmańczyk, 2011; Ahmad, 2020).

The management process as well as the actions of the superior determine the climate and its atmosphere, which is important for the development of such an important

resource category as creativity. Creative behavior is a multi-phase process leading to the identification of problems, the creation of ideas and solutions, and their implementation (Scott and Bruce, 1994). It is creative work in terms of management that plays an important role in generating value for the organization (Bresnahan, 1997), and creativity (Amabile, 1988) is a key element of innovative behavior.

The issue of the importance of the climate for creativity in terms of management support has been discussed by many authors (Bresnahan, 1997; Roffe, 1999; Williams, 2001; Egan, 2005; Zhou, Shalley, 2008; De Jong, Hartog, 2010; Bibi *et al.*, 2020). Mentioned authors emphasize that from the point of view of employees, important issues are: inspiring and motivating creative activities, freedom in making decisions and limiting excessive control, providing broadly understood support, providing examples by managers that should be followed, and an appropriate style of leadership.

The last aspect is crucial as it is known that the leader's behavior influences the organizational climate and culture, thus favoring creativity (Amabile, 1996; Mumford *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, the competences of managers include ensuring such working conditions that will enable development and increase efficiency through education, training, or creative work.

The relationship between leadership and creativity was explored by Fiedler (1962) who showed that a leader can support the creative activities of team members both if there are bad group relationships (through guidance, support, solidarity) and good relationships (through withdrawal, confirmation, provocation, and disagreement). Burns (1978), on the other hand, in his theory based on the transformational-transactional concept, considered two styles of leadership: transactional (based on exchanging something for something) and transformational (based on non-instrumental justification of actions).

Transformational leaders are visionaries of the future, able to make even radical transformations in the organization in order to ensure its continued development and increase competitiveness using the potential of employees and at the same time shaping a favorable organizational culture (Bass, 1996; Karwowski, 2010). The indicated model can be an excellent stimulus for the development of an organization, provided that employees equate the award with a creative attitude and implementation of creative activities (Karwowski, 2010). It should be added that creativity may also be the result of imitating the supervisor. The degree of perception of a leader by his followers may contribute to the growth of their creativity (Simonton, 1975).

## 3. Materials and Methods

The subject matter of this article required a review of the source literature. Articles were identified on the possibilities of acquiring knowledge, the potential of a source

of knowledge, and creativity for the creative development of the organization. This part of the study was devoted to establishing the theoretical framework and gaining a broader understanding of the relationship between the components selected for the study. The verification procedure adopted in this article consisted in examining certain interdependencies between observable phenomena or facts, without any intervention by the researcher.

The research was diagnostic and exploratory. The research aimed to gain knowledge about the discussed phenomena and to analyze them to verify the theory, namely to confirm or disprove it. The conducted analysis made it possible to organize the knowledge related to the discussed issue.

The main research problem, which is also the subject of the study, is to understand the relationship between creative activities and managers' attitudes towards creativity in terms of undertaking creative activities. Moreover, the discussion and conclusions they will focus on the impact of the above relationships on the creative development of the organization. The authors aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the identified research problem, due to the wide research area, a hypothesis was formulated regarding the following selected issues. It was formulated:

Hypothesis (H). There is a relationship between the selected attitudes of managers and creative activities.

Creative activities are those activities undertaken by an employee that was previously unknown to him, thanks to which he enriches himself (through the development of knowledge, increase in authority, etc.) and the environment (through new products, services, processes, etc.). In order to verify the hypothesis, self-report studies were used with the use of the proprietary questionnaire that was used in the article.

The questionnaire used in the study was based on the many years of experience of A. Sokół and I. Figurska in exploring the topic of knowledge and creativity management, which was reflected in many scientific publications (Figurska and Sokół, 2020). Then, after defining the sampling frame, i.e. a set of items in the statistical population, used to verify the formulated hypothesis, a research sample was drawn using a stratified non-proportional random sampling method. The sample consisted of managers working in creative organizations that carry out creative activities.

Another classification criterion in the studied group was the continuous acquisition of knowledge in educational institutions. Hence, the sample was taken from adults who were not only managers but also management students in the last two years of their studies (hereinafter also referred to as entities, sample group, and respondents). This decision was influenced by the fact that the studies allow for the continuous acquisition of new knowledge and the development of creativity.

Due to its availability, the respondents were a group of people from the West Pomeranian Voivodeship studying at the same university. This fact did not affect their responses and facilitated the control and evaluation of the study population.

To ensure the appropriate number of questionnaires, it was decided to conduct a survey of 350 respondents. A total of 280 correctly completed questionnaires were returned. This amount met the minimum sample size criterion and allowed us to obtain the lower error rate. 157 of the respondents were women.

Respondents up to 25 years of age accounted for 77.5% of the surveyed group, and those aged 26 to 35 - almost 14%. Most of the respondents have worked from 1 to 5 years (209 people), 30 people indicated 6 to 10 years of professional activity, and the rest of them have worked for over 10 years. The respondents worked in firms of various sizes. 27.5% of them worked in firms employing less than 10 people, three out of ten respondents - in those employing 11-50 people, 13.9% of respondents were professionally associated with organizations employing 50-250 people, and the rest worked in firms employing more than 250 people (18.2%) or did not answer this question.

The collected data was encoded in a research matrix in an Excel file and further analyzed using the SPSS program. The obtained results, discussed in the context of the hypothesis, are presented in the next section. In order to measure the relationship, the Spearman correlation coefficient between the ordinal variables was calculated. Then, the strength of the relationship between the nominal and ordinal variables was measured using chi-square tests. The limit of statistical significance was p < 0.05.

## 3. Research Results and Discussion

The theoretical considerations were verified by an empirical analysis carried out according to research sequences based on the findings resulting from the answers to the questionnaire. The first stage (stage I) of the analysis involved processing the obtained data. Then the hypothesis was verified (stage II) and compared with the theoretical part of the obtained material. Stage III presents the final conclusions and suggestions for managers of creative organizations on how to stimulate the development of employees so that they undertake more creative activities and expand their knowledge.

The first research aspect was the assessment of the relationship between managers' attitudes towards creative activities. For a better understanding of the results of the analysis, it is worth noting that the attitudes of a creative manager as well as creative and reproductive actions were developed based on scientific literature in the field of psychology and management (Sokół, Gozdek, Figurska, and Blaskova, 2015; Peszko and Sokół, 2016). The individual columns of Table 2 indicate the following managerial attitudes and creative activities.

	managers' attitudes*														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
-	1	0,001	0,035	0,551	0,045	0,375	0,161	0,497	0,010	0,866	0,285	0,136	0,019	0,048	0,058
	2	0,940	0,278	0,820	0,064	0,883	0,104	0,188	0,543	0,043	0,605	0,354	0,196	0,991	0,030
	3	0,973	0,985	0,826	0,019	0,128	0,178	0,862	0,204	0,181	0,441	0,674	0,243	0,796	0,096
	4	0,067	0,056	0,653	0,120	0,035	0,515	0,001	0,600	0,056	0,883	0,625	0,010	0,109	0,002
	5	0,042	0,358	0,859	0,008	0,956	0,503	0,471	0,747	0,001	0,638	0,023	0,021	0,010	0,000
_	6	0,019	0,056	0,033	0,092	0,048	0,885	0,409	0,198	0,446	0,024	0,081	0,000	0,733	0,021
_	7	0,007	0,099	0,134	0,377	0,595	0,208	0,327	0,508	0,817	0,954	0,125	0,002	0,377	0,015
	8	0,940	0,278	0,820	0,064	0,883	0,104	0,188	0,543	0,043	0,605	0,354	0,196	0,991	0,030
	9	0,973	0,985	0,826	0,019	0,128	0,178	0,862	0,204	0,181	0,441	0,674	0,243	0,796	0,096
	10	0,067	0,056	0,653	0,120	0,035	0,515	0,600	0,056	0,883	0,625	0,010	0,109	0,002	0,600
۰ -	11	0,042	0,358	0,859	0,008	0,956	0,503	0,747	0,001	0,638	0,023	0,021	0,010	0,000	0,747
activitie	12	0,019	0,056	0,033	0,092	0,048	0,885	0,198	0,446	0,024	0,081	0,000	0,733	0,021	0,198
<u>ۃ</u> .	13	0.007	0.099	0.134	0.377	0.595	0.208	0.508	0.817	0.954	0.125	0.002	0.377	0.015	0.508

*Table 1.* Manager's attitudes and creative activities

# Notes:

- 1. Manager's attitudes: (1) precision, reliability, efficiency, methodicalness, discipline as well as conformism, (2) focusing on problem solving rather than problem identification, (3) looking for proven solutions to problems, (4) dealing with problems through effective actions with maximum continuity, (5) being perceived as a conformist, dependent person, (6) relying on known means of achieving goals, (7) being rarely bored, performing time-consuming tasks with great precision, (8) taking over leadership within existing structures, (9) rarely questioning established rules and only with strong backing, (10) having a tendency to lack self-confidence, reacting to criticism with even greater conformism, falling under social influence and power, (11) being relevant to the operation of an organization, yet sometimes revealing tendency to hide (immerse) in one's work, (12) attention to stability, order and effective cooperation when working with innovators, (13) sensitivity to other people, fostering group cohesion and cooperation, (14) laying a secure foundation for risky behavior of innovators.
- 2. \*\* Activities: (1) known, perceived many times activity, (2) known, repeated or even algorithmized activity, (3) known, used many times activity, (4) usually a simple activity, reduced to a minimum, of an imitative nature, (5) activity condensed in time, (6) usually fixed, often even automated and habitual activity, (7) immediate feedback activity, positive reinforcement, (8) unknown, new, unique, interesting activities (9) new, non-routine, frequently changing, challenging activities performed at work, (10) the use of new tools, new, interesting, frequently changing methods in the process of performing activities, (11) surprising and creative decisions enabling innovation, (12) non-routine, unspecified time of performing activities, (13) variable activities related to new tasks.

Source: Own study.

However, in the case of the superiors of the analysis, statistically significant relationships occurred between:

1. being precise, reliable, effective, methodical, disciplined and conformist, and actions that constitute feedback, positive reinforcement; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things;

- not routine, indefinite duration of activities; variable activities related to new tasks:
- 2. focus on problem-solving rather than problem discovery and feedback activities, positive reinforcement;
- coping with problems through effective actions with maximum continuity and feedback activities, positive reinforcement; activities that are new, not routine, change frequently, creating space for new challenges; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things;
- 4. being perceived as a conformist person, dependent and activities requiring the use of new tools, new methods, interesting methods, often changing one; not routine, indefinite duration of activities;
- 5. rare boredom, being capable of considerable accuracy in carrying out longlasting tasks and activities requiring the use of new tools, new methods, interesting methods, often changing one;
- 6. rarely questioning established rules, only when you have considerable support, and activities that produce unknown, new, unique, interesting outcomes; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things;
- 7. having a tendency to unbelief in oneself, reacting to criticism and even greater conformity, succumbing to social and power influences rather than routine, indefinite duration of activities:
- 8. being important for the functioning of the organization, but sometimes with a tendency to hide (immersion) in one's own work; and activities leading to surprising and creative decisions that condition the introduction of new things;
- 9. care for stability, order, and good cooperation in the process of cooperation with innovators and activities that constitute feedback, positive reinforcement; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things; not routine, indefinite duration of activities; variable activities related to new tasks;
- 10. sensitivity to other people, fostering group cohesion and cooperation and feedback activities, positive reinforcement; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things;
- 11. creating a safe basis for risky behaviors of innovators and activities producing unknown, new, unique, and interesting results; activities requiring the use of new tools, new methods, interesting methods, often changing; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things; not routine, indefinite duration of activities; variable activities related to new tasks.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the research published by A. Sokół (2014) allowed to indicate that when it comes to the type of leadership, managers mostly belong to the transformational type (58%). Transactional leaders are in second place (24%). 18% of the respondents obtained results that allow assigning them to the third possible

type of leadership - mixed, which, according to Bass and Avolio (1995), is an ineffective attempt to control employees, doomed to failure due to inconsistent management methods. The obtained difference between the number of results of particular types was statistically significant.

Additionally, referring also to the research by A. Sokół (2014) it should be noted that the presented results are to some extent correlated and allowed to define that creativity is related to such characteristics of employees as courage, openness, and assertiveness as well as reciprocity of action. The respondents very often emphasized the importance of the factor determining the success and development of the creative sector in Poland, i.e. the propensity to take initiatives, take risks, and an appropriate level of acceptance and tolerance. These are significant stimulators of the development of creativity in these entities and their lack is often a significant obstacle preventing the implementation of some projects.

On the other hand, the results of the research presented in this article constitute another research aspect in the field of the development of creativity in organizations, related to the attitudes of managers toward creative activities. When reviewing the survey results, it was found that not all managerial attitudes are correlated with the indicated creative activities. Namely, such an aspect was discovered in the case of three managerial attitudes, i.e., looking for solutions to problems with proven methods; achieving goals based on known methods; taking over the management of existing structures.

Hence, the next stage of the study was to determine which of the managerial attitudes show a positive correlation in the presented scope. Such correlations occur between the results obtained in the other management attitudes selected by researchers, such as: is precise, reliable, efficient, methodical, disciplined, and conformist; copes with problems through effective actions with maximum continuity; is perceived as a conformist, dependent person; is rarely bored, is capable of considerable accuracy in carrying out long-lasting tasks; tends to be unbelieving in oneself; reacts to criticism with even greater conformity - succumbed to social and power influences; is important for the functioning of the organization, but sometimes tends to hide (immersion) in its own work; when he/she cooperates with innovators, cares about stability, order, and good cooperation; is sensitive to other people, fosters group cohesion and cooperation; creates a safe basis for risky behaviors of innovators, and creative activities such as: feedback, positive reinforcement, evaluation in the performance of an activity (as a rule, immediate feedback, positive reinforcement); result obtained as a result of performing activities at work (unknown, new, unique, interesting); structure of activities at work (new, not routine, frequently changing, creating space for new challenges); means (tools) used in the performance of activities (new tools, new methods, interesting methods, frequently changing); decision resulting from the performance of a given activity (a surprising, creative decision that determines the introduction of a novelty); duration of activities (not routine, indefinite); the degree of consolidation of the performed activity (variable activities related to new tasks) is statistically significant.

Summarizing the above research results as well as considerations and research presented in the source literature, it follows that the impact of the above-mentioned attitudes of managers on creative activities may be different and have a different scale of impact force. The indicated significant relationships, which were discovered in the study, confirm the conclusions known in the subject literature of attitudes toward creative work. Therefore, it must be said that definitely new, non-routine, unknown, unique, and interesting activities stimulate creative attitudes and undertake creative activities.

The results of the research confirm the dependence that creative people with high openness to novelty generate much more new ideas (Kaufman, 2011). Openness includes curiosity, originality, incompatibility, active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, and change preferences. Also, people with a high level of openness to experience are considered broad-minded, modern, and non-traditional (Shalley *et al.*, 2004).

Moreover, openness to new things is related to the creative ability that has long been correlated with divergent thinking and cognitive style. Divergent thinking refers to an individual who is adept at generating original ideas (Torrance, 1974). In turn, when describing the cognitive style, it can be indicated that it is an individual style of thinking and remembering information, allowing for problem-solving and making decisions that are considered part of creative processes (Kirton, 1976).

It is worth noting that for this type of employee, unknown situations should be treated as interesting, exciting, and harmless, inspiring to react creatively (Dacey, Lennon; 2000). Creativity is also associated with persistence allowing for completing activities. It is determined by the appropriate motivation - achievement motivation and internal motivation. These conditions are extremely important for creativity because these features cumulated together allow for a rational and effective assessment of the activities undertaken to develop new ideas, processes, and products (De Dreu *et al.*, 2014).

# 5. Summary

The issue of managers' attitudes towards creativity and their impact on the development of creative organizations is of great importance for the development of both management theory and practice. Based on the research framework established in the course of the analysis of the subject literature, an identification of the attitudes of managers related to creative activities was made, and then in the course of a statistical analysis of data obtained thanks to the conducted survey, the relationships between selected attitudes presented by managers and the performance of creative activities in the organization were examined.

The analysis of the obtained results allowed us to determine which attitudes of managers are positively and significantly correlated with specific creative activities, thus the hypothesis presented in this article was positively verified.

It should be emphasized that the attitudes significantly correlated with the largest number of creative activities are: creating a safe basis for risky behaviors of innovators; being precise, reliable, effective, methodical, disciplined and conformist; care for stability, order, and good cooperation in the process of cooperation with innovators. In turn, the undertaken activities of a creative nature positively correlated with as many managers' attitudes as possible are: feedback activities, positive reinforcement; activities leading to surprising and creative decisions, conditioning the introduction of new things; not routine, indefinite duration of activities.

Knowing which attitudes of managers influence the undertaking of specific creative activities in an organization is of great importance for the practice of management in creative organizations, including building an organizational culture that supports such foundations among the managerial staff. Knowing what creative activities are expected of employees, it is possible to determine what specific attitudes of managers will be conducive to undertaking these activities.

Certain limitations should be taken into account in the context of the study performed. First of all, the research was conducted on a narrow group of managers working in organizations, therefore the transformation of the obtained results into the entire population of managers may be flawed.

Another limitation concerns the question of the methods used. It is suggested here to conduct an empirical study to demonstrate the relationship between selected research areas with the use of various complementary diagnostic tools (e.g. focus studies). The last limitation is related to the fact that the attitudes of managers selected and discussed in this article may be subjective in the opinion of the readers.

The described limitations are the starting point for determining further research directions. On the one hand, further development of diagnostic tools allowing for even better, more detailed research in the field presented in this study is suggested, and on the other hand - expansion of the research group. The obtained research results do not exhaust the issues discussed in the article but constitute an introduction to further research and analysis.

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