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Creativity Control as a Core Component of the Creativity Management Process

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Abstract:

Purpose: *To examine the role of creativity control in organisations and to identify how creative-sector enterprises monitor and evaluate the development of employee creativity.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *The study uses a quantitative CAWI survey conducted among 125 employees and managers from creative-sector organisations in the West Pomeranian region. A purposive sampling strategy based on PKD 2007 ensured the inclusion of relevant enterprises.*
Findings: *Most organisations do not apply structured creativity-control mechanisms (78%). Employees associate control mainly with performance evaluation, while managers link it to project outcomes. Only a minority use any creativity-control practices, and these rely largely on general HR tools rather than specialised methods.*
Practical Implications: *Introducing systematic creativity-control mechanisms can support the development of creative competencies, improve monitoring processes and strengthen organisations' ability to transform creative potential into innovation.*
Originality/Value: *The study provides one of the first empirical insights into creativity-control practices in the Polish creative sector and supports the development of a structured creativity-management model in which control functions as a diagnostic and developmental component.*

Keywords: *Creativity control, creativity management, creative sector, employee creativity, innovation*

JEL Codes: *L21, M10, M12, O31.*

Paper Type: *Research study.*

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1. Introduction

Creativity has become a critical determinant of organizational competitiveness, particularly in environments characterised by rapid technological change, increasing market turbulence and intensified global competition. As a result, organisations are placing growing emphasis on managing creativity as a deliberate and structured process rather than treating it as a spontaneous and unpredictable phenomenon.

While much attention in the literature has been devoted to the stimulation, development and organisation of creative work, the dimension of creativity control remains significantly underexplored. This gap is especially relevant, as the effectiveness of any management process is contingent on the presence of mechanisms that monitor progress, evaluate outcomes and provide feedback for improvement.

Controlling creativity presents unique challenges. Unlike traditional organisational activities, creative processes are inherently ambiguous, iterative and non-linear. At first glance, creativity control seems inherently contradictory, as creative processes thrive on nonconformity and boundary-breaking, whereas classical control relies on predefined standards, norms and comparisons.

Creative work resists strict standardisation, often thrives on deviation from established norms, and requires a careful balance between autonomy and guidance. Nonetheless, organisations increasingly recognise that without appropriate control mechanisms—adapted to the specific nature of creativity—it becomes difficult to assess the effectiveness of creative initiatives, identify barriers, allocate resources or translate creative potential into innovation (Anderson *et al.,* 2025).

Despite the growing interest in organisational creativity, existing studies tend to prioritise its drivers—such as motivation, climate, leadership or team composition—while offering limited insight into how creativity is monitored, assessed and aligned with organisational goals. This omission is noteworthy, as creativity control represents not a restrictive mechanism, but a strategic managerial function that enables organisations to understand the trajectory of creative efforts, identify developmental needs and ensure the effective utilisation of creative potential.

Moreover, the issue of creativity control becomes particularly salient in sectors whose competitiveness relies directly on talent, originality and continuous innovation. Creative-sector organisations operate in environments characterised by project-based work, high uncertainty and strong dependence on individual and collective creative contributions. In such contexts, the absence of structured control mechanisms may lead to inefficiencies, misallocation of resources or the inability to convert creative inputs into actionable innovations.

Given these challenges, there is a clear need for a deeper conceptual and empirical examination of creativity control as an integral part of the creativity management

process. This article responds to this gap by combining theoretical analysis with empirical evidence from organisations operating in the creative sector. The results provide new insights into how creativity is monitored in practice, what mechanisms are currently used, and which areas require further development.

By highlighting the nature, functions and challenges of controlling creativity, the article contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of creative management and offers insights that may assist organisations in designing mechanisms that support—not suppress—creative potential.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Creativity Control in the Creative Management Process

Managing creativity in organisations involves a sequence of interrelated activities aimed at shaping the conditions, behaviours and organisational mechanisms that stimulate the generation of valuable ideas. Although research on creativity typically concentrates on such elements as motivation, organisational climate or team composition, considerably less attention is paid to the role of control within the creative management process. This gap is noteworthy, as any management system requires tools for monitoring progress, verifying results and ensuring alignment with strategic objectives (Amabile, 1996; Nermend *et al.,* 2021; Grima *et al.,* 2020).

In classical management theory, control is defined as a process of establishing standards, measuring performance, comparing achieved results with expectations and undertaking corrective actions (Mockler,1994). However, when applied to creativity, these assumptions require significant reinterpretation.

Creative processes are inherently non-linear, ambiguous and strongly dependent on individual cognitive styles, which makes rigid standards inappropriate. Instead of traditional benchmarks, organisations must apply flexible indicators that reflect creative progress, such as the scale of idea generation, novelty of proposed solutions or the maturity of creative projects (Mumford, 2012).

However, creativity presents a unique challenge to traditional assumptions about organisational control. The non-linear, boundary-crossing and norm-defying nature of creative work appears to contradict the standardised, comparative and normative logic traditionally associated with control. Classical forms of control rely on predefined benchmarks, performance comparisons and corrective actions. In contrast, creative processes flourish through experimentation, autonomy and deviation from established patterns. This inherent tension has contributed to the perception that creativity control is paradoxical or even counterproductive.

Another important perspective comes from personal controlling, conceptualised by Purgał-Popiela and Pocztowski, who emphasise the evaluative, informational and developmental functions of control within human capital management. When adapted

to creativity, this approach highlights the need to understand how creative potential evolves over time, how employees respond to developmental efforts and which organisational factors hinder or stimulate creative performance. Instead of restricting creative work, control functions as a mechanism for diagnosing capacity, supporting learning and guiding developmental strategies. (Pocztowski, 2003).

Creativity control also involves systematic monitoring of the effects of creative work. Organisations that maintain records of creative initiatives, implemented projects and commercialised innovations gain the ability to assess progress over time. Year-to-year comparisons help determine whether actions taken within the creative management process lead to measurable improvements. This aligns with the logic of functional controlling, where the key objective is to understand the efficiency and effectiveness of specific organisational functions (Davila *et al.,* 2012).

Another essential dimension of creativity control is the evaluation of employees' creative competencies. Assessments may involve proprietary diagnostic tools or established instruments measuring creative potential, skills or attitudes. Regular evaluation allows organisations to track changes in creative capabilities, identify stagnation or growth, and verify whether developmental interventions produce the expected outcomes (Gonlepa *et al.,* 2022).

Another relevant dimension of creativity control relates to how organisations capture and interpret employee feedback. Insights into employees' experiences of their creative work context—ranging from perceived enablers to specific obstacles—allow managers to make informed adjustments to organisational practices. When feedback is collected regularly and systematically, it becomes a diagnostic tool that reveals hidden constraints, highlights unmet developmental needs and guides improvements in communication systems, workflow coordination and resource distribution. In this sense, feedback serves not as a supervisory mechanism but as an information-based driver of organisational learning and continuous enhancement of creative processes (Le *et al.,* 2024).

A distinct and increasingly relevant contribution to the discussion on creativity control is the information-system approach proposed by Knosala and Tomczak-Horyń. Their multi-layered model demonstrates how creative inputs can be transformed into evaluable outputs through structured procedures, forming the basis for systems such as ESPIR. These systems collect creative proposals, support expert assessment and categorise innovations, exemplifying how creativity control can be operationalised through digital tools without suppressing autonomy or originality (Knosala *et al.,* 2016).

A complementary mechanism within creativity control concerns employee feedback. Understanding how employees perceive their creative environment – what supports their creativity and what hinders it – provides valuable information for managerial decision-making. Feedback obtained through surveys or interviews helps identify

barriers and stimulates improvements to organisational design, communication and resource allocation (Liu *et al.,* 2022).

Taken together, these mechanisms demonstrate that creativity control is not a traditional supervisory function but rather a reflective, developmental and information-oriented process. It supports the entire system of creativity management by providing insight into gaps, strengthening creative competencies and aligning creative efforts with strategic organisational goals. Properly designed, creativity control becomes a strategic instrument that links creative activities with long-term organisational outcomes and translates creative potential into tangible innovation.

3. The Creative Sector as a Framework for Creativity Research

The creative sector in Poland represents a relatively young yet dynamically expanding segment of the economy, whose significance is steadily increasing at both the national and regional levels. The concept of the "creative sector" began to gain prominence in academic discourse in the 1990s, when researchers recognised the growing potential resulting from the convergence of culture, technology and entrepreneurial activity. Although terminology in this field is not uniformly adopted, the knowledge base has been consistently enriched through ongoing analyses and sector-specific studies.

The creative sector—often referred to as the creative industries—encompasses activities situated at the intersection of art, culture, technology and business. Its foundations rely heavily on creativity, talent and the capacity for innovation.

Organisations operating in this domain demonstrate substantial economic potential: they generate revenue, stimulate employment and contribute to the development of intellectual property. In the United Kingdom, the Creative Industries Team identified 13 categories representing this segment of the economy, including advertising, film and video, radio and television, computer games, software, music, performing arts, architecture, publishing, the art and antiques market, crafts, fashion design and design (Stojek-Filus, 2014).

Despite their diversity, creative-sector activities share a common feature: creativity embedded in interdisciplinary work. Projects undertaken within this sector are characterised by originality, high quality and a strong focus on innovation, often implemented under conditions of high time pressure.

According to recent analyses, the creative sector continues to exhibit stable upward growth trends, highlighting its rising relevance and influence on the European economy (Dellisanti, 2024). Moreover, the sector supports local and regional development by fostering cultural activity, strengthening social capital and stimulating creativity, which play crucial roles at multiple stages of regional growth (Markiewicz *et al.,* 2013).

Given the sector's intrinsic dependence on creativity as a core competence, understanding how creativity can be supported, evaluated and effectively managed becomes essential. Importantly, the creative sector offers a particularly appropriate context for examining creativity control: organisations frequently operate in project-based, uncertain environments where both creative autonomy and structured coordination are required. In such settings, the presence—or absence—of mechanisms for monitoring creative work can significantly influence organisational performance (Moore, 2014).

These considerations provided the rationale for undertaking research focused on developing a comprehensive model for managing creativity in creative-sector organisations.

The proposed model aims to enhance understanding of creativity processes in practice and to offer solutions that may support future empirical studies and organisational initiatives aimed at improving creativity management.

4. Research Methodology

The study was conducted using an online survey based on the computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) technique, which enabled efficient access to respondents and increased participation rates. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and remained available throughout the entire data collection period.

A purposive sampling strategy was applied to ensure full alignment between the research objectives and the characteristics of the organisations included in the study. Three main criteria guided the selection process.

First, only entities classified within the creative sector according to the Polish Classification of Business Activities (PKD 2007) were eligible for participation. The relevant PKD sections, departments and subclasses constituting the creative sector are presented in Table 1.

Second, the research targeted enterprises registered and operating in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship. Assuming that the process of managing employee creativity does not depend on the geographical location of a company's headquarters, there is no reason to expect that creative-sector organisations in the West Pomeranian region would manage this process differently from those operating in other regions of the country. For this reason, the decision was made to conduct the research in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship.

Third, participating organisations were required to employ at least several workers, ensuring the existence of identifiable human resource management processes. This condition was essential for analysing practices related to creativity development and employee motivation within creative-sector organisations.

Table 1. *Divisions of PKD 2007 that constitute the creative sector*

Section	Department/class/subclass	Name
Section G	47.78.Z	Retail sale of other new products in specialized stores
Section J	58.11.Z	Book publishing
	58.13.Z	Newspaper publishing
	58.14.Z	Publishing of magazines and other periodicals
	58.19.Z	Other publishing activities
	58.21.Z	Computer game publishing business, programming
	59.11.Z	Activities related to the production of films, videos and television programs
	59.13.Z	Activities related to the distribution of films, videos and television programs
	59.14.Z	Film projection activities
	59.20.Z	Sound and music recording activities
	60.10.Z	Broadcasting of radio programs
	60.20.Z	Broadcasting of public access television programs and subscription
Section M	71.11.Z	Architectural activities
	73.11.Z	Activities of advertising agencies
	73.12.A	Intermediation in the sale of advertising time and space on radio
	73.12.B	Intermediation in the sale of advertising space In printed media
	73.12.C	Intermediation in the sale of advertising space In electronic media (Internet)
	73.12.D	Intermediation in the sale of advertising space In other media
	74.10.Z	Specialized design activities
	74.20.Z	Photographic activities
Section R	90.01.Z	Artistic performance exhibition activities
	90.02.Z	Activities supporting the exhibition of artistic performances
	90.03.Z	Artistic and literary creative activities
	90.04.Z	Activities of cultural facilities
	91.01.A	Libraries' activities
	91.01.B	Activities of archives
	91.02.Z	Activities of museums

Source: *Based on R. Kasprzak, Przemysły kreatywne w Polsce. Uwarunkowania i perspektywy, Kamon Consulting Publishing House, Warszawa 2013.*

A total of 307 companies meeting these criteria were invited to participate in the survey. Out of this group, 89 enterprises agreed to take part, representing approximately 29% of all contacted organisations. Ultimately, 125 individuals

employed in these 89 creative-sector companies completed the questionnaire. According to the Polish Classification of Business Activities (PKD 2007), these companies were distributed across the following sectors:

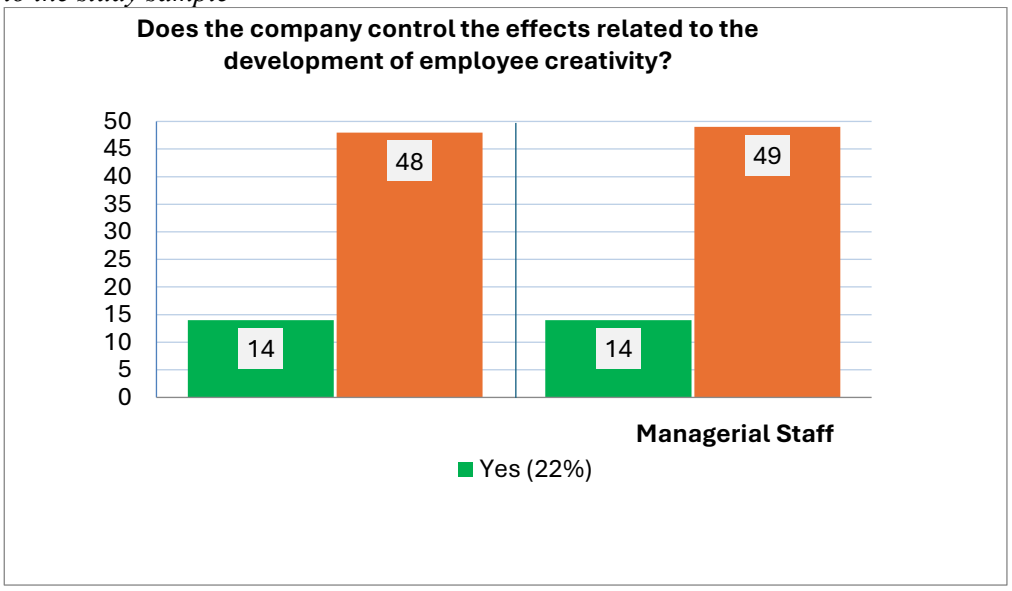
- Section G – 7 companies (8%),
- Section J – 39 companies (44%),
- Section M – 34 companies (38%),
- Section R – 9 companies (10%).

The final research sample consisted of both employees and managers, representing diverse professional roles and demographic characteristics, including a balanced share of women and men. This composition enabled a multidimensional analysis of managerial practices within creative-sector organisations, taking into account a wide range of organisational perspectives and experiences.

5. Analysis of Creativity Control in Creative Sector Enterprises

The next stage of the research focused on examining how organisations operating in the creative sector approach the control of creativity and the monitoring of employees' creative development. A dedicated question addressing this aspect was included in the survey and directed to both employees and managerial staff. All 125 respondents provided an answer, ensuring full data coverage for this part of the analysis. The aggregated results are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Control of the effects related to employee creativity development according to the study sample*



Source: *Own elaboration based on conducted surveys.*

The findings show that a clear majority of employees (77%) reported that their organisations do not undertake actions aimed at monitoring or controlling the development of employee creativity. Only 23% indicated that such activities are implemented.

A very similar distribution was observed among managerial staff: 78% stated that their organisations do not engage in creativity control, while 22% expressed the opposite view. Responses did not differ by gender, although individuals with higher education more frequently reported the presence of creativity control compared to those with secondary education.

When considering the research sample as a whole, 78% of all respondents stated that creativity control is not practised in their organisations, whereas 22% confirmed its presence. Positive responses were more common in medium-sized and large enterprises, while negative assessments were reported primarily by micro and small organisations, suggesting that organisational scale may influence the likelihood of formalised creativity-monitoring practices.

Respondents who indicated that creativity control is conducted in their enterprises were subsequently asked to specify the types of activities used. A total of 28 individuals—employees and managers—provided detailed responses, with many listing more than one activity. The results are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

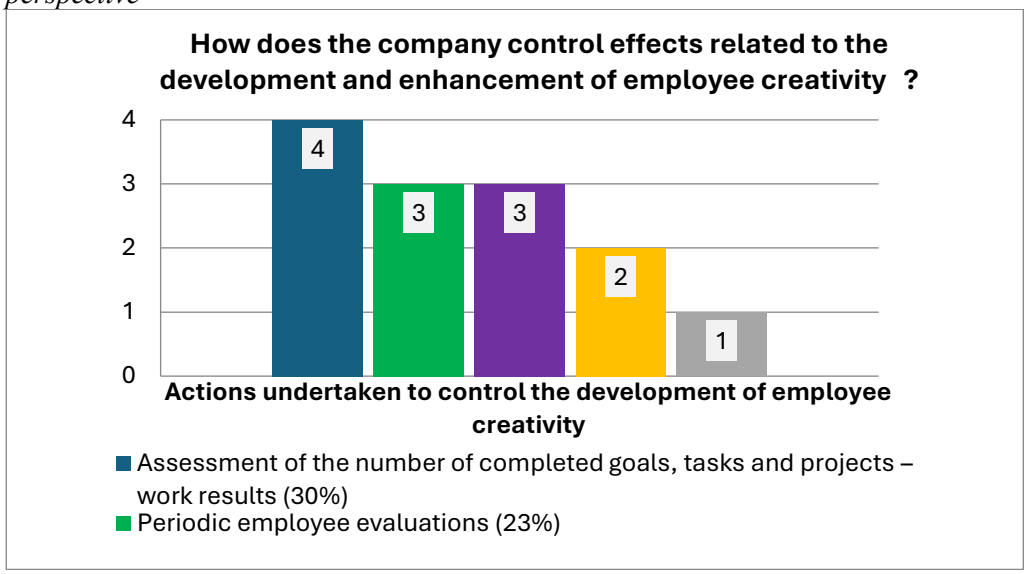
Among employees, the most frequently mentioned practice was the assessment of the number of completed goals, tasks and creative projects, chosen by 30% of those who provided an extended answer. The next most common activities included periodic employee evaluations and ongoing performance assessments, each selected by 23% of respondents.

Less frequently, employees referred to periodic interviews (16%) and continuous reporting (8%). Men most often pointed to monitoring outcomes in terms of completed tasks and projects, while women more frequently cited regular performance evaluations. All respondents in this group had more than ten years of professional experience and held higher education qualifications.

A somewhat different perspective was provided by members of the managerial staff. The most frequently identified creativity control activity was the analysis of organisational results, particularly the number of generated or implemented creative projects (30%). An equally common response (30%) was continuous observation and evaluation of employees.

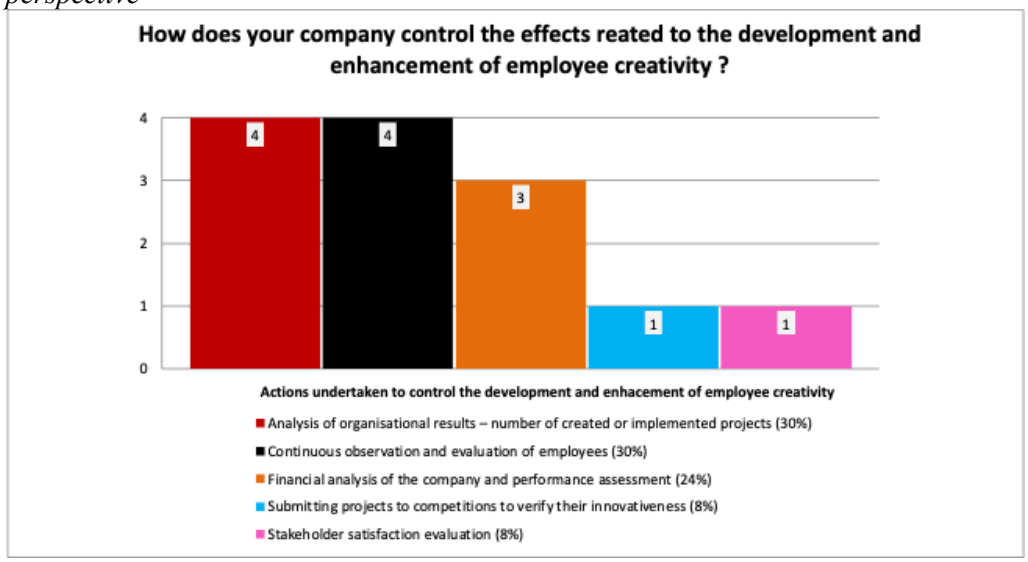
Additionally, 24% of managers indicated the use of financial analysis and performance metrics to monitor the outcomes of creative work. Less frequent practices included submitting projects to competitions as a way to verify their innovativeness and evaluating stakeholder satisfaction (8%).

Figurε 2. *Actions undertaken to control creativity development – employees' perspective*



Source: *Own elaboration based on conducted surveys*

Figure 3. *Actions undertaken to control creativity development – managers' perspective*



Source: *Own elaboration based on conducted surveys*

Male managers most often emphasised continuous observation of employees, while female managers placed greater emphasis on project-outcome analysis. Managers with longer professional experience (over ten years) were more likely to refer to project analysis, whereas those with shorter experience (below ten years) more often

highlighted financial performance measures. All managers participating in this part of the study had higher education.

A comparison of responses from employees and managers reveals clear differences in how creativity control is perceived and implemented across organisational levels. Employees primarily associate control with the evaluation of individual results and creative performance, whereas managers focus more strongly on monitoring creative project outputs and assessing their financial implications for the organisation. Notably, neither group reported the use of specialised or proprietary tools dedicated to creativity assessment..

Although the majority of respondents indicated that their organisations do not currently engage in creativity control, the practices identified by those who do offer important insights into emerging approaches within selected enterprises. These examples may serve as valuable references for organisations aiming to strengthen their creativity management processes.

The findings also point to a growing awareness of the importance of creativity in organisational development and to a gradual shift towards implementing activities aimed at supporting its enhancement. Moreover, the results obtained at this stage of the study directly informed the development of the proposed model of employee creativity management, which emerged as a key outcome of the broader research project.

6. Conclusions

This study examined how organisations in the creative sector approach the control of employee creativity and the monitoring of its development. Although creativity constitutes a fundamental resource for competitive advantage in this sector, the findings reveal that creativity control is still underdeveloped and rarely implemented in a systematic manner.

A large majority of respondents—78%—reported that their organisations do not monitor or evaluate the development of creative competencies. Only one-fifth indicated the use of any creativity-control mechanisms, and even in these cases the practices applied were fragmented, informal or based primarily on general performance assessments.

The results also highlight important differences in the perception of creativity control across organisational levels. Employees tend to associate control with the evaluation of their individual tasks, achievements and performance, whereas managers emphasise project outcomes, financial effects and overall organisational results. Neither group reported the use of specialised diagnostic tools or structured procedures dedicated specifically to assessing creativity.

These findings demonstrate a clear gap between the strategic importance of creativity and the operational mechanisms available to support its development.

Despite these limitations, the analysis made it possible to identify concrete practices used by some enterprises, such as monitoring project completion, periodic employee evaluations, continuous observation or financial performance analysis. These examples provide valuable insights for organisations seeking to implement or strengthen creativity-control mechanisms.

Practical implications emerging from the study indicate that organisations should consider integrating creativity control as a standard element of their creativity-management systems. Properly designed control mechanisms do not restrict creative freedom; instead, they serve diagnostic, developmental and informational purposes that help identify organisational barriers, track progress and support the effective use of creative potential. Organisations may benefit from developing unified procedures, adopting diagnostic instruments or implementing digital systems that allow systematic monitoring of creative outcomes.

The study also presents limitations. The sample was limited to enterprises operating in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship; although justified methodologically, future studies could broaden the geographic scope to compare regional differences. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may not fully capture the complexity of organisational practices. The small number of respondents who confirmed the existence of creativity-control activities also limits the generalisability of the detailed findings regarding specific practices.

Future research should explore creativity control using mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights to better understand how creativity is monitored in practice. Further studies could also investigate dedicated tools for creativity assessment, the role of leadership in shaping control mechanisms, and the impact of creativity control on organisational innovation outcomes.

Overall, the findings from this study informed the development of a comprehensive model of employee creativity management, emphasising the position of creativity control as a core, developmental component of the management process. By embedding monitoring, evaluation and feedback within creativity management, organisations can more effectively support employee creativity and translate it into sustainable innovation and long-term competitive advantage.

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