



Enhancing the Competitiveness of Enterprises Through Creativity in a Global Economy

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ABSTRACT

This paper covers a comprehensive study of creativity as a means of enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises in a global economy. The study is intended to examine globalization issues and opportunities faced by enterprises today. The era of innovation has replaced traditional production marking the transition of society to the knowledge-based economy, where creativity has a crucial significance. Correspondingly, this research is aimed at demonstration of a key role played by creativity for enterprises which operate in a highly competitive global environment. Importance of creativity for entrepreneurship is shown with help of analysis of intensive processes of McDonaldization and Disneyization. Further creativity is assessed as one of top in-demand skills which helps businesses to increase efficiency and take advantage over competitors. Moreover, the article shows entrepreneurial creativity as the way for establishment of the newest form of entrepreneurship.

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Introduction

One of the main phenomena that nations have faced and which has affected all aspects of human life at the modern stage is globalization. Globalization in recent decades has dramatically changed the world creating many advantages for the development of not only national economies but also companies and firms as the very economy of many countries is undergoing significant structural changes (Subaşat, 2015; Ruettimann, 2014; Straw & Glennie, 2012).

Increasing threats (e.g. competition, a business closure, limited resources), on the one hand, and exploiting opportunities (e.g. increase of productivity, trade expansion), on the other, have created a dynamic and unpredictable environment where companies face serious obstacles that challenge them to change and innovate (World Economic Forum, 2019; Lee & Vivarelli, 2006).

Theoretically, in business, all actions should comply with norms that carry little risk. However, entrepreneurship cannot flourish according to the “norms” and needs something completely new. As a result, a major task for businesses today is to search for novelty and creative ways

of responding to challenges of a globalized world (Tsai, 2014). Such well-known entrepreneurs as Steve Jobs from Apple Inc. or Bill Gates from Microsoft became leaders demonstrating the spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

Based mostly on ideas and cultural characteristics rather than on physical capital, creativity is an inexhaustible resource, which becomes the driving force of a modern economy, one of the key concepts of economic development (Sacchetti & Sugden, 2007) and the determining stimulus for intensification of the enterprises activity.

Because one of the sources of creativity is art and traditions, currently there is a large number of publications that explain the impact of globalization on different cultures, their emergence and preservation (Hassi & Storti, 2012; Wani, 2011; Nederveen, 2009; Sotshangane, 2002). As a result, creativity is viewed superficially as a derivative of culture. Therefore, there is a need to clearly outline the relationship between globalization and creativity from an economic perspective.

This study is aimed to demonstrate and evidence a key role played by creativity for enterprises which operate today in a highly competitive global environment. Moreover, the paper discusses globalization challenges and opportunities faced by businesses and creativity as a major leadership quality needed in such conditions, highlighting the importance of creativity in redefining the competitive advantages of enterprises. It is necessary to understand what stands behind entrepreneurial creativity and how it affects the way economic entities are performing their activity and operate in the market. With this purpose, except for theoretical studies, reports of NGOs and professional blogs dedicated to top job skills and future jobs requirements have been examined.

Methodology

This paper briefly explains how creativity may trigger competitiveness of enterprises in a global economy. Obviously, there are a lot of studies (McCarthy, 2019; de Vries et al., 2015; KEA European Affairs, 2009) dedicated to creativity in relation to various cultures and cultural peculiarities, but there is a need for better perception of creativity regarding its contribution to business and financial prosperity. For this reason, it is hypothesized that assessment of the role of creativity in enterprise competitiveness has not appeared very clearly. This statement has been the key motivation guiding this new publication.

To understand creativity effect on enterprise competitiveness, it is important to find out the underlying determinants shaping creativity, including originality, flexibility, novelty etc., since it is the ability of businesses to adjust to those forces that can enhance their competitiveness.

The study has been funded from different sources of information (Howkins, 2001; Sacchetti & Sugden, 2007; O'Connor, 2010), which deal with the issue of creativity as in business so in general. The literature on the subject (Morris et al., 2003; Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Cropley, 2019) reveals a broad range of concepts to explanation what creativity is, which are commonly used in the text.

This article is organized in four parts. The first part looks at changes in business environment caused by globalization. The second part highlights the definitional aspects of creativity. The third part is dedicated to the importance of creativity in entrepreneurship. The discussion includes comparison of new production processes based on creativity – Disneyization (Bryman, 2004) and McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2000), followed by an assessment of creativity as one of top in-demand skills in modern business, based on investigations made by the World Economic Forum (2019), and analysis of creativity as a competitive advantage of an enterprise. Finally, the study examines entrepreneurial creativity where the idea generation process is designed.

The complexity of today's business environment is more significant than ever to recognize aspects of growth, integrating such concepts as creativity, innovation, and profits to provide a fuller picture of what is needed and what works. In this context, this research pushes forward on how creativity contributes to competitive advantages of enterprises in a global economy.

Literature Overview

Creativity's contribution to today's economy makes it a key element for business, science, and public endeavors.

From a scientific point of view, creativity is considered as a complex, multifaceted, heterogeneous phenomenon, which is expressed in a variety of theoretical and praxeological aspects of research. Understanding this is an important factor in the humanistic development of both an individual and society as a whole.

The founder of the phenomenon of creativity is considered to be the English scientist of the 19th century F. Galton (Galton, 1869), who studied human abilities, their development and diagnostics. Hence, creativity is an individual's ability to flexible, innovative and original thinking, which precedes the process of creative action. Creativity is not an innate characteristic of a person and can be formed thanks to special conditions of education and training (e.g., freedom of choice, independence, autonomy, self-affirmation). So, when it comes to creativity, such people as Mozart or Einstein spring to mind.

Maslow (1954), in turn, emphasized that creativity was inherent in all people but was lost by the majority of them in the process of upbringing, education and social practice.

In this regard, Hawkins (2001), a well-known expert in the field of creativity, a visiting professor at the Shanghai School of Creativity, a member of the Advisory Council on the Creative Economy of the United Nations, the head of the BOP Consultants company, who advises governments, global corporations and private individuals, claims that creativity is the most interesting and most profitable branch of the economy. J. Hawkins knows well how to make money of ideas and proves a simple, essentially, idea: if a specialist is given freedom in decision-making, the results will be much more interesting and greater than one could imagine.

Gilford (1959) suggests considering creativity through the prism of its following parameters:

- the ability to identify and pose a problem – determining the type of problems that require creative thinking;
- productivity – the ability to produce as many ideas as possible;
- flexibility – the ability to put forward new, unexpected ideas that differ from the general public;
- originality – the ability to react to stimuli in a non-standard way;
- the level of “development” of an idea, i.e. producing an original idea or improving the existing one by adding details to it;
- analysis and synthesis – the ability to solve problems.

In turn, Mumford (2011) singles out five problematic characteristics of creativity: 1) poorly defined; 2) unusual; 3) requested; 4) complex; and 5) suitable for use.

Interesting is the approach of Morris et al. (2003), who use the term “creative intensity” to describe the cumulative effect of the degree and frequency of creativity at the individual, organizational, or societal levels. Individual creativity within an enterprise contributes to its competitiveness and organizational innovation, while collective or team creativity enhances future benefits.

The most attention to the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurship is paid by O'Connor (2010). He points out that creativity provides the ability to combine, communicate and collaborate, which is demanded by modern entrepreneurs and is vitally important for potential employees in today's changing world. Producers are focused on the manufacturing of such products that meet the expectations of the population or, more importantly, generate these expectations. According to O'Connor, creativity in this case can be very beneficial.

It is obvious that many scholars make attempts to explain and analyze creativity as a broad approach and an important trend as for individuals so for societies. However, little research has focused on the significance of creativity for businesses which operate in a global economy. The present study is designed to fill this gap.

Results and Discussion

Globalization Challenges and Opportunities Faced by Enterprises

Globalization is a complex phenomenon which is characterized by the shift away from national level toward international or even global level through increasing of trade flows, labor force mobility, international capital movement, global expansion of businesses and FDI. Especially, globalization has created many opportunities and incentives for enterprises, including lowering costs of production; access to foreign markets and foreign investment (Lee & Vivarelli, 2006); reaching foreign buyers; use of global communication networks, which facilitate flows of important information both to individuals and to companies. Considering these new prospects, more businesses started to go beyond the borders of domestic countries performing their activities abroad and demanding for more resources necessary for their development. However, the ironic thing is that mankind lives in conditions of limited resources.

On the other hand, globalization in business represents expansion of the scope of technical, technological, organizational and other changes, as well as a sharp intensification of competition in world markets which may lead to a business closure or bankruptcy. Confronted with foreign competition, production becomes more competition-oriented (Bendle & Vandenbosch, 2014), which makes enterprises searching for ways how to respond and to build a lasting competitive advantage. In such an environment, competitive advantages are acquired by those companies whose management and employees can quickly critically assess the state of affairs, eliminate

old stereotypes in production, develop a strategy for changes in their organization, form new guidelines for activity and self-improvement.

These two factors – limited resources and competition caused by globalization – compel enterprises to look for new alternatives and solutions. One of such solutions became creativity – a major driving force and a constant generator of innovative ideas. The new paradigm is based on human creative potential as an unlimited resource.

Indeed, in the beginning of the XXI century globalization induces the growth in movement across national borders not just of goods, services, capital and people, but also ideas which represent a new way of thinking and formulation of something completely new.

The Concept of Creativity in a Global Economy

As a result of intensive economic changes associated with the reorientation of many countries to market relations, the opening of borders, the accelerated development of certain realms of the economy and the humanization of society, the need for qualified personnel of a new type who can effectively and creatively solve the tasks is steadily growing. Global challenges exist in every sphere of social life and their solution is often associated with the search for non-traditional methods, creativity and generation of collective ideas, as well as the integration of different areas of science. To solve these problems, it is not enough to be competent in one area, but to be competent in various realms in order to find new solutions, that is, to think creatively.

Creativity (Latin *creatio*) (WordPress, 2010) is a creative, innovative activity; it is an individual's capacity for variability, flexibility, innovative and original thinking, which precedes the process of creative action. In Western culture, creativity was associated with a gifted individual who was able to present any invention aesthetically. Creativity is the ability to produce new and original ideas based on one's own knowledge, talent, divergent thinking, cultural values, civilizational foundations of each particular society, etc., and, therefore, creativity is often identified with the sphere of culture or innovative activity. Today creativity can be found everywhere in a global economy, e.g. a unique piece of clothing, designing a website, a unique arrangement of melodies, a podcast, a project idea, gardening design and many more.

Being a multifaceted concept, creativity is interpreted in different ways, but it expresses the possibility of ensuring a conflict-free, non-antagonistic path of development not only of a specific individual but also of an enterprise or any other community as a whole (see Table 1).

Table 1. Critical Assessment of the "Creativity" As a Category

	Definition	Critical review
Creativity	The ability to produce things which are original or novel and appropriate or useful (Runco & Jaeger, 2012).	Creativity is related to the ability of people to think differently and has a psychological nature.
	The latest term that describes the creative abilities of people who simultaneously produce and consume a product (Bruns, 2008).	Creativity is affected by the digital age when a new type of creators emerge.
	Human activity which is used as a tool in problem-solving (Cropley, 2019).	Complex and complicated problems require unconventional thinking to solve them.

Source: compiled by author.

Table 2. Comparison of Disneyization and McDonaldization in Entrepreneurial Activity

Disneyization	McDonaldization
Produces new opportunities for the development of local commercial activity and property based on the use of geographical and historical images, as well as the banal distribution of television.	Principles of efficiency, calculation, predictability and control are used in order to dominate in various spheres of life in modern society.
Disney's theme parks work according to four dimensions which cause their enormous success and popularity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theming: designs to match user preferences, e.g. a Wild West-style restaurant; • hybrid consumption: a generalized trend, in which forms of consumption are associated with different areas that are connected to each other and that are difficult to distinguish; • merchandising: promotion and sale of goods as image or logo copyright; • 4) performative labor: a growing trend towards work perceived as a performance / show. 	A stereotypical situation: eating at a standard McDonald's or Burger King has the advantage of satisfying a basic human need (hunger) cheaply and in a predictable environment.
A key feature of Disney theme parks is the illustration and symbolism of the Disneyization principles.	McDonaldization is usually associated with homogeneity and sameness.
Disneyization restaurants are focused on getting an experience that provides special impression from consumption.	
One of the basic foundations for Disneyization is to increase the attractiveness of goods and services and the conditions, in which they are delivered in the increasingly homogenized environments, that are, in turn, products for McDonaldization.	

Source: compiled by author.

A critical assessment of creativity and its characteristics allows to distinguish two positions regarding understanding of its nature:

Firstly, creativity is an activity aimed at creating new socially significant values. The main attention is paid to the criteria of objective novelty and originality of the products of creative activity.

Secondly, creativity is connected to the self-realization of a person and to the development of motivation of his/her creative activity. The criterion of creativity is its value – the personality of an individual, and not only the product of creative activity.

Consequently, creativity requires:

- personal skills (ability to think non-linearly and be creative);
- technical skills (relating to traditional crafts and handicrafts, which form the basis of material culture);
- social environment (the social structure of education and training, which encourages creativity and values the economy, as the latter invests in the development of creativity).

The Importance of Creativity in Entrepreneurship

In business, theoretically, all actions must comply with norms that carry risk. However, entrepreneurship cannot flourish according to the “norms” and needs something completely new.

From the perspective of entrepreneurship, creativity can be considered a connecting link between innovative activity and profitability in monetary and social dimensions. Creativity is important for entrepreneurs because it is the first stage in the process of innovation or a precursor to innovation and successful commercial

exploitation of ideas. Therefore, creativity is a skillful transformation of creative solutions into new products, processes or services (Woodman et al., 1993), while innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas and their acceptance by various stakeholders in the enterprise (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Creativity stimulates innovation, which, in turn, improves the business as a whole, increasing competition in the market.

In recent decades, all elements of creativity mentioned above have been significantly modified: the main shift has taken place in the direction from individual to social or collective, which means shifting the position of creativity from the dominance of high culture to the plane of a popular and acceptable way of life. This redefinition indicates the so-called collectivization or “massification” of social processes, which took place in Western countries at the edge of the 19th and 20th centuries, introducing the terms “mass society,” “mass production” and “mass culture,” thereby causing the possibility of disappearance of any authenticity or originality. As a result of the development of information and communication technologies, a rethinking of creativity arises. In addition to aesthetics, many other elements are included in creativity, e.g., technological, commercial and managerial activities. Vivid examples of the development of creativity at this stage are intensive processes of *McDonaldization* (Ritzer, 2000: 51) that correlate with the diffusion of principles of fast-food operations, or *Disneyization* (Bryman, 2004: 44), which are a globalizing force, as they gradually spread throughout the world (see Table 2).

Table 2 provides comparative analysis of two phenomena – McDonaldization and Disneyization – based on contribution of creativity to business.

As new actors enter the market, entrepreneurs often rely on creativity in the form of novelty, utility, and relevance. Starting from these first manifestations of creativity, entrepreneurs build effective organizations that, in order to survive and develop, regularly produce and transform ideas into commercially valuable forms. Consequently, all enterprises are divided into four types (Alvani, 2009): innovative enterprises, traditional enterprises, enterprises, which take into account events and changes in the external environment, but are not creative enough to respond to them and creative enterprises (see Table 3).

Creative enterprises require special abilities from the employees to increase efficiency and take advantage over competitors. As a result, creativity became one of top in-demand skills, at least by 2027. Moreover, this dimension also belongs to the most important skills according to the World Economic Forum and comes second after analytical thinking in 2023 (see Table 4).

Table 4 shows top 10 skills, which were, are and will be of major importance in 2015, 2020, 2023, and 2025, respectively. Accordingly, creativity / creative thinking is

among other in-demand skills improving its significance permanently.

Additionally, about 60% of CEOs consider creativity the most important leadership quality (see Figure 1).

To better demonstrate the importance of creativity for business, it is also worth to mention that 94% of hiring managers consider creativity when hiring a job candidate (see Figure 2).

Besides the fact that creativity is one of major in-demand skills of employees, it provides various benefits to its bearer, e.g. to meet business objectives or get new responsibilities, as it shown in Fig. 2.

Creative professionals gain new responsibilities, including marketing strategy, culture, customer experience, analytics, or even mediation between internal teams. Simultaneously, creative problem solving sessions with teams, which have a minimal amount of training and study in creativity principles and tools generate 350% as many ideas than teams without training. All these ideas are 415% more original.

Table 3. Key Characteristics of Different Types of Enterprises

Innovative enterprises	Organizations, which pay great attention to changes and development of the environment, where they operate, and are characterized by a high level of creativity.
Traditional enterprises	Organizations, which, unlike innovative enterprises, are quite weak to pay attention to events and changes in the external environment, and therefore have a low level of creativity.
Enterprises, which take into account events and changes in the external environment, but are not creative enough to respond to them	Businesses, which simply imitate and use competitive innovations.
Creative enterprises	Enterprises, which do not take into account the changes and development of the external environment.

Source: compiled by author.

Table 4. Top 10 In-demand Skills

Rank	In 2015	In 2020	In 2023	In 2025 (Forecast)
1	Complex Problem Solving	Complex Problem Solving	Analytical Thinking	Analytical Thinking and Innovation
2	Coordinating with Others	Critical Thinking	Creative Thinking	Active Learning and Learning Strategies
3	People Management	Creativity	Resilience, Flexibility and Agility	Complex Problem-Solving
4	Critical Thinking	People Management	Motivation and Self-awareness	Critical Thinking and Analysis
5	Negotiation	Coordinating with Others	Curiosity and Lifelong Learning	Creativity, Originality and Initiative
6	Quality Control	Emotional Intelligence	Technological Literacy	Leadership and Social Influence
7	Service Orientation	Judgment and Decision Making	Dependability and Attention to Detail	Technology Use, Monitoring and Control
8	Judgment and Decision Making	Service Orientation	Empathy and Active Listening	Technology Design and Programming
9	Active Listening	Negotiation	Leadership and Social Influence	Resilience, Stress Tolerance and Flexibility
10	Creativity	Cognitive Flexibility	Quality Control	Reasoning, Problem-Solving and Ideation

Source: compiled by author based on data (Soffel, 2016; Whiting, 2020; Masterson, 2023).

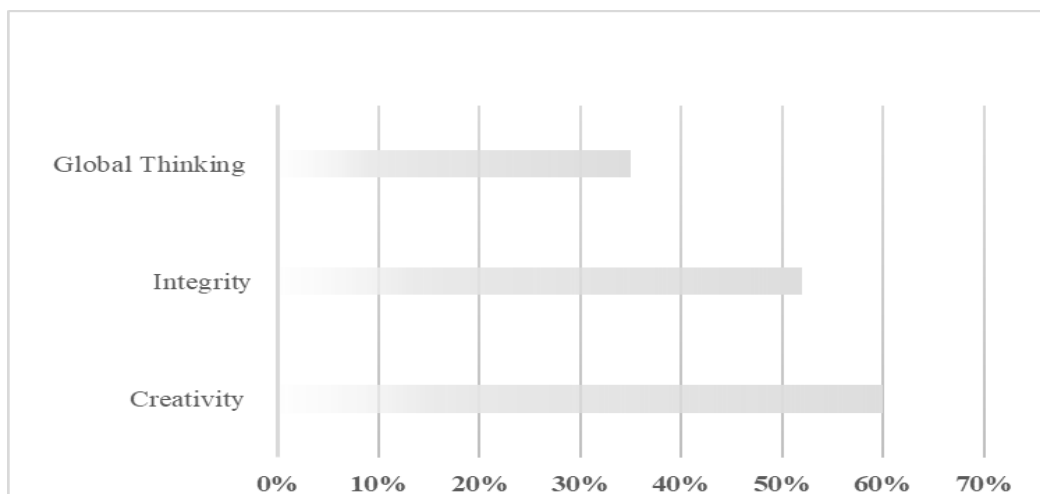


Figure 1. Creativity as a Major Leadership Quality
 Source: compiled by author based on data (Upland, 2023).

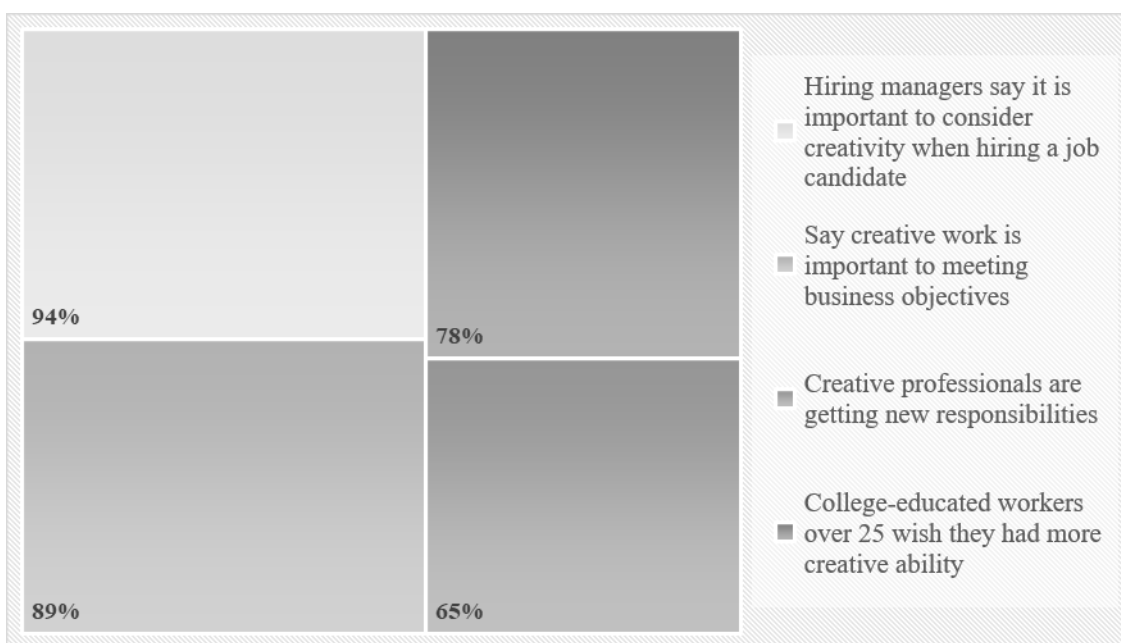


Figure 2. Basic Facts About Creativity in Business
 Source: compiled by author based on data (Haydon, 2019; Lytho, 2023).

Usually, businesses operate in the conditions of uncertainty; this requires specific entrepreneurial competencies, e.g. diligence, willingness to take risks etc., which are related to cognitive skills (originality, opportunity evaluation etc.). All these skills are affected by technological changes, market trends, competition among others, which ultimately leads to creativity. Thus, creativity is simultaneously a competitive advantage, a philosophy, a motivation, a problem-solving, and a productivity enhancer (see Figure 3).

It is necessary to mention that there is a transition from operational to creative competitiveness. Existing management practices need updating, namely how businesses are organized and structured, how they interact and cooperate with larger networks, what instruments and technologies they use, what markets they target, who they hire, and how they use capital. When the goal of business activity is efficiency, the concept of management includes ensuring standardization, a high level of coordination and

careful risk assessment. When approaching entrepreneurship creatively, management looks completely different: it focuses on the speed of learning and rigorous experimentation.

Entrepreneurial Creativity

Since creativity and entrepreneurship go hand in hand, they lead to a new phenomenon – entrepreneurial creativity. Entrepreneurial creativity refers to the generation and implementation of original ideas in order to establish the newest form of entrepreneurship (Corte & Gaudio, 2017). For instance, world-known company Nike united with production company Unit9 and launched the Epic React shoes in 2018 using an augmented reality videogame. Players could literally try the Epic React on for size. This option inspired 48% of the players to buy the shoes (Herkert, 2020). The ability of enterprises to create, access and commercialize new knowledge in global markets is fundamental to their sustained competitiveness.

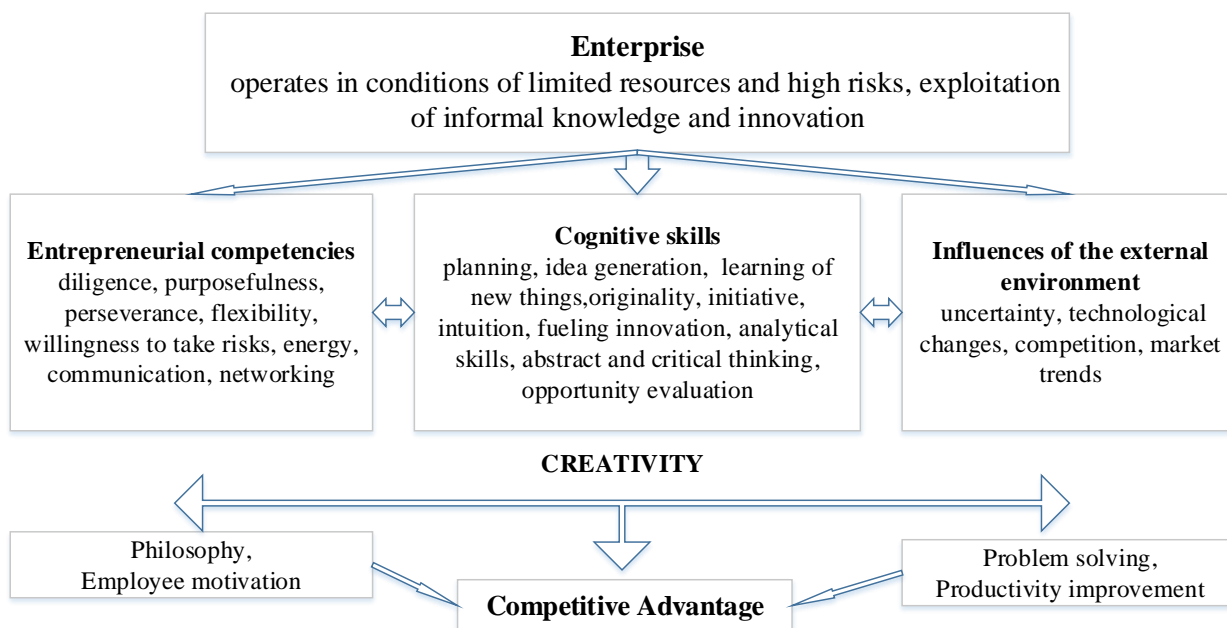


Figure 3. Creativity of Enterprise as a Competitive Advantage
Source: compiled by author based on (Urbancová, 2013; Barnard & Herbst, 2019).

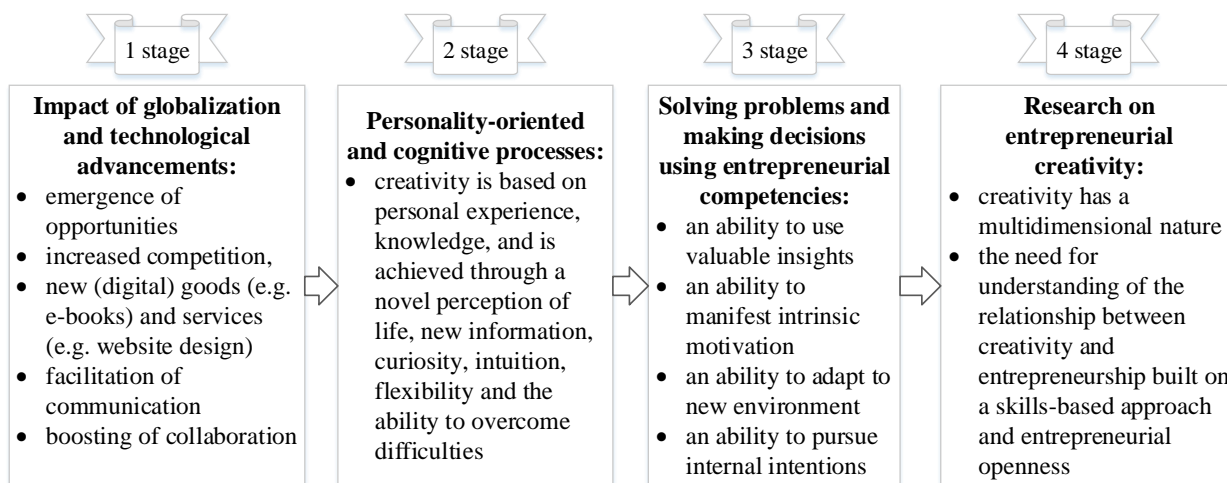


Figure 4. The Conceptual Framework of Entrepreneurial Creativity
Source: compiled by author based on (Peljko & Antončič, 2022; Puhakka, 2012).

Entrepreneurial creativity is observed throughout the life cycle of a particular business, as it is generated by individuals which make decisions. Being able to ask the right questions is far more important (and more difficult) than getting the right answers. As Fig. 4 shows, entrepreneurial creativity requires a combination of external implications, cognitive processes and entrepreneurial competencies combined with an individual's strong interest.

Creative thinking becomes a *must-have* for a modern entrepreneur who is searching for more competitive advantages, since it:

- helps to formulate the best idea;
- allows to explore new horizons;
- allows to ask and evaluate questions, which were not considered before;
- helps in taking decisive actions.

A creative entrepreneur thinks freely but focuses on the main question, the answer to which he is trying to find; on the product he seeks to develop; or on the area he wants to improve (see Figure 5).

Fig. 5 demonstrates the importance of creative thinking for generating creative ideas. The main focus of the creative process revolves around the problem and searching a solution for it. Creative thinking leads to thoughts that were not there before, which is the basis for designing more modern and profitable business practices.

Evidence of this is the huge success of the E-bay company, which in a short time became one of the richest companies in the world, and the foundation of its success was neither an increase in the quantity and quality of human labor and capital, nor the acquisition of new technologies. The most important factor in the company's success was one of its founders' creative idea (Sikder, 2022).

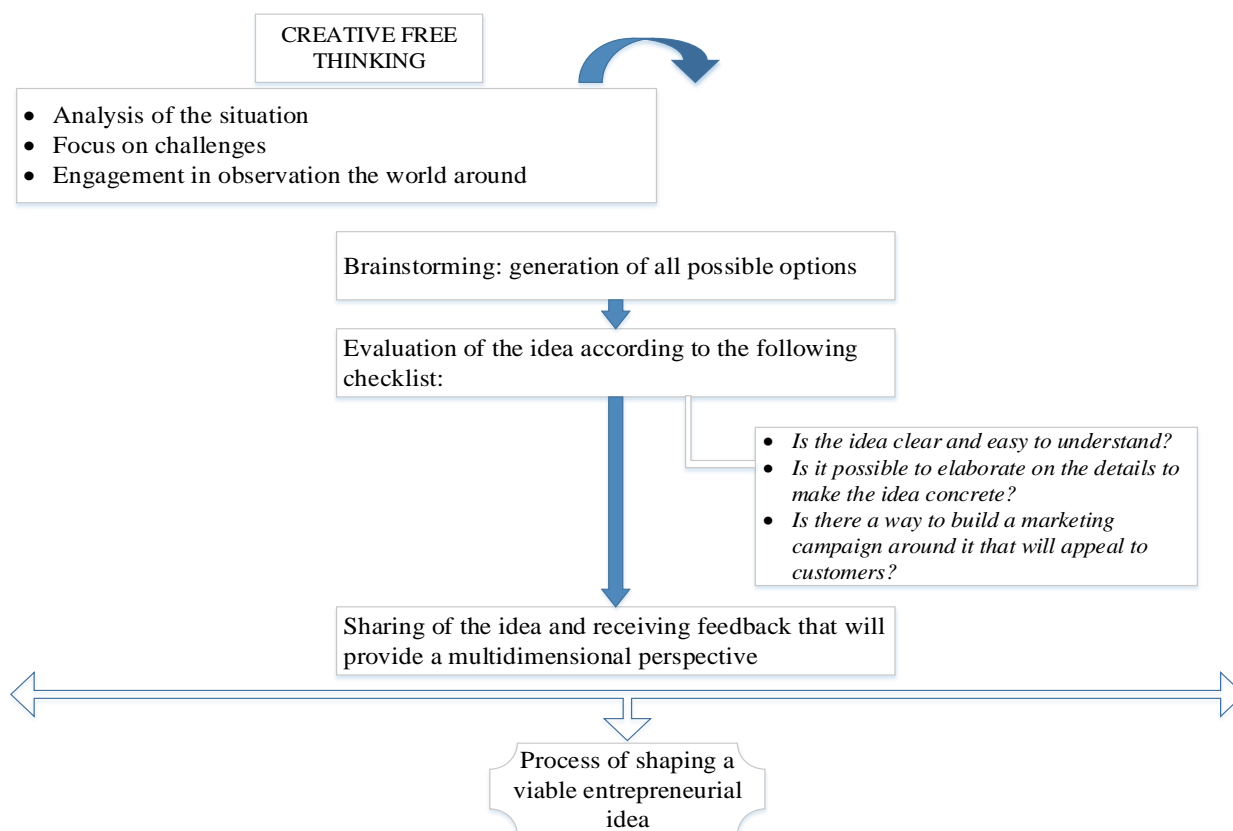


Figure 5. Idea Generation Process
Source: compiled by author based on (Upland, 2023a).

Conclusion

In the beginning of the XXI century, global economy offers many opportunities for businesses providing them with a possibility to benefit from worldwide expansion. But a single space with no borders becomes a battleground for the consumer, the market segment and the increase of incomes. Firms need more than just an efficient production process, cost control and an appropriate technological base to be successful and remain competitive. They need a sustainable brand, motivated staff and management. In this race for survival, the strongest ones become the most creative ones. Thus, creativity turned into an integral part of entrepreneurship.

Creativity is the ability to generate new vision, differentiation, invisible and social values based on personal experience, spontaneity, intuition, memories, imagination and aesthetics, e.g. a project idea, a podcast.

Creativity stimulates innovation, create, access and commercialize new knowledge that help enterprises to become more competitive in the global environment. This idea is proved by processes of McDonaldization and Disneyization used in entrepreneurship where creativity is a force of beneficial changes.

Furthermore, a creative approach in management and thinking of enterprise managers and employees turns into a stabilizing element of the organization's competitiveness. As the study shows, creativity is considered to be the most important leadership quality and one of top in-demand skills. Indeed, the competitive environment is the basis for the implementation and development of innovative and creative thinking, but simultaneously it undergoes

transformation due to the influence of creative thinking which reflects dynamic changes in the socio-economic, institutional and organizational spheres of entrepreneurship, that together induces the arise of entrepreneurial creativity. As a result, the synthesis of constant use of innovations and a creative approach to solving problems becomes an effective and efficient innovative development strategy to acquire advantages over the competitors. Such companies, for example, as Nike and E-bay evidence this conclusion having become revenue generators and important players in the market.

The article contributes to the existing studies dedicated to creativity. The importance of this publication lies in the fact that it outlines creativity as one of the factors that strengthens the competitiveness of an enterprise in international markets, where the competition is especially fierce, the consumer is more demanding, and the technologies are more progressive.

Findings of this research cause the necessity to examine other dimensions and components of entrepreneurship, which are influenced or can be affected by creativity, e.g. corporate culture, personal growth, teamwork.

Conflicts of Interest

The author states that did not have conflict of interests

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