

CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND ARTS-BASED LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Piotr Pachura^{1*}, Jacek Sztuka²

^{1,2} Czestochowa University of Technology, Faculty of Management, Poland

Abstract: The contemporary challenge regarding the key role of creativity and innovation in the activities of organizations requires new approaches and techniques in the education and learning of managers and business leaders. This article is a contribution to the debate on the legitimacy of using artistic techniques and behaviors in the educational processes in business studies. It also presents the proposal of a model illustrating the way in which artistic creativity affects the conscious and unconscious areas of personality. The text is a review of the current state of knowledge in this field and is based on the research of secondary sources in the form of academic literature reports in the field of management studies. The participant observation technique and unstructured interviews were also used in a group of students and lecturers of the *Design and Project Management* study program at Czestochowa University of Technology (Poland).

Keywords: artistic expression, business studies, creativity, education, management

JEL classification: A29, M19, O31, Z10

Introduction

If we assume that creativity is one of the key competencies of the contemporary manager and leader of innovation and entrepreneurship, the question arises whether management studies programs use a sufficient number of educational approaches to teach high levels of creativity. Needless to say, there is ongoing discussion in many

¹ Piotr Pachura, PhD, university professor, ul. Dąbrowskiego 69, 42-201 Częstochowa, Poland, piotr.pachura@pcz.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2007-6005>

² Jacek Sztuka, PhD, university professor, ul. Dąbrowskiego 69, 42-201 Częstochowa, Poland, jacek.sztuka@pcz.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5915-5523>

* Corresponding author: Piotr Pachura, piotr.pachura@pcz.pl

national or regional educational spaces about the effectiveness of creativity-related education (see: Nitkiewicz & Ayen, 2018; Yusnita et al., 2020; Ociepa-Kubicka et al., 2021). It is traditionally recognized that the education of management students (broadly defined) tends to be associated with fairly standard curriculum proposals. A view can be put forward that operational problem-solving skills or the standard effectiveness of a manager's day-to-day activities are more valued. As Xu and Rickards proposed, “creative management is the study and practice of management, drawing on the theories of creative processes and their application at individual, group, organizational and cultural levels” (2007, p. 217). As Rampersad and Patel noted, “the education sector has been increasingly criticized for its failure in effectively generating creative leaders” (2014, p. 1).

The purpose of this paper is to present the concept of developing creative competence in management learning based on the application of various forms of artistic activity and expression. The article also presents a conceptualization of human creativity itself as a complex and multi-level process based on psychological structure. The research methodology included literature studies from a range of fields of knowledge such as psychology, sociology, education, but primarily involved the exploration of secondary sources in the scope of management. In addition, methods of participant observation and focus discussions among students and lecturers of the *Design and Project Management* study program (a five-year program, implemented at the Faculty of Management, Czestochowa University of Technology), were used to formulate empirical conclusions. Thus, the article has a theoretical-cognitive profile, supplemented by the authors' empirical observations. The novelty of this paper is the presentation of a certain model illustrating the importance of arts-based learning processes in management education. This model is based on the structure of personality and the impact of creative activities in the education process on different parts of the consciousness and unconsciousness. It seems to be a rather new approach, especially in the case of management education and management studies programs.

Conceptualization of creativity and artistic expression – literature review

We suppose that we can agree with the statement by Amabile and Khaire that “creativity has always been at the heart of business, but until now it hasn't been at the top of the management agenda” (2008). As Szostak and Sułkowski claimed “the phenomenon of creativity is an issue of psychology (individual creativity), sociology (creativity of groups), management (creativity of organizations) and aesthetics (artistic creativity)” (2020, p. 354). Thus, creativity is a very complex issue, and developing or teaching it in, for example, a management curriculum is a challenge (Córdoba-Pachón, 2020).

In the research and theories of organization and management, creativity is most often recognized as a collective process or having the character of collective action. This activity is very complex and multi-level in nature and is based not only on direct communication and sharing, but also on many overt or covert interactions between

actors. Creativity emerges from social interaction and is, so to speak, socially constructed under the conditions of intersubjectivity of knowledge, in a sense on the emergence of collective consciousness and shared intuitions. Ever more attention is being paid for example, to the importance of the space of a place in the creative process (Pachura, 2016; 2017; 2021). Reckhenrich et al. assume that intuition, imagination or specific inspiration related to thinking outside the box play a key role in modern managerial activities (2009).

One of the important questions concerning creativity is the issue of the possibility of managing creativity, that is, whether creativity is the result of individual “heroic” actions or whether it can be a structural form of organizational performance. This point is raised by Bilton (2010), among others, postulating structural creativity, but at the same time describing such processes as unpredictable from the point of view of organizational development. Sirková et al. (2014) on the basis of empirical studies recognize the occurrence of relationships between staff creativity and characteristics such as age, level of education and others, which may indicate a potential associated with the “manageability” of creativity. As Ismayilova and Laksov note, “creativity is welcomed to some degree in teaching as in research, it has been argued to go against the grain of academia, where stability and sameness is often considered a survival mechanism” (2022, open access).

One possible solution as a basis for better understanding of creative processes and creativity learning processes may be to refer to the personality model. There are many personality models, and one of the examples cited in creativity literature is Assagioli’s structural model of the human psyche (Figure 1).

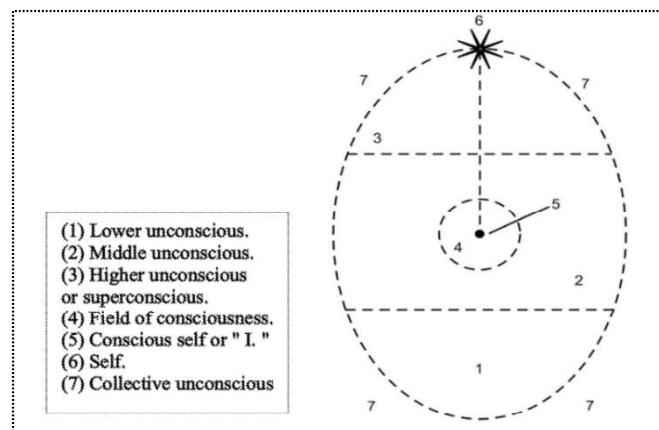


Figure 1. Assagioli’s structural model of human psyche

Source: (Assagioli, 2000, p. 15)

With this model (Figure 1), lower unconscious (1) is an important source of spontaneity, intuition and serves as well as a base for creativity. Middle unconscious (2) is related to human higher emotions, values and the belief system formed in the processes of education and socialization. The higher unconscious (3) is a part of the personality in some way beyond personhood, meaning a sense of belonging to some

universal sphere that is part of a larger whole, such as society. Collective unconscious (7) represents the surrounding environment, some space of collective experience that affects us, and we are part of it in some way, such as the collective memory of a family or social group. At the center of the model (5) is the self, which is the center of personality, and the space around it is our human consciousness (4). Who we are and how we act is a complex of the spheres of the unconscious and consciousness marked as the boundary point (6).

As is well known, in the process of creativity, an important role is played not only by conscious action but also by what happens in our unconscious and what happens between our conscious and unconscious. For this reason, references to the personality model seem justified in research on creativity, not only in management studies but also in other areas.

Arts-based learning in management education

This section is a fusion of conceptual research and empirical findings based on unstructured interviews and participant observation. Thus, it is not merely a theoretical description, while empirical conclusions can serve as an example of a case study of the application of arts-based learning in education in a management curriculum. As Szostak and Sułkowski noted “there are publications showing that management and art cross their borders for mutual good and benefit; many organizational problems can be solved with the use of creative artistic” (2020, p. 256). It seems that one of the ways of such learning of good, creative and innovative management can be the integration of elements of artistic creativity through the implementation of art courses, where students express individual and collective creative expression in visual arts, drawing, painting, sculpture (Sztuka, 2010; 2017; 2021) pantomime or dance. The literature indicates that artistic expression can be divided into two basic classes: verbal and non-verbal expression. Non-verbal techniques include not only painting, drawing, designing or musical expression, but also body expressions – dance, psychodrama, pantomime (Assagioli, 1963). One can see greater emphasis on encouraging the use of nonverbal means of expression, which for many is the most direct, and in some ways natural to human nature. In addition, it is worth noting that the human unconscious is rather based on nonverbal modes because they are better suited to expressing symbolic meanings. In a broad sense, it can be said that all speech is symbolic; in verbal expression abstract concepts are etymologic symbols of the external real world around us.

Simpson et al. “proposed a novel approach to management learning that builds both on paradox and on artistic knowledge, with the intent of informing practical wisdom in dealing with organizational challenges” (2021, p. 643). An interesting example of research related to the use of an artistic form of expression in management education is the employment of traditional music as a certain medium for cultural and social messages aimed at better understanding the socio-cultural context of a certain space (Simpson et al., 2021). In the referenced research, the subject was

traditional Portuguese *fado* music. In this case, *fado* was a symbolic and artistic expression of the context to sensitize students in management teaching to the specific paradoxes and tensions of everyday functioning (management).

As Ropo and Parviainen note, mainstream research in management almost completely ignores issues of the body and its importance in management processes (2001). However, the expression of physicality has considerable significance, for example, in organizational leadership processes as a kind of body language or in processes of collective creativity as certain physical signals to actors and to the shared space of a place. An interesting example of the employment of dance as a medium for understanding interpersonal communication and the importance of movement and the body in collective creativity processes is the research of Satama et al. (2022). Based on sensory ethnography, they identify aspects of the emergence of collective creativity through bodily communication during dance. In this motion, there is a communication process composed of micro-gestures, movements and a kind of shared choreography similar to the emergence and formation of the creative process. This has expanded individual imaginations, allowing collaborative creativity to emerge as an embodied practice, and thus producing interesting power dynamics between process actors. Their findings contribute to a better understanding of the practice of collaborative creativity, which we consider not only intellectual practice, but also the practice of communication by means of the body. Exploring the sensory micro-dynamics between ourselves and collaborators can be crucial to the creative interaction required for management learning in contemporary organizations.

A specific example of the implementation of educational art courses in the curriculum of the Faculty of Management is a study program started five years ago called *Design and Project Management*. This is a program that combines creative art classes with a classic subjects of organizational management and project management. Students take several art classes such as *Artistic Creation in Management*, *Fine Arts* or *Visual Arts*. The following photos (Figures 2 and 3) show examples of work done by students such as sculpting in clay (Figure 2) and collaboratively creating a large-format painting (Figure 3). These classes develop the individual creativity of the students, as well as collective creativity and a culture of collaboration on creative and innovative business projects.



Figure 2. Photos from Portrait Sketch in Clay class, *Fine Arts* course, winter semester 2021, *Design and Project Management* study program

Source: Authors' own photographs



Figure 3. Photo from Collaborative Painting class, *Visual Arts* course, summer semester 2022, *Design and Project Management* study program

Source: Authors' own photograph

Students learning and experiencing their own and collective artistic creativity demonstrate greater potential for creativity during other educational tasks in subjects and projects classically related to management issues. In addition, according to observations and focus discussions among students and lecturers, they exhibit more potential to initiate their own entrepreneurial activities in the form of their own business projects.

Discussion and Conclusions

Richard Florida, perhaps the most influential researcher on creativity in conjunction with development factors, calls for the implementation of creativity programs in university curricula as an essential factor in the development of organizations and territories (2002). In this approach “management education needs to consider a trend in learning design which advances creative learning through an alliance with art-based pedagogical processes” (Kerr & Lloyd, 2008, p. 486). As Simpson et al. point out, “the study of artistic cultural expression supports zooming out, to explore how time and space shape processes, including in management” (2021, p. 639).

Referring to the model of personality cited in the earlier part of the text (Figure 1) consisting of areas of the unconscious and conscious self, it seems that it is possible to propose a model (Figure 4) that presents the interplay of creative artistic activities during learning processes on the development of the conscious and unconscious. This model can illustrate a way of enriching creative potential, which can be used for non-artistic activities, such as in management problems, organizational leadership or entrepreneurship.

The proposed model (Figure 4) illustrates the anticipatory flow (a) of emotions, experiences, knowledge and skills associated with the act of artistic practice shown on the personality structure model according to Assagioli (Figure1). We assume that by means of creative works related to various artistic activities (such as dance, drawing,

painting, sculpting, etc.), there is enrichment (expansion) of the human consciousness and self in a direct (conscious) way and through the unconscious (b). At the same time, we suppose a connection between our unconscious acts and experience and the collective unconscious (c). This process presented as a conceptual model highlights the possible impacts of creative activities (artistic in its pure form) to expand a spectrum of the management learning process. If we further assume a collective creative process (team), we can also expand the spectrum of management, learning to include cooperation, group harmony or forms of informal leadership in a team collaborative culture.

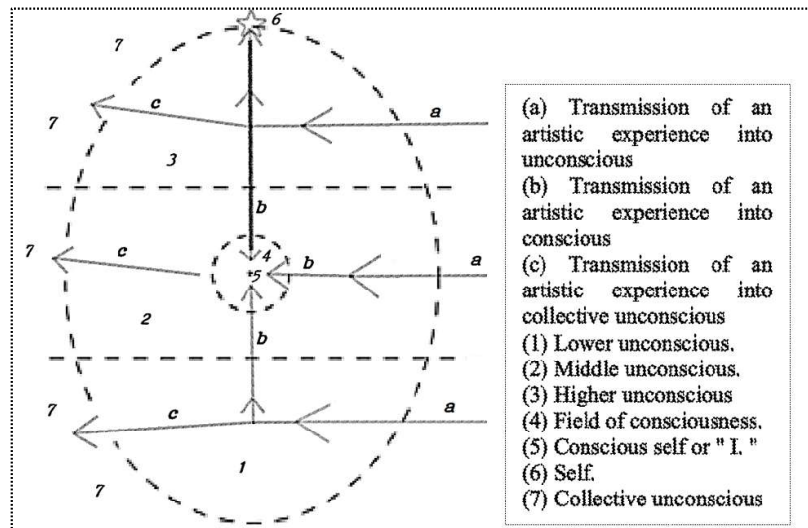


Figure 4. Process of arts-based learning in management studies in scheme of Assagioli's structural model of human psyche

Source: Authors' own compilation

Naturally, this approach is a conceptual proposal derived from observations and requires further research and possible stronger confirmation or refutation. Nevertheless, it seems to the authors that it may represent a preliminary proposal that contributes to the development of scientific and practical discussion of the importance of various forms of artistic creativity in management studies and beyond.

References

- Amabile, T., & Khaire, M. (2008). Creativity and the Role of the Leader. *Harvard Business Review*, October, <https://hbr.org/2008/10/creativity-and-the-role-of-the-leader>
- Assagioli, R. (1963). Creative Expression in Education. *Journal of Education*, 145(3), 54-60.
- Assagioli, R. (2000). *Psychosynthesis, a Collection of Basic Writing*. The Synthesis, Amherst.
- Bauer, Ch., & Strauss, Ch. (2015). Educating Artists in Management – An Analysis of Art Education Programmes in DACH Region. *Cogent Education*, 2:1, DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2015.1045217
- Bilton, Ch. (2010). Manageable Creativity. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 16(3), 255-269. DOI: 10.1080/10286630903128518

- Córdoba-Pachón, J.-R. (2020). *Creativity in Management Education. A Systemic Rediscovery*. Creativity, Palgrave Pivot, Cham. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-50960-6
- Florida, R. (2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. Basic Books.
- Ismayilova, K., & Bolander Laksov, K. (2022). Teaching Creatively in Higher Education: The Roles of Personal Attributes and Environment. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. DOI: 10.1080/00313831.2022.2042732
- Kerr, Ch., & Lloyd, C. (2008). Pedagogical Learnings for Management Education: Developing Creativity and Innovation. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 14(5), 486-503. DOI: 10.5172/jmo.837.14.5.486
- Nitkiewicz, T., & Ayen, Z. (2018). *Identifying Key Criteria in Development of Industrial Engineering Education*. <https://www.matec-conferences.org>
- Ociepa-Kubicka, A., Katarzyna Rozpondek, K., Montalee Sasananan, M., Tuntitipawan, N., & Ionescu, N. (2021). Design Thinking in Innovative Teaching in Industry 4.0. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Zarządzanie*, 41, 23-34. DOI: 10.17512/znpcz.2021.1.02
- Pachura, P. (2016). Ba jako przestrzeń kontekstu w procesie zarządzania wiedzą. *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu*, 422, 72-80.
- Pachura, P. (2017). University and Space – in Search of Knowledge Production Places. *Geographical Journal*, (69)4, 301-312.
- Pachura, P. (2021). *Trójprzestrzenie. Modelowanie teorii przestrzeni organizacji (Trispaces. Modeling Organisational Space Theory)*. Scholar.
- Rampersad, G. C., & Patel, F. (2014). Creativity as a Desirable Graduate Attribute: Implications for Curriculum Design and Employability. *Asia Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Reckhenrich, J., Kupp, M., & Anderson, J. (2009.) Understanding Creativity: The Manager as Artist. *Business Strategy Review*, 20(2), 68-73. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8616.2009.00602.x
- Ropo, A., & Parviainen, J. (2001). Leadership and Bodily Knowledge in Expert Organizations: Epistemological Rethinking. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 17(1), 1-17. DOI: 10.1016/S0956-5221(00)00030-0
- Satama, S., Blomberg, A., & Warren, S. (2022). Exploring the Embodied Subtleties of Collaborative. What Organisations Can Learn from Dance. *Management Learning*, 53(2), 167-189. DOI: 10.1177/1350507620985226
- Simpson, A. V., Berti, M., Cunha, M. P., & Clegg, S. (2021). Art, Culture and Paradox Pedagogy in Management Learning: The Case of Portuguese Fado. *Management Learning*, 52(5), 630-651. DOI: 10.1177/1350507620988093
- Sirkova, M., Ali Taha, V., & Ferencova, M. (2014). An Analytical Study on Organizational Creativity: Implications for Management. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 10(2), 179-187.
- Szostak, M., & Sulkowski, L. (2020). Manager as an Artist: Creative Endeavour in Crossing the Borders of Art and Organizational Discourse. *Creativity Studies*, 13(2), 351-368. DOI: 10.3846/cs.2020.11373
- Sztuka, J. (2010). *Widzenie dzieła sztuki. Percepcja i interpretacja*. Materiały z Ogólnopolskiej Konferencji Naukowo-Metodycznej 7. Triennale Sztuki Sacrum. Częstochowa.
- Sztuka, J. (2017). *Jacek Sztuka Malarstwo. Forma organiczna w przestrzeni realnej i wirtualnej*. Wydawnictwo Wydziału Zarządzania Politechniki Częstochowskiej.
- Sztuka, J. (2021). *Życie w obrazach*. Miejska Galeria Sztuki w Częstochowie.
- Taylor, S. S., & Ladkin, D. (2009). Understanding Arts-Based Methods in Managerial Development. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1), 55-69.
- Xu, F., & Rickards, T. (2007). Creative Management: A Predicted Development from Research in to Creativity and Management. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 16(3), 216-228. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8691.2007.00445.x
- Yusnita, N., Sunaryo, W., & Notosudjono, D. (2020). Professional Commitment – Organizational Mechanisms, Individual Characteristics and Individual Mechanisms. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Zarządzanie*, 40, 67-83. DOI: 10.17512/znpcz.2020.4.06

Authors' Contribution: Piotr Pachura – 70%, Jacek Sztuka – 30%.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements and Financial Disclosure: The lack of external funding.

KREATYWNA EKSPRESJA I PRZEDMIOTY ARTYSTYCZNE W STUDIACH ZARZĄDZANIA

Streszczenie: Współczesne wyzwanie dotyczące kluczowej roli kreatywności i innowacji w działaniach organizacji wymagają coraz to nowych podejść i technik w kształceniu i uczeniu się menedżerów i liderów przedsiębiorczości. Niniejszy artykuł stanowi przyczynek do debaty na temat zasadności stosowania technik i zachowań artystycznych w procesach kształcenia na studiach biznesowych. Przedstawia też propozycję modelu obrazującego sposób oddziaływania twórczości artystycznej na świadome i nieświadome obszary osobowości. Tekst ma charakter przeglądu dotychczasowego stanu wiedzy w tej dziedzinie i oparty jest na badaniach źródeł wtórnych w postaci doniesień literatury naukowej w obszarze zarządzania. Zastosowano również technikę obserwacji uczestniczącej oraz wywiady swobodne w grupie studentów i wykładowców programu studiów *design i zarządzanie projektami* na Politechnice Częstochowskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: ekspresja artystyczna, studia biznesowe, kreatywność, kształcenia, zarządzanie

Articles published in the journal are made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Public License. Certain rights reserved for the Czestochowa University of Technology.

