

**University of Strathclyde
Department of Marketing**

**MIND STRETCHING: A GROUNDED THEORY FOR ENHANCING
ORGANISATIONAL CREATIVITY**

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis establishes an initial understanding, by providing an insight, on the way employees' creativity can be enhanced. Specifically, the primary focus of this study is to explain the different ways through which creative organisations mobilise creativity within the workplace environment.

The findings of this research revealed the emergent substantive process of mind stretching. The process of mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This substantive theory has emerged through the study of organisational behaviour of creative professionals within three organisations, namely a corporate identity consultancy, a multidisciplinary design consultancy and an architectural firm.

Mind stretching has two sub-core variables, "perpetual challenging" and "confidence building". Perpetual challenging encompasses the processes that creative organisations use in order to enhance employees' internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge. Confidence building refers to the ways through which creative organisations assist their employees to build a belief in themselves. Each of the aforementioned sub-core variables has categories which explain the way the theory works within its context.

The emergence of the theory of "Mind Stretching" was made possible by using the orthodox grounded theory method. The researcher followed specific stages of analysis and synthesis of data. After having identified the basic social process of mind stretching, it was then compared with the existing bodies of literature.

The mind stretching theory provides an original perspective into the behaviour of the people under investigation. It provides an integrated conceptual explanation of the different ways adopted by creative organisations to mobilise creativity within their workplace environment. Furthermore, as with all grounded theory studies conducted in

organisational settings, the mind stretching theory can be considered as methodologically original since it provides a holistic and in-depth insight into current business practices.

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Grounded theory, Creative organisations, Employees, Organisational culture

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Abstract

This introductory chapter places this thesis in context. The aim of this study is to examine the ways through which creative organisations enhance employees' creativity. The successfulness of this process has a direct impact on the outcome of their work. This thesis discusses the social process of mind stretching as a means of coming up with innovative solutions. This comprises an emergent substantive theory study into the organisational and behavioral practices of creative organisations.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section (1.1) briefly explains the objectives of this research. The second section (1.2) presents the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching. The next section (1.3) illustrates the research strategy applied. The fourth section (1.4) highlights the usefulness and significance of this research. The last section (1.5) outlines the structure of this thesis allowing the reader to follow in a coherent step by step sequence.

1.1 The aim and objectives of the research

The overall aim of this study is to establish an initial understanding, by providing an insight, on the way employees' creativity can be enhanced. In relation to this aim the following objectives were set:

- (a) To explore current management practices employed by creative organisations,*
- (b) To discover and document the range of activities and principal techniques used within creative organisations and*
- (c) To identify both productive and counterproductive working practices between employees within creative environments.*

However, the focus of the research had to be slightly refined, as it was influenced in some extent upon fieldwork opportunities that had to be negotiated. Since the objective is to explain the nature of phenomena under study, the initial objectives had to be replaced by the following one, which encapsulates the overall purpose of this research.

To explore the ways through which creative organisations enhance their employees' creative potentials so that innovative solutions can arise.

1.2 Introduction to the emergent substantive theory of “Mind Stretching”

The process of mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This substantive theory has emerged through the study of organisational behaviour of creative professionals from three companies, namely a corporate identity consultancy, a multidisciplinary design consultancy and an architectural firm.

Mind stretching has two sub-core variables, “perpetual challenging” and “confidence building”. Perpetual challenging encompasses the processes that creative organisations use in order to enhance employees' internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge. Confidence building refers to the ways through which creative

organisations assist their employees to build a belief in themselves. Each of the aforementioned sub-core variables has categories which explain the way the theory works within its context. There are eleven categories being briefly explained below.

Adventuring

Adventuring is the only process which occurs implicitly when employees' goal is the generation of new ideas. Creative employees must come up with an idea which, although it is based on information derived through data collection, is not known in the beginning whether it will be successful or not. In other words, creative employees take advantage of the adventuring process to explore uncertainty, so that they can generate innovative solutions.

Overt confronting

This is where deliberately set of work-related debates among employees stimulate employees' creative thinking. This creates a forum for debate leading to the development of different and robust ideas. The successfulness of this process enhances the employees' ability to judge the value or potential in their own and others' ideas.

Portfolioing

Portfolioing refers to those situations where an individual is involved in a diverse range of projects or teams. This process assists creative employees to develop their ability to see connections among projects, which will help them to correct current mistakes and avoid potential ones in the future. Portfolioing can also be viewed from its financial viewpoint as a means of maintaining a high level of cash flow.

Opportunising

This is where creative organisations seek to identify commercially and creatively interesting projects to be cultivated. This process aims to increase external stimuli so that employees' creative thinking is utilised. At the same time, opportunising is

perceived as another means for generating projects, which will act as a major source of income for the organisation.

Authenticating

This is the first of the four processes explaining the way confidence is built in an individual basis. This is where an individual is able to demonstrate its genuine abilities, skills and personality, which will give them the opportunity to extend their personal initiative within the working environment.

Credentialising

Credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations develop their reputation from scratch. In other words, the internal employee market tests individuals' abilities and skills while they are establishing themselves in the company, which enhances their confidence.

Updating

Updating involves the employees' attunement to the emerging trends and knowledge of their specific industry or general of what is happening in the world. The main purpose of updating is to increase external stimuli so that employees' perspectives are refreshed and stimulated.

Switching off

Creative organisations are labour intensive and therefore demand a lot of thinking and expression from their employees. Therefore, individuals must be in a position to switch off without feeling guilt about it. The temporary breakdown from their preconceived ideas can assist them to continue their work after a while with a clearer mind and therefore continue to be creative.

Bonding

This is the first of the three categories explaining the way confidence is built in a collective way. Individuals associate with others with whom they have similarities. The bonding process breaks down the stereotypes among employees.

Inspirationalising

It is the creative organisations' ability to inspire people to do their best work by constantly infusing a belief of the power of creativity.

Making a difference

Making a difference is about the creative organisations' ability to instill a belief in their employees that their work will greatly contribute to the success of their clients' business or will significantly influence the way things are done in the industry.

1.3 Research strategy

This section introduces the grounded theory methodology adopted in this study. It illustrates both the principles behind it as well as the reasons behind my decision in using this methodology.

1.3.1 Using Grounded Theory

The emergence of the theory of "Mind Stretching" was made possible by using the orthodox grounded theory method. There are specific stages of analysis and synthesis of data, which must be strictly followed by the researcher. After having identified the basic social process, it must be compared with the existing bodies of literature. The grounded theory method is summarised by Barney Glaser (1992, p. 16) in the following quote:

"The grounded theory approach is a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area".

A detailed explanation of this process is given in two chapters, namely the third and the fourth chapters of thesis.

Grounded theory is based upon the philosophical assumption that the world is socially organised and constructed. Lowe (1996, p. 4) argues that grounded theory seeks to discover the logic of people's lives.

1.3.2 Reasons behind my decision to use the Grounded Theory methodology

The grounded theory methodology was adopted in this study for two main reasons. Firstly, the exploratory nature of the research objectives demanded the application of an inductive methodology. Therefore, the grounded theory's ability to create an explanation of behaviour beyond a simple description of what people are doing in the substantive area under investigation has influenced me to apply this research method. Secondly, both my research and consulting experience made explicit the difference between the commercial reality and the management practices disseminated in textbooks. Therefore, adopting a methodology which allows the researcher to build a theory rather than being influenced by an external theoretical framework appeared more appealing to my research interests.

1.4 Usefulness and significance of the research

The theory of mind stretching must be considered in accordance with originality and relevance.

Mind stretching theory provides an original perspective into the behaviour of the people under investigation. It provides an integrated conceptual explanation of the different ways adopted by creative organisations to mobilise creativity within their workplace environment. Furthermore, all grounded theory studies conducted in organisational settings can be considered as methodologically original since they provide a holistic and in-depth insight into current business practices.

Mind stretching is relevant to three communities, namely academics, practitioners, and policy makers. In terms of the academic community mind stretching provides a new insight in the area of organisational creativity. It comprises the basis upon which further investigation into its categories can be conducted. Moreover, mind stretching presents the practitioners an integrated insight into the more effective mobilisation of creativity within an organisation. In terms of policy makers, the theory of mind stretching identifies issues, such as employees' development and retention, which governmental bodies should take into consideration. Chapter seven, "Findings and implications", expands on the implications of the mind stretching theory.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This chapter serves an introduction to this study by illustrating its main aspects. The emergent substantive theory of mind stretching as well as the context within which it is set were briefly explained. The principles of the methodology applied in this study are also discussed.

The second chapter provides an understanding of the creative economy. It first presents the trends regarding creativity. It then explains the importance of the creative industries to the British economy. It concludes by offering an explanation of the contextual characteristics of the creative organisations.

The third chapter is devoted to the research methodology. It describes the research design adopted in this study. It outlines the procedures used to analyse and synthesise the results of the data to answer the research questions. Finally, there is a brief discussion of my evolving experience as a Grounded Theory researcher.

Chapter four focuses on the major stages of analysis and synthesis. It begins by referring to the open codes, which were the result of the fracturing of the data. The chapter then turns to explaining how these open codes became more conceptual explanations and

gave rise to the development of the core variable and its sub-core variables and categories. The chapter concludes by illustrating the grounded theory of mind stretching.

In the subsequent chapter, chapter five, “Mind stretching: The substantive grounded theory”, focus is shown in explaining the core variable and its constituent sub-core variables and categories. Referring to excerpts of theoretical memos assists the explanation of the theory.

Having explained the emergence of the emergent substantive theory, “Mind Stretching”, chapter five aims to compare and then position the theory with the established bodies of literature. Therefore, it examines the relationship between what is already written in journal articles, textbooks and industry reports covering the enhancement of workplace creativity and what “mind stretching” theory explains.

Finally, chapter seven focuses on the finding and implications of this study. The chapter starts by discussing the findings of the research in relation to the literature. It then illustrates the implications of the theory for practitioners and academics. It finishes by giving recommendations for those who are interested in conducting research in the specific area of this research.

CHAPTER 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY TO ORGANISATIONS AND THE BRITISH ECONOMY

Abstract

This chapter introduces the reader to the research context through which the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching has emerged. It is presented in three sections.

The first section (2.1) introduces the concept of creativity and highlights the differences between creativity and innovation. The second section (2.2) focuses on explaining the different reasons with regards to the importance of creative thinking within project based environments. The final section (2.3) highlights the importance of creative organisations to the British economy.

2.1 What is creativity?

This section reviews different viewpoints in the organisational creativity literature in an attempt to clearly define the concept of creativity. The area of creativity has attracted interest among academics and practitioners for the last two decades. Nevertheless, despite the increasing number of studies published in this area, there is no unambiguous, generally accepted definition for the concept of creativity.

Although the term of creation is clearly defined by Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913) as *"the act of creating or causing to exist"*, it is suggested by Boden (1996) that creativity seems to be not only beyond any scientific understanding, but even impossible. Smolensky and Kleiner (1995) view on what creativity is, proposes that the creative process often requires integrating left brain (logic) and right brain (imagination) thinking to solve problems or produce something new.

However, over the years authors in this area have adopted different and more complicated definitions for the term of creativity. The problem of definition regarding the concept of creativity mainly derives from the diversity of relevant studies, which explore the construction from different disciplinary perspectives.

To begin with, the literature review showed that creativity was perceived as a **mental ability**. Binswanger (1986, p. 109) defines it as *"the power to bring into existence an arrangement (or combination or integration) of natural elements that had not existed before. This is true of any human product, scientific or aesthetic: man's imagination is nothing more than the ability to rearrange the things he has observed in reality"*. Several authors (Mednick, 1962; Vernon, 1989; Whitfield, 1975; Koestler, 1964) under the same line of argument also propose that creativity is the capacity of forming associative elements into new combinations, which either meet requirements or have in some way scientific, aesthetic, social or technical value. However, Andrews (1975) adds that the combination of novel and useful ideas does not happen in vacuum. Therefore, a creative individual must be aware of a specific problem, task, or technological "gap",

and must be motivated to work on it. Furthermore, creative individuals must have at their command the discreet bits of knowledge and skills which, in combination, can contribute to the solution. Whitfield (1975) suggests that an ability can really only be described in terms of the power to perform a mental or physical act. The concept of intelligence has been variously described as the forming of associations, the integration and synthesis of ideas, showing good judgement and reasoning, adjusting to new situations, abstract thinking, and constructive thinking directed to the attainment of some end.

There are also authors who perceive creativity as a **process**. For instance, Kao (1989, p. 14) defines creativity as *“a human process leading to a result which is novel (new), useful (solves an existing problem or satisfies an existing need), and understandable (can be reproduced)”*. Moreover, Feurer, Chaharbaghi and Wargin (1996, p. 6) give a definition of creativity, which can be used in order to develop a framework within which the concept of creativity can be utilised in organisations. They suggest that *“creativity can be considered as a process by which ideas are constantly generated for developing opportunities or addressing problems without limiting the organisation to one particular situation”*.

Other authors view creativity as a **human behaviour**. Woodman and Schoenfeldt (1990, p. 280), based on the work of Barron and Harrington (1981), argue that *“creativity is not a single, unitary characteristic, but instead can be thought of as an imprecise category of behaviour”*.

Several authors aim within their writings to illustrate the differences between creativity and innovation. Woodman (1995, p. 61), in a broader context, defines organisational creativity as *the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working within a complex social organisation*. On the other hand, several authors define innovation as the successful exploitation of creative ideas (Whitfield, 1975; Cook, 1998; Jones, 1995; Persing, 1999). In other words,

organisational innovation is generally defined as the sequence of activities by which a new element is introduced into an organisation with the intention of changing or challenging the status quo (King 1995, p. 83). Amabile et al (1996, p. 1155) write that *“creativity...is a starting point for innovation; the first is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the second one”*. Creativity therefore comes first and provides the impetus and content for many but not all innovations. Amabile et al (1996) propose that successful innovation also depends on other factors and it can stem not only from creative ideas that originate within an organisation but also from ideas that originate elsewhere, such as in the case of technology transfer. King (1995) moves this argument forward by proposing that innovation is public; it aims to make a positive change to the status quo and to have an effect on people other than the initiator of the innovation. Creativity may be public, but it does not have to be so. To make progress through the pipeline requires that the organisation have a strategy converting creativity into innovation.

For the purposes of this study any kind of thinking can be called creative when one or more of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The output of thinking has novelty and value, either for the originator of the idea or his/her discipline (Mednick, 1962; Sethia, 1995; Torrance, 1966; Eysenck, 1996; Amabile et al, 1996; Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Woodman et al, 1993).
- The thinking is unconventional, in the sense that it requires modification or rejection of formerly accepted ideas (Newell et al, 1962).
- The output of thinking is the result of studying reality. Creative discoveries do not emerge full-blown, divorced from any prior knowledge, through mystical insights or causeless intuitions. (Locke and Kirkpatrick, 1995)
- The output of thinking can be either individual (when one challenges his/her own preconceptions) or collective (when one's ideas spark the generation of debate so

that the diverse range of viewpoints can be heard and be the basis of something novel).

- The thinking requires high motivation and persistence, taking place either over a considerable span of time (continuously or intermittently) or at high intensity (Newell et al, 1962).
- The creative output can be the result of one freeing himself/herself from his/her own conceptual system and by which he/she sees in a deeper or comprehensive or clearer way the structure of the situation he/she is trying to understand (Henle, 1962).
- The problem as initially posed was vague and ill-defined so that part of the task was to formulate the problem itself (Newell et al, 1962).

This section has offered an initial understanding of the nature of creativity and innovation. To sum up, creativity is perceived by both academics and practitioners as the quality of originality in something developed by the human mind, the mental ability to produce such novelty, or the actual activity of producing it. On the other hand, innovation is viewed as the whole process of translating a piece of original thinking into something tangible. The next section aims to explain the different ways, which make creative thinking as an integral component of organisations to sustain competitive advantage.

2.2 Why is now more than ever before the age of creativity?

Several authors stress that the value of what creativity, as a useful process, which enhances communication, promotes learning and the exploration of the problem, and helps to develop new ideas, solutions and/or alternatives, is of high importance since organisations nowadays have to overcome the following challenges:

- **Technology.** The rapid technological advancements, such as new design software and the extensive use of the World Wide Web have changed the way work is done,

the forms of communication as well as the contents of messages. Özsomer et al (1997) propose that a new business era, in which information technology is changing the way we work and live has emerged (Business Week, 1994; Stewart, 1994). The information revolution has created a business environment with shorter product cycles, increased segment fragmentation, blurring industry boundaries, breaking corporate hierarchies, and increased interdependence of world markets. Such increased environmental dynamism increases the need for innovativeness- the ability of a firm to introduce new products and production processes in order to capitalise on marketplace opportunities.

- **More unpredictable customers.** It is commonly accepted that customers, due to their increased knowledgeable of the products or services offered from companies, are becoming demanding and are no more loyal than they have to be. Mohanty (1999) proposes that customers remain at the heart of any organisation. Therefore every company has to perpetually learn as will be dictated by the consumer's choice, and his requirements. Moreover, demographic changes are leading to customer diversity and ethnic and cultural diversity makes customising to individual differences essential for gaining and sustaining a competitive edge. This power forces an organisation to move from a bureaucratic mode to an adaptive mode to deliver value to the customers and necessitates being flexible, lean and yet able to create new customers.
- **Global competition.** Kao (1996) proposes that global competition is increasing a country's ability to mobilise its ideas, talents and creative organisations. Mohanty (1999) under the same line of argument suggests that our contemporary interlinked economy on a borderless business world, evolving out of deregulation trends in all nations, generates fierce time based competition. This situation forces every organisation to understand real time strategic changes and update its knowledge for making quick innovations, by providing a constant stream of new and improved

products, processes and services, so as to maximise value for its stakeholders (Irani et al, 1997).

- **Knowledge.** The advances in communication and information technology help an organisation learn and compete at a faster pace. Mohanty (1999) points out that information power enables knowledge networking, increases the speed of decision making, eliminates the need for large numbers of managers in multiple layers to exercise control and empowers, the doers in the bottom line to concentrate on delighting customers. Over the last decade organisations have increasingly adopted team-centered structures in order to improve the way in which knowledge is developed, disseminated and applied in organisations. In other words, creativity adds value to knowledge and makes it more useful (Kao, 1996).
- **Change.** The rapid technological advancements and the fierce competition for market share have contributed to the unprecedented increasingly pace of change. Terms such as “Paradigm shifts”, “Managing in Chaos or in Turbulent Times” make it explicit that change in the business sector is out of control. Therefore, organisations should be ready to re-arrange their resources to meet the new demands. The prevailing forces for organisational change, including globalisation and the supply of ideas at much faster speeds and lower costs, have been evident for some time. Peters (1997) and Morgan (1991) reiterate the view that the world of business is now in a permanent state of flux where constant innovation is the only strategy for survival for both the individual and the organisation. Therefore, the power of organisation itself rests in its capabilities to quickly transform market opportunities into tangible bottom-line results.
- **Higher employees’ expectations.** Employees within creative environments increasingly look for autonomy so that they can use their personal initiatives. Kao (1996) suggests that high caliber employees are mobile as never before. O’Toole et al (1972) also criticise the American custom of emphasising monetary compensation

for work and proposed that human work should be perceived as an activity that produces something of value for other people. Nishibori (1972) moves beyond this statement by stressing the fact that human work should always include creativity (the joy of thinking), physical activity (the joy of working with sweat on the forehead) and sociality (the joy of sharing pleasure and pain with colleagues). Therefore, organisations, nowadays, are required to identify ways for motivating, and developing their talented people.

2.3 Research context

Mind stretching emerged from research based on creative organisations in the UK. Specifically, a corporate identity consultancy, a multidisciplinary design consultancy and an architectural practice comprised the basis for this research.

2.3.1 Defining a creative organisation

The literature review illustrates that the area of creativity has been approached from an individual, process or organisational perspective. Both academics and practitioners fail to clearly define what a creative organisation is, but rather focus at explaining the different social and environmental variables that either foster or suppress creativity. Nevertheless, based on the different definitions of creativity as described in the first section of this chapter, this thesis defines a creative organisation:

“as any business entity whose main source of income comes from the production of novel and appropriate ideas to tackle clients’ problems or opportunities identified”.

2.3.2 Creative industries in the UK

The value of the creative sector to UK gross domestic product is substantial as highlighted by a new government report, the Creative Industries Mapping Document (1998), the main findings of which are presented in this section. This report suggests that the creative industries in the UK generate revenues of £60bn per year and contribute over 4% to the domestic economy. In addition, for those industries for which material is

available excluding the software industry, the total value of exports is in the area of £7.5bn. The aforementioned creative industries employ more than 1.4m people as shown in more detail in the following figure:

Sector	Estimated Revenues £m	Exports £m	Employment
Advertising	>4,000	565	96,000
Architecture	1,500	250	30,000
Arts and Antiques Market	2,200	1,300	39,700
Crafts	400	40	25,000
Design	12,000	350	23,000
Designer Fashion	600	350	11,500
Film	900	522	33,000
Interactive Leisure Software	1,200	417	27,000
Music	3,600	1500	160,000
Performing	900	>75	60,000
Publishing	16,300	1,900	125,000
Software	7,500	N/A	272,000
Television and Radio	6,400	234	63,500
Total	>£57bn	>£7.5bn	c. 1m

Figure 2.1 Creative Industries in the the UK – Revenues, Exports & Employment
(Source: Creative Industries Mapping Document, 1998, p. 8)

Since mind stretching is a substantive theory, it is contextually specific. Its context (architecture and design) represents a fraction, rather than the creative industries as a whole.

It is estimated that architecture firms' turnover was around £1.5bn in 1995/96. Some £250m of architectural fee income was earned abroad (CIC/DETR Survey of UK Construction Professional Services 1997). The most important markets abroad were Hong Kong (42%) followed by work done within the European Union (25%). Private non-residential projects comprise the major source of fee income both within the United Kingdom (£609m) and abroad (£168m).

Design firms had a fee income of £12bn in 1995/96, which included around £10bn spent by British manufacturing companies on design and product development. The remainder comprises work by design consultancies and freelance designers. Fees earned by design firms abroad amounted to £350m in 1995. There are 3000 design firms in the UK, where the 100 largest consultancies account for around 75% of the sector's total turnover.

2.3.3 Contextual characteristics

In the previous section, I have identified the diverse range of organisations under the heading creative industries and described briefly the two sectors, namely architecture and design and their importance to the British economy both in the the UK and abroad. However, the general contextual characteristics of creative organisations within this research are exhibited below:

- Output strongly depends on the employees' individual contribution.
- Creative employees tend to personalise work since the outcome of their work will be exposed in the eyes of people within and outside the company.
- Creative professionals' responsibilities range from coming up with a new idea and/or selling it. Therefore, they are required to have a mix of skills to thrive.
- The firm and its staff have specific financial and creative targets to achieve, (e.g. industry awards, impact of their work to the clients' business).
- Employees' remuneration is directly associated with the quality of their work.

- Creative employees must act proactively in learning new techniques or updating their knowledge regarding their field in order to face new challenges.
- Companies' founder(s) and supervisors are extremely important in communicating the value of creativity within the workplace.
- Creative employees have a large amount of autonomy in the workplace.
- Diversity in the workplace is highly valued.
- Creative organisations image and reputation are mainly affected by the output of their employees' work.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter served as an introduction to this study by reviewing the literature relevant to the concept of creativity. Although several studies have been published in the area over the last forty years, the literature review makes it clear that there is no unambiguous, generally accepted definition of creativity. However, a definition of creativity relevant to the purpose and questions of this research has been provided. Furthermore, the importance of creative behaviour as a means of achieving competitive advantage was highlighted in the second section of this chapter. Last but not least the importance of the creative organisations and in general of the creative sector to the British economy was also illustrated.

The following chapter explains the grounded theory research methodology. It outlines the research design adopted in this study and the procedures used to analyse and synthesise the results of the data to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the methodological approach to studying the area under investigation. The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, the research design adopted in this study is described. The second part outlines the procedures used to analyse and synthesise the results of the data to answer the research questions, while the third part justifies the selection of an explanatory, qualitative methodology. Finally, there is a brief discussion of my evolving experience as a Grounded Theory researcher.

3.1 The research design

In the first part of this chapter, I outline the procedures involved within the chosen methodology for the collection of the data. Although data collection and analysis happen simultaneously in Grounded Theory, I decided to handle them separately for the purposes of describing the procedures used.

Tull and Hawkins (1993) suggest that the research design is the specification of procedures for collecting and analysing the data. They regard it as necessary to help identify or react to a problem or opportunity, such that the difference between the cost of obtaining various levels of accuracy and the expected value of information associated with each level of accuracy is maximised.

3.1.1 Identifying the research setting

To begin with, I needed to identify companies so that the research could be conducted. Therefore, sampling started by considering companies where the researcher would expect to find answers to my research questions. For instance, in this research, which aims to identify how employees' creativity can be enhanced, companies from the creative industry, such as advertising agencies, design consultancies, architectural and software companies, were considered. Three companies were willing to participate in this research, namely a corporate identity and a multidisciplinary design consultancy as well as an architectural company. I have chosen three companies since:

- Their primary business is to generate ideas, which will help their clients to distinguish themselves from competition. These ideas may take the form of a corporate identity, an interior design or a building.
- They have been in business for more than a decade and they are still profitable.
- They have gained industry awards. For instance, the first company has won in the Design Effectiveness Awards in the category of the best corporate identity over £1million with the Channel 5 corporate identity. The multidisciplinary design consultancy has won the Best Workspace Interior Award for Red Lemon, a Glasgow

based computer-games company. Finally, the third company has won two awards at the recent British Council of Offices Awards 1998 for Glaxo Wellcome's new world headquarters as well as the New Zealand House.

- Last but not least, an adequate level of access could be achieved so that different types of data could be collected.

A brief summary of the participant companies is illustrated below.

Company A – Corporate Identity Consultancy

The company was founded in London in 1965 and is now one of the world's largest corporate identity and branding consultancies. The company was initially involved in the creation and/or management of corporate identity and brands, but lately has added new services to its existing ones. For instance, the company also offers consulting to companies, which need assistance in terms of their own vision, culture and image. The company employs approximately 160 staff in offices in London, Madrid, Lisbon, Mumbai and recently New York in four main skill groups, namely, designers, consultants, project managers and support people. The company's annual turnover is in the region of £17m. Its cross-industrial and multinational clientele includes companies like First Direct, Q8, 3i, Goldfish, Channel 5, BT, Orange, Boehringer Ingelheim and others.

Company B – Multidisciplinary Design Consultancy

This cross-disciplinary consultancy was established in Glasgow in 1986. It currently employs 15 staff in two major activities, namely graphic and interior design and has an annual turnover of approximately £1million. In terms of graphic design, the company has expertise in corporate identity, annual reports, packaging, etc. As far as the interior services are concerned, the company encompasses corporate, retail and leisure sectors. The company's diverse clientele derives from the public as well as the corporate sector and includes The British Council, Barclays Plc, Babbie Group, DTI, The Royal Mail and others.

Company C – Architectural Practice

This company was founded in the late 50s in both Edinburgh and London. Nowadays, the company's offices have increased substantially both in the the U.K (Cambridge, Newcastle, Glasgow) and abroad (Hong Kong, Thailand, Dubai and Philippines). The company's Scottish subsidiary has agreed to participate in this research, which employs approximately 100 staff and has a current annual turnover of £12million. The company's projects include the new University of Lincolnshire, Glaxo Wellcome's new World Headquarters, New Zealand House as well as the Tron Theatre in Glasgow.

3.1.2 Gaining organisational access

An important issue in any primary data collection procedure is that of obtaining an appropriate level of access. This in return gives the opportunity to the researcher to collect different types of data required. In this study, access being initially negotiated by my supervisor permitted a high level of access in one of the leading corporate identity consultancies in the world. Nevertheless, numerous meetings were required to gain access since I had to explain to the management the purpose of the research.

This initial stage of the field research has involved a series of briefings and personal contacts with most of the company's employees from the consultancy department as well as from the senior executives. At the first stage of the research, seven interviews were conducted in order to familiarise myself with the area under investigation, specifically the corporate identity industry. My priority at that stage was to discover and document as much as I could the range of activities and principal techniques used within a corporate identity consultancy. By doing so, patterns of interaction, both productive and counterproductive were observed and therefore documented. Most interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, between the interviewer and the interviewee. Since my knowledge at that time concerning the substantive area under investigation was limited, a topic guide with open semi-structured questions was used. At that early stage, the data collected during the field research were in a raw form and no data could be rejected.

Nevertheless, data had to be prioritised and some to be rejected so that the process of discovery could occur.

This first visit was followed by two more visits over the next two months and the gathering of more data, including seventeen in-depth interviews with employees from the consultancy, the creative as well as project managers and senior executives, and most important from all the founder of the company, as shown in Table 3.1. All the interviews were conducted during working hours in the company's headquarters, within the employees' workspace in order to ensure a relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, field notes were also taken during my visit in the company (19 days, between 1997/1998). Between the visits to the company I had to analyse the data and therefore discover what kind of data was needed to be collected next.

Table 3.1 First Period of Research (Interviews with Company A)

Position	Date	Duration (Min)	How Recorded
P.R. Manager	27/10/1997	60	Notes
Marketing Manager	29/10/1997	45	Notes
Managing Director	30/ 10/1997	60	Notes
Consultant	4/11/1997	10	Notes
Chairman	6/11/1997	15	Notes
Head of Consultancy	7/11/1997	45	Notes
Consultant	7/11/1997	20	Notes
Consultant	7/11/1997	60	Notes
Founder	1/12/1997	35	Notes
Consultant	1/12/1997	50	Notes
Project Manager	2/12/1997	45	Notes
Consultant	2/12/1997	20	Notes
Graphic Designer	2/12/1997	35	Notes

Graphic Designer	2/12/1997	30	Notes
Consultant	3/12/1997	30	Notes
Graphic Designer	4/12/1997	20	Notes
Project Manager	5/12/1997	45	Notes
Consultant	12/1/1998	60	Notes
Consultant	12/1/1998	60	Notes
Graphic Designer	12/1/1998	40	Notes
Head of Consultancy	13/1/1998	35	Notes
Designer	13/1/1998	30	Notes
Consultant	13/1/1998	20	Notes
Designer	14/1/1998	35	Notes

At the end of the interviews with the first company on the 2nd of March 1998, I presented my findings to the company's management and consultants. At the same time, a detailed plan for continuing the research was also discussed with the management of the company for half an hour. Nevertheless, the company's managing director turned down the proposal and therefore refused to allow me access, since the identified problems were going to be researched and resolved by a team of consultants. This forced me to identify the second company so that the research could go on.

The next target was a multidisciplinary design consultancy, which was initially contacted by my supervisor. A meeting with the founders of the company was arranged in order to discuss the objectives of the research, as well as the role that I could have in that organisation. The founders of the company showed a keen interest in creativity and access was allowed. However, I was asked to develop a database related to the company's client list. I used a more detailed topic guide so that the identified categories from the first company would reach saturation and new ones could arise. All the interviews took place during working hours in the company's offices. Over a two months period in that company, I gathered data by conducting twelve in-depth interviews with employees from the interior and graphic department, and most important

from the founders of the company, as shown in Table 3.2. Data was generated by observation during my visit to the company's offices (28 days, between 1998/1999).

Table 3.2 Second Period of Research (Interviews with Company B)

Position	Date	Duration (Min)	How Recorded
Managing Director	5/6/1998	60	Notes
Architect	8/6/1998	30	Notes
Head of Graphic Design	8/6/1998	60	Notes
Graphic Designer	10/8/1998	20	Notes
Architect	11/6/1998	30	Notes
Managing Director	12/6/1998	30	Notes
Head of Interior Design	2/7/1998	60	Taped
Director	6/7/1998	30	Taped
Head of Graphic Design	10/7/1998	15	Notes
Architect	13/7/1998	15	Notes
Managing Director	14/7/1998	30	Notes
Graphic Designer	15/7/1998	45	Taped

After conducting these interviews on the 14th of October 1998 I presented my initial findings to the two founders, where valuable feedback was gained. Consequently, I focused on analysing the data by writing and constantly comparing the memos to identify both potential links among them as well as to discover what kind of data was needed to be collected next. This led to a second presentation of the process identified on the 27th of November 1998, which was followed by a discussion that lasted for half an hour. The presented process gained favourable comments from the two founders although some of its categories were not fully exploited and needed more data collection. This had as a result the development of a new topic guide so that more in-depth data could be derived regarding identified categories or their properties. I then

decided to go back to the company and gain information by conducting four more interviews with the founders of the company and two employees, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Third Period of Research (Interviews with Company B)

Position	Date	Duration (Min)	How Recorded
Architect	19/1/1999	25	Notes
Graphic Designer	19/1/1999	25	Notes
Director	22/1/1999	20	Notes
Managing Director	25/1/1999	60	Notes

During my first presentation, its founders were keen to help me to identify the next company. As a result, three referrals were made for possible companies to participate, namely a motor racing company, a computer game company as well as an architectural firm. At the same time, I sent letters to companies, which have unique approaches to creativity, explaining my research objectives, procedures and potential findings, see Appendix. These companies included an internet design consultancy, and two computer game companies. Problems associated with gaining organisational access are explained in the last section of this chapter section under the heading “Research limitations”. After several discussions and contacts with the aforementioned companies, the architectural firm agreed to participate in the research and therefore gave me the appropriate access.

I started the process of interviewing in the architectural firm by talking to the company’s director. The information from these interviews was of high importance since an overall view of its company as well as its history and future plans were provided. Following that, five more interviews were conducted with the company’s architects and a technician, as shown in Table 3.4. I arranged these interviews with the assistance of the company’s director. All employees’ interviews took place in the company’s boardroom to ensure interviewees’ confidentiality. Whereas, the director’s interviews were

conducted in his office. Moreover, note taking during the visits to the company's office (7days, 1999) also generated data.

Table 3. 4 Fourth Period of Research (Interviews with Company C)

Position	Date	Duration (Min)	How Recorded
Co-director	22/4/1999	60	Notes
Co-director	27/4/1999	90	Notes
Architect	28/4/1999	90	Notes
Architect	5/5/1999	120	Notes
Architect	7/5/1999	100	Notes
Architect	21/5/1999	70	Notes
Architectural Technician	25/5/1999	75	Notes

Then, on the 1st of June 1999 I made a presentation to the company's director regarding the process generated, organisational problems identified and recommendations for resolving them, which was followed by a discussion that lasted an hour and a half. The company's director agreed with the identified process related to creativity, however, an insightful discussion related to the causes and solutions of the problems took place. After explaining the mechanics of this research, the next section will justify the selected methods of data collection.

3.1.3 Methods of data collection

The research method used is Grounded Theory. The main technique of gathering information in this research was in-depth interviews. Easterby et al (1991, p. 71) suggest that in-depth interviewing is "*..the most fundamental of qualitative methods...*". Kahn & Cannell (1957, p. 149) described an interview as: "*a conversation with a purpose*". The importance of in-depth interviewing is summarised by Burgess (1982, p. 107): "*The interview is the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues,*

open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience”.

This qualitative method of data collection was chosen since qualitative interviews aid towards understanding how creative individuals construct the meaning and significance of their work situations from the complex personal framework of beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives in order to assist explain and predict events in their world (Burgess, 1982). Also in-depth interviews were appropriate in this research since:

- the aim is to develop an understanding of the respondents’ world
 - the step-by-step rationale of the situation is not clear
 - the area under investigation is highly confidential or commercially sensitive
 - the interviewee may be reluctant to be truthful about the issue in question
- (Easterby et al 1991, p. 74)

In this research two types of in-depth interviews were employed, namely elite and informal conversational interviews. To begin with, Marshall and Rossman (1995) point out that an elite interview is a specialised case of interviewing that focuses on a particular type of interviewee. King (1994, p.23) gives some advice on the role to adopt when interviewing high status interviewees. He suggests that: “*..in order to avoid offending respondents, there is a need to refrain from being over familiar or to give the impression of being over expert. On the other hand, in order to be treated with some credibility, there is also a need to avoid being over nervous or submissive*”. Elite individuals are considered to be the influential and the well-informed people in an organisation or community and are selected for interviews on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research. In this research high status interviewees were considered CEOs, managing directors, creative directors and head of departments of the participant companies. The outcome of elite interviewing is that valuable insight and meaning regarding certain themes can be obtained since these participants hold high positions. They can also provide an overall view of their company as well as history and

future plans. However, there are some problems associated with elite interviewing. For instance, it is very difficult to reach them since they are busy people and most of the times they will manage to change the interview' topic list to fit their own agenda.

The informal conversational interview was the second type of interview used in this research. Patton (1987) points out that informal interview relies entirely on the spontaneous formulation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction with the participants. This type of interview was made possible in the corporate identity and the multidisciplinary consultancy since the researcher was able to stay in the situation for some period of time, so that he is not dependent upon a single interview to gather all the data required. As suggested by Patton (1987) its strength is that it allows the interviewer to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes. Therefore, questions can be individualised to establish in-depth communication with the person being interviewed make use of the immediate surroundings and situation to increase the concreteness and immediacy of the interview questions and responses. Nevertheless, I had to establish rapport with the participants prior to the interviews so that data collection could be maximised.

An interview guide was used in all in-depth interviews, except for the informal conversational interviews. Patton (1987, p.111) defines an interview guide as “..a list of questions or issues to be explored in the course of an interview”. A semi-structured type of personal interview suggests the use of a list of questions, which serves as an “aide memoire” covering the topics to be discussed. An interview guide was essential in this research since:

- it ensured that essentially similar information is gained from the participants by discussing the same issues. This in return helped the researcher to explore topics or subject areas, which eventually will explain the particular subject.
- it served as a fundamental checklist during the interview to ensure that all predetermined topics are covered.

- it ensured to make interviewing different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting the issues to be discussed in the interview.
- it kept the interaction focused, but at the same time gave the flexibility for different perspectives and experiences to be put forward.
- it provided a framework within which I would make decisions regarding information to be further pursued. Consequently, it was possible to distinguish certain areas of interest and to formulate new topic lists to be discussed with other participants.

The other two methods of data collection used for this study were participant observation and management diaries. They served as an additional basis for triangulation and interpretation, as suggested by Denzin (1970). Easterby-Smith et al (1991) point out that the method of participant observation has its roots in ethnographic research studies, where researchers would live in tribal villages in faraway places, attempting to understand the customs and practices of strange cultures. In defining participant observation Bernard (1988, p. 148) states:

“Participant observation is the foundation of anthropological research, and yet is the least well-defined methodological component of our discipline. It involves establishing rapport in a new community, learning to act so that people can go about their business as usual when you show up; and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualise what you have learned, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly. It helps to distinguish between participant observation and fieldwork. All participant observation is field work, but not all field work is participant observation”.

Participant observation was chosen as another method for data collection in this study for the following reasons:

- It facilitates the collection of data on social interaction (Burgess, 1984)
- Participant observation discovers complex interactions in natural social settings

- It helps to collect rich detailed data based on observation
- Observation plays an important role as the researcher notes body language in addition to the person's words (Marshall and Rossman,1995)

Easterby-Smith et al (1991) note that it is important for the researcher to be clear about the kind of role he is adopting. In this study the researcher had to adopt three roles in order to fit the culture of the organisations being studied in order to maximise data collection. For instance, in the first organisation, namely the corporate identity consultancy, due to its large size and organisation of work in multi-cultural project teams I had to be an explicit observer. Therefore, I had to be present every day over a period of time, which was negotiated in advance with the management and with some key employees as well. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) note that this type of observer role is the most often favored, since it offers many of the insights that the complete observer would gain, while at the same time it offers much greater flexibility without the ethical problems that deception entails. Roy (1970, p. 217) describes the advantages of this approach by saying that: *“The participant as observer not only makes no secret of his investigation: he makes it known that research is overriding interest. He is there to observe. The participant observer is not tied down; he is free to run around as research interest beckons”*.

On the contrary, in the second company, namely the multidisciplinary design consultancy, I had to work within the organisation, alongside others. The role of the researcher was to create a clients' relationship list. This gave me the opportunity to move around and gather information and perspectives. This role is appropriate when the researcher needs to experience the work or situation at first hand. It involves observing, participating, talking and making interpretations, all of which are required, if complete participant observers are to share and understand significant aspects of the employee's experience. In the third company, specifically, the architectural company, I had to be present sporadically over time, moving in and out of the organisation. This was decided

since most of the employees were outside the organisation, as they had to manage projects, which were on the building stage.

Nevertheless, in all companies' organisation I had to systematically document the following eight features of the social situation as suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983):

- Physical space and layout
- All the people involved not just those directly involved
- The activities of all the people within the defined social space
- The physical artifacts which are contained within the defined space
- Observation of particular rituals and other group based social events
- The time sequence of a typical days' activities
- Differences in objectives of each type of person within the chosen social setting
- Difference in emotional reactions to changing social contexts

The other method of data collection was the management diary. During this research, I kept a diary including emergent ideas, reflections on issues in question, which may be important at the data analysis and writing up stages. This in return helped me to collect other relevant data while the research was in progress, which helped me to carry out more analysis.

3.1.4 Recording the data

When doing grounded theory there is no need for complete recording of the interview as one would want descriptive completeness. Therefore, in the majority of the interviews notes were taken. In some instances, interviews were recorded since I aimed to capture the exact words or explanations of the interviewees related to certain phenomena. Theoretical completeness only requires those notes written down after an interview to be later used for constant comparison. Glaser (1998) devotes a chapter in his book "*Doing Grounded theory*" explaining why taping interviews is not an appropriate method for

recording data. Taping is inappropriate when doing grounded theory study for the following reasons:

- Taping provides the researcher with too much unnecessary data. Thus, it undermines delimiting collecting information which occurs from the interchangeability of indices. This constant collection by taping neglects theoretical saturation of categories and their properties, which delimits the researcher's effort and the theory. By consequence so does theoretical completeness.
- Taping slows down data gathering. It prevents and delays theoretical sampling, which is essential to both extending the theory as it delimits it. The researcher also cannot code and analyse the data that night for the next day's research, as he can with field notes. Taping requires the time to type the notes or even listen to them, which slows down the research process.
- In grounded theory there is no such thing as observation without interviews to give them meaning. The reverse is also true; Interviews without some observations are not embodied by behaviour and in this regard not as grounded in meaning. In note taking within a few hours after interviewing and observing, both are put into the notes as a meaningful mix. On the contrary, taping just collects words not observations.
- Taping provokes properline data from the interviewees because it is "recorded". Therefore, the interviewees are being told which issues they should mention and which to avoid. .
- Finally, someone can argue that note taking can be selective based on the preconscious matrix of associations build up in the generated theory. However, the methodology of grounded theory keeps that this selectivity in note taking is grounded and controlled by the emerging theory as coding, analysing and theoretical sampling consistently adjust the theory.

3.2 Procedures adopted during the research

A qualitative research design has been adopted, since the aim of this study is to explain the delicate and subtle indicators of innovation rather than to measure their frequency. In particular, the orthodox grounded theory research method by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which aims to explain behaviour beyond a simple description of what people are doing in the substantive area under study, was used.

3.2.1 Coding

Lowe (1996) suggests that coding starts with “open” coding which involves the fracturing of data by isolating significant incidents, such as events, processes or issues. In generating open codes, I read several times the interview transcripts in order to identify meaningful statements relevant to my research. The identified open codes could derive from the interviewee’s either replies to my questions or from remarks, which were unrelated to the topic guide. Those identified open codes were cut. After completing the coding process, each open code should be given a label. This occurs so that the researcher is becoming sensitised to the processes and patterns, which may be revealed at a later stage of the research. Sometimes the labels given are the exact words or phrases used by the interviewees. Glaser (1978, p70) refers to those codes as “*in vivo codes*”. The label assigned should be a gerund, for instance a verb ending in “ing”. This open coding process, as part of the systematic analysis of phenomenological data, is summarised in the following figure (Figure 3.1):

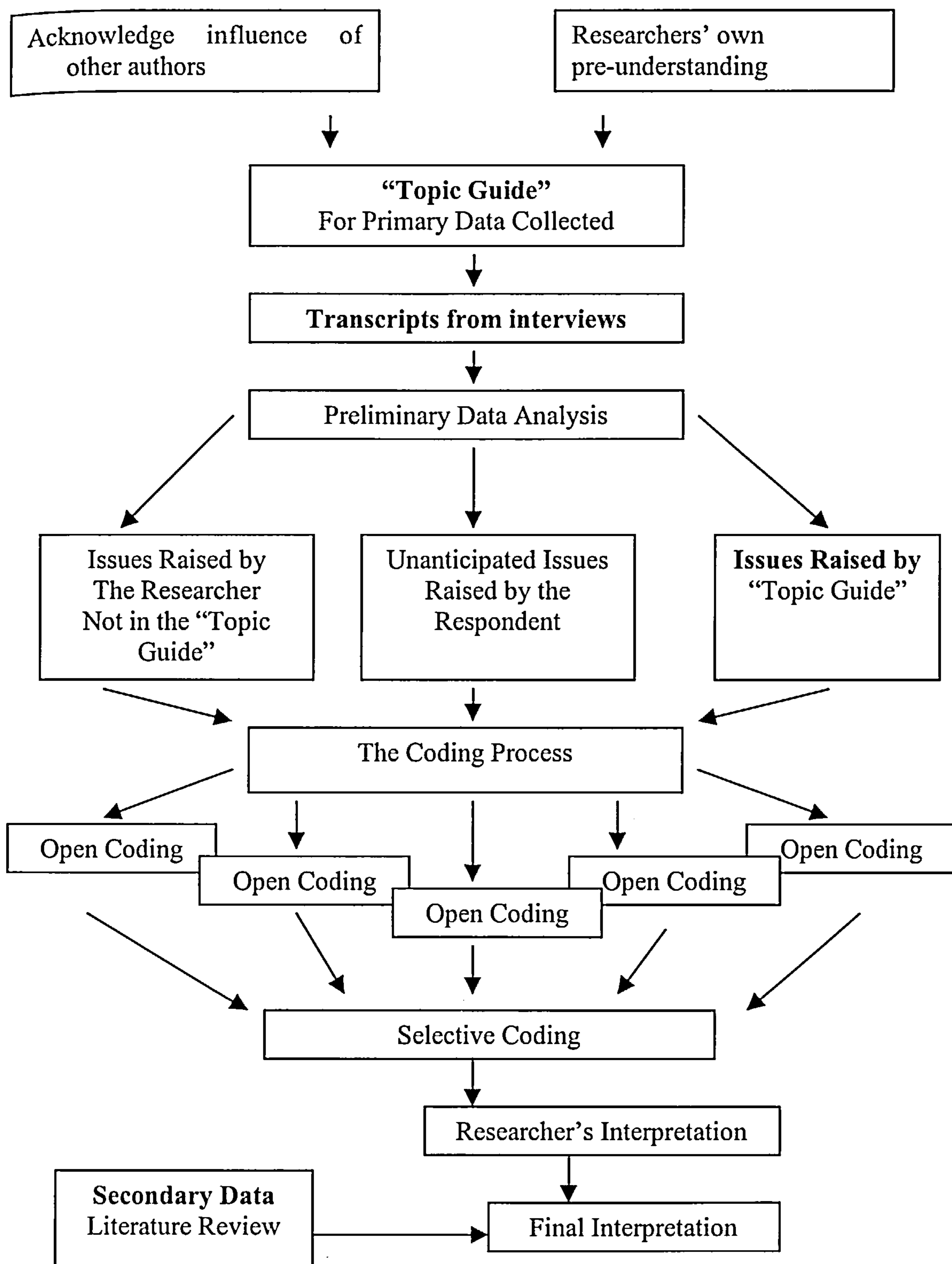


Figure 3.1 The Systematic Analysis of Phenomenological Data (Lowe, 1993)

As the research progresses and more data generated are coded, it is apparent that several open codes are related to each other. This interplay between theoretical memos and the constant comparison process leads to development of “selective codes”. In order for that process to be successful, it is required by the researcher to engage both intuition and intellect. The next stage of analysis is the generation of theoretical memos and is discussed in the next section.

3.2.2 Theoretical memoing

Glaser (1978, p.83) describes theoretical memos as “*the theorising up of ideas about the codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding*”. Lowe (1996) suggests that they are means of abstraction and ideation and can be used throughout the grounded theory process. In the initial stages of the research they can be as brief as a sentence but as the analysis progresses, they can be expanded to several pages in length.

3.2.3 The constant comparison method

Theoretical categories emerge through sorting and comparing of theoretical memos with data. This results in the redefinition of the categories as relationships clarify. Lowe (1996) notes that by constantly comparing the data and by looking for negative incidents of relationships it is likely to elaborate and integrate data to the point where no new evidence arises within a category. As categories become saturated, they comprise the basis upon which further questions should be asked about the underlying process.

3.2.4 The core variable

The objective of the grounded theory methodology is to discover basic social processes, which explain the resolution of the problem or issue confronting people in the substantive area under study. Lowe (1996) points out that theory generation occurs around the core variable. The grounded theory process is presented in the following figure (Lowe, 1996):

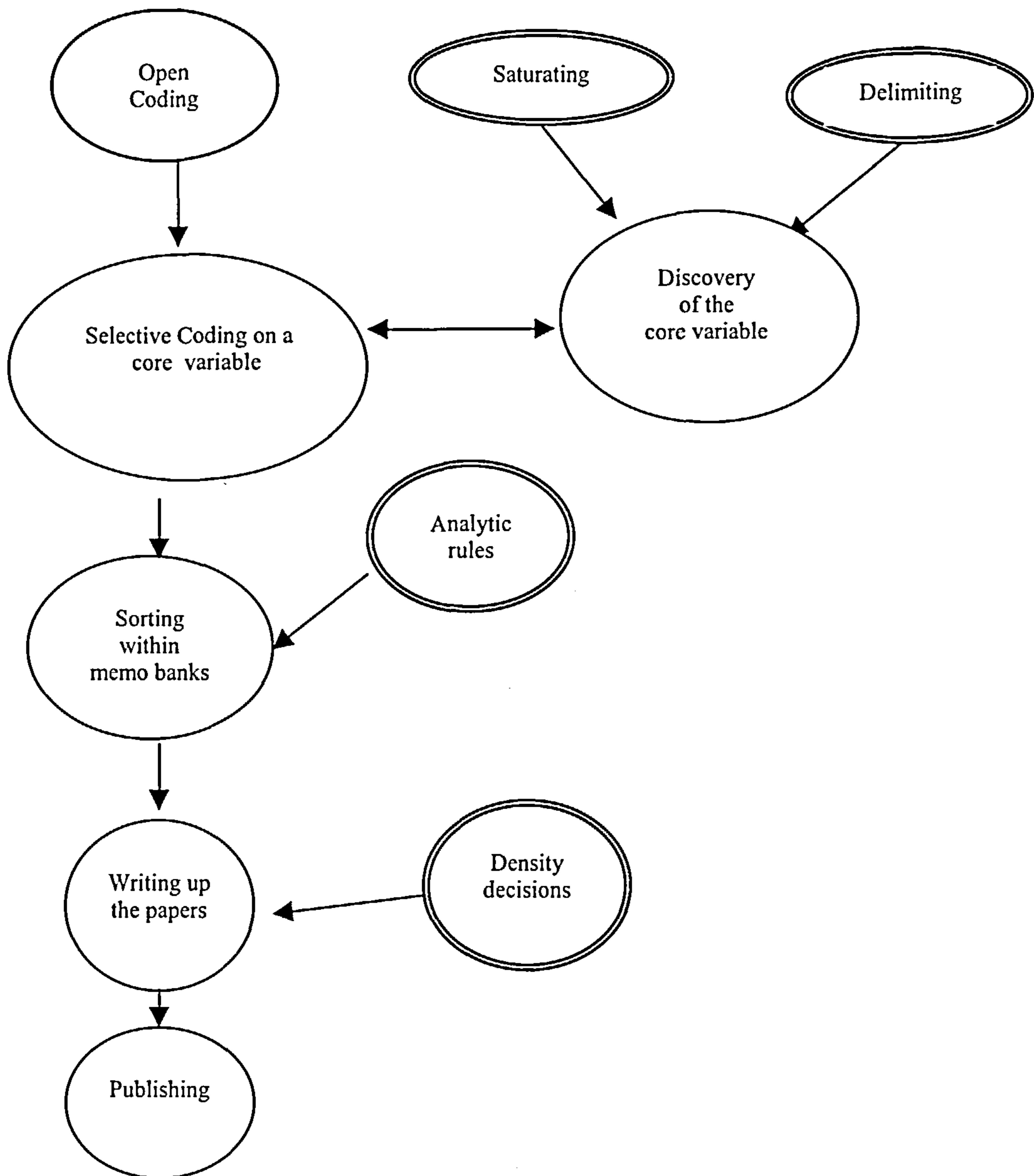


Figure 3. 2 The Grounded Theory Process (Lowe, 1996)

3.2.5 Writing up Grounded Theory research

Since the grounded theory researcher is continuously writing new memos or expanding existing ones, while at the same time he/she constantly compares them, the research is being written up from the day it starts. Therefore, further research in other similar organisations around the processes of perpetual challenging as well as going back to the

original data will enhance the conceptual understanding of the researcher, which will lead to the emergence of a grounded theory.

Having explained the grounded theory method's characteristics, the next section offers a detailed explanation of more practical issues of this research. For instance, the identification of companies to collect data, gaining organisational access as well as the fieldwork process, analysed.

3.3 The choice of grounded theory

LeCompte and Preissle (1990) point out that the process of selecting an appropriate methodology must involve a clear focus on the issue in question, the objectives of the study, what type of data will answer the research question; and which research design will be most effective in gaining that information. I have selected grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998), a particular related form of the phenomenological philosophy, as relevant to this research. The following reasons justify why grounded theory was chosen:

Commercially sensitive data

This type of research aims to investigate and therefore conceptualise informal relationships. Therefore, it involves the collection of commercially sensitive information, which cannot be gathered by using impersonal questionnaires to be completed by companies' employees. This is true since people are more willing to support the company's general philosophy, vision and goals rather than disclosing personal views or agendas. Hence, I had to carefully plan the research design, as discussed in the previous section, so that a deep level of analysis could be made possible.

Limited knowledge about the phenomenon

Grounded theory has been used to generate theory where little is already known, or to contribute a fresh view on existing knowledge. Furthermore, it is the most appropriate methodology for investigating a phenomenon, which is a process.

Therefore, in order to throw light to the substantive area under investigation a qualitative research method like Grounded Theory could only be applied (Denzin, 1971; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

Self-validated methodology

Implicitly in the method there is a process of self-validation. As the research reveals patterns of interactions, I have focused on verifying and explaining what seems to be emerging. On the contrary, data, derived from people who are lying or are inconsistent, patterned out automatically, since the process of analysis was correctly used.

Conceptual empowerment

This study aims to explain the basic social processes behind corporate creativity. That involves the development of a substantive theory, which could explain the phenomenon under investigation. Van Maanen (1983, p. 255) points out that the issues under investigation focus on everyday activity as *“defined, enacted, smoothed, and made problematic by persons going about the normal routines”*.

In a qualitative research such as Grounded Theory, the researcher is the primary and solely instrument for gathering and collecting data. Merriam (1989, p.19) justifies this view by saying that: *“Data are mediated through this human instrument rather than through some inanimate inventory”*. Patton (1987) and Minnis (1985) point out that fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative methods, since contextual understanding can only be achieved with direct knowledge of a research setting. The reason behind the use of direct contact was given by Van Maanen (1979) who suggested that there is relatively little knowledge about what a diverse range of behaviours means until descriptions of the context in which the behaviours take place, are achieved.

Because such methods are used in “natural” settings, Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest that qualitative researchers have to interact with people in their own language and on their own terms, as would be expected on someone else’s territory. Therefore, I had to be proactive in defining my own key issues in relation to the investigation. This in return

proved to be of high importance for the quality of the data generated, since I built up a social relationship with the companies' members and therefore gained more insights in their collective understanding by actively sharing that experience.

Patton (1987) suggests that a naturalistic inquiry should be chosen in order to describe naturally unfolding activities and processes, document variations and individual differences between various respondents' experiences and outcomes. Easterby et al (1991, p. 24) stress that a naturalistic inquiry underlies the phenomenological approach by saying that:

"..the task of the social scientist should not be to gather facts and measure how often certain patterns occur, but to appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience. One should therefore try to understand and explain why people have different experiences rather than search for external causes and fundamental laws to explain their behaviour. Human action arises from the sense that people make of different situations, rather than as a direct response from external stimuli".

In their natural settings human beings are involved habitually in processes, in a subconscious manner. Therefore, the generation of a theory with its variations will help the companies' employees under investigation to fully understand what is happening and hence perform the same actions consciously. The identification of productive processes, which have an impact on the improvement of employees' performance, is referred to as conceptual empowerment.

Generate a theory

The outcome of the grounded theory is primarily concerned with the discovery of basic social processes, with the generation occurring around a core variable. The core variable accounts for most of the variation in a pattern of behaviour. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) suggest that the phenomenological paradigm has the potential to contribute substantially

to the development of new theories, since it has the strength to reflect and adjust to new ideas and issues that people are facing in their own environments. Therefore, qualitative methods allow flexibility in the research process, which is also related to a willingness to formulate new hypotheses and alter old ones as the research progresses, in the light of emerging insights.

Easterby-Smith et al (1991) point out that the phenomenological paradigm considers that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined, and therefore focuses on identifying the viewpoints of the people under investigation at a micro-analytical level. Qualitative techniques emerge from phenomenological and interpretive paradigms where the emphasis is on constructivist approaches where there is no clear-cut objectivity or reality. Therefore, qualitative research is less driven by specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks and are more interested in emergent idiographic explanations. Van Maanen (1979, p.520) characterises the label qualitative methods as *“an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world”*. These social phenomena are typically pre-occupied with complexity, authenticity, contextualisation, shared subjectivity of researcher and researched and minimisation of illusion.

Then the emerging theory can be tested through scientific methods. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) suggest that the extensive use of statistics is of significant relevance to policy decision at a macro-level, since measurement is reliable, valid, and generalisable in its clear predictions of cause and effect. Furthermore, the same authors argue that causal explanations and fundamental laws are applied to explain regularities in human social behaviour through the use of hypothetico-deductive processes. As suggested by Cassell and Symon (1994), behind the positivist paradigm there is an objective truth existing in the world which can be revealed through the scientific method where the focus is on measuring relationships between variables systematically and statistically.

Holistic view of the phenomenon

Grounded theory was finally chosen since it is a methodology, which considers a complete activity as an interrelated system with a deep structure. By focusing more on the whole entity, a better sense of how the activity under investigation works can be provided. In the case of management research as in this case where one needs data to evaluate how multi and inter-disciplinary activities occur, a holistic approach is particularly important (Light, 1979). Bogdan and Taylor (1975) and Weiss (1966) suggest that an important characteristic of qualitative approaches is that they seek to give a holistic view of situations or organisations that researchers are trying to understand. Patton (1987) adds that the awareness of a human behaviour and organisational systems are often better understood in their entity since it allows all factors to be taken under consideration and a complete explanation to be developed.

3.3.1 Justification of the chosen methodology

An emerging grounded theory primarily justifies itself by providing a detailed and carefully explanation of what is happening of the area under investigation. This theoretical account not only aids the researcher's understanding, but also offers a means of communicating findings to those in the area studied, either as a basis for discussion or as a means for implementing change.

Nevertheless, Glaser (1978, p. 4-6) points out that grounded theory studies should be assessed through a specific range of criteria, namely those of fit, workability, relevance and modifiability.

Fit

Fit means that the categories of the theory have emerged from the data without forcing. Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that this criterion is concerned with how truthful the particular findings of the research are. Glaser (1978, p.4) suggests that this criterion is automatically met since the categories of the grounded theory are generated

systematically and directly from the research data. He concludes by saying that as long as grounded theory procedures are followed, the findings of the theory will fit and therefore be credible.

Workability

The next criterion is that of workability. Glaser (1992) suggests that if a grounded theory works, it will explain the diverse range of behaviours with respect to processing the major concerns of the people under investigation. For instance in this study, are all the variables in mind stretching necessary for the process to be completed? It was found that creative employees need to be involved in a diverse range of jobs or in work with higher difficulty, while at the same time they needed to believe in themselves, which would help them build their confidence.

Relevance

Glaser (1992) points out that if a theory fits and works then it has relevance. Relevance means that the emerging theory should be of interest to the people involved in the study, practitioners and other researchers. For example in this research most of the actions conducted by creative organisations were subconsciously done. The detailed explanation of the different behaviours and their consequences on the quality of the work and employees' motivation has helped them to realise the relevance instantly.

Modifiability

The question here is how modifiable is the theory to another context. The concept of modifiability implies that if a theory is to remain applicable over time then it must be readily modifiable when new categories or their properties emerge. For instance, in this study, the theory is now being used to analyse the way employees' creativity is enhanced into various contexts, such as a corporate identity and a design consultancy, as well as an architectural company.

3.4 Research limitations

During the research, several issues have limited the outcome of this study. These limitations were mainly concerned with my evolving experience regarding the methodology, the language barrier, as well as organisational access and other limitations, which are further explained below.

Researcher's evolving experience with the Grounded Theory method

It must be noted that this was the first time that I used this methodology for collecting and analysing data, which meant that I had to undergo a major learning process before I could use the methodology correctly. Therefore, mistakes, such as rushing into conclusions and making associations between concepts, were occurring at the beginning of the research. However, the aforementioned mistakes were pointed out in the initial stages of the research by my supervisor. This in return helped me to adjust my thinking to the principles of the methodology and therefore learn to cope with ambiguity.

Language barrier

Grounded theory is based on fully understanding the meanings that people give to their words. Therefore, since English is not my mother tongue, it was very difficult at the beginning to reach that level of analysis which would give me the opportunity to explain fully what is going on in the substantive area under investigation. However, my willingness to deepen the level of analysis was enhanced by investing considerable time and effort in writing memos. The writing of ideas while they were striking proved of high importance so that I could reach that level of conceptualisation. This level of conceptualisation would help me give explanations regarding informal and ambiguous sociological relationships.

Access limitations

Grounded theory requires data collection from different organisations so that emerging categories could be verified or rejected while at the same time there is a need to identify where more data could be collected next. In order for that to be achieved I had to

identify companies, which would potentially participate in this research. Although the first and the second companies were willing to be involved in this research since they could understand its significance and its potential outcomes, it was extremely difficult to gain access to a third one. The founders of the second company were keen to help me to identify the next company. As a result, three referrals were made for possible companies to participate, namely a motor racing company, a computer game company as well as an architectural firm. At the same time, I sent letters to companies, which have unique approaches to creativity, explaining my research objectives, procedures and potential findings. These companies included an internet design consultancy, and two computer game companies. My attempt led to the arrangement of three meetings with two computer games and the internet design consultancy. The first meeting was held with the founder of a Scottish computer game company on the 19th of January 1999, where I found the opportunity to explain the objectives and the outcomes of the research. Nevertheless, the company at that stage was in the stage of launching its first product so they turned down my proposal. Therefore, I arranged the next meeting with the internet design consultancy, which is based in London. This initial meeting took place on the 16th of February in the company headquarters. However, after several discussions with the creative director, the company management decided to reject my proposal for organisational access. As a result, I contacted the other computer games company, which is also based in London. After having explained by e-mail the research objectives, the research design and potential outcome, a meeting with the CEO of the company was arranged for the 10th of March 1999. During that meeting I had the opportunity to gather data about the way creativity was encouraged within that organisation. That meeting was also unsuccessful since the company's staff didn't show the required willingness to participate in this research. I then decided to go back to the second company of this research and had a meeting with the managing director so that the next company could be identified and the research could carry on. The managing director suggested the architectural company whose director finally agreed to participate in the study.

Other limitations

This kind of research involves a great deal of observation and interviews with the participant companies' employees. Therefore, I had to finance myself during the first stage of the research with the corporate identity consultancy, which is based in London. This made me be very resourceful in terms of arranging interviews with the companies' employees in order to maximise data collection in those periods. Nevertheless, some of the employees couldn't be interviewed since they were on business trips while I was present. Furthermore, most of that company's employees were very careful in disclosing personal opinions and preferred to support the company's general principles instead. Finally, time limitations in analysing data were also evident during the study since I had to take advantage of a specific time between visits to the companies. This in return delayed my understanding regarding the conceptual nature of the methodology used.

3.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I explained the research design applied, the procedures used and the philosophical assumptions behind it. It must be highlighted that gaining and maintaining organisational access was of high importance since this is the only way to collect data. The established guidelines set by the methodology as well as the justification of the research methodology were also given.

The following chapter explains the major stages of analysis and synthesis. It aims to illustrate how the findings were generated by applying the principles of Grounded Theory.

CHAPTER 4: THE ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF DATA

Abstract

This chapter outlines the major steps regarding the analysis and synthesis of the research data so that the emerging substantive grounded theory could be generated. The chapter is divided into three sections; the first section (4.1) focuses on the analytic techniques, which must be followed rigorously in order to generate rather than test the grounded theory. The second section (4.2) refers to the synthesis of the data, which leads to the generation of the theory. The final section (4.3) of this chapter concludes with an explanation of the substantive grounded theory as it has emerged from this study. In the process of interpreting data it became apparent that the basic social process enhancing creativity within creative environments was that of “mind stretching”.

4.1 Introduction

This is an orthodox Grounded Theory study with an emphasis on the discovery of basic underlying processes within creative environments. The substantive theory has revealed the core variable of mind stretching and its two sub-core variables, namely perpetual challenging and confidence building, as shown in the Figure 4.1. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is encouraged. A brief analysis of the concept is given in the last section of this chapter.

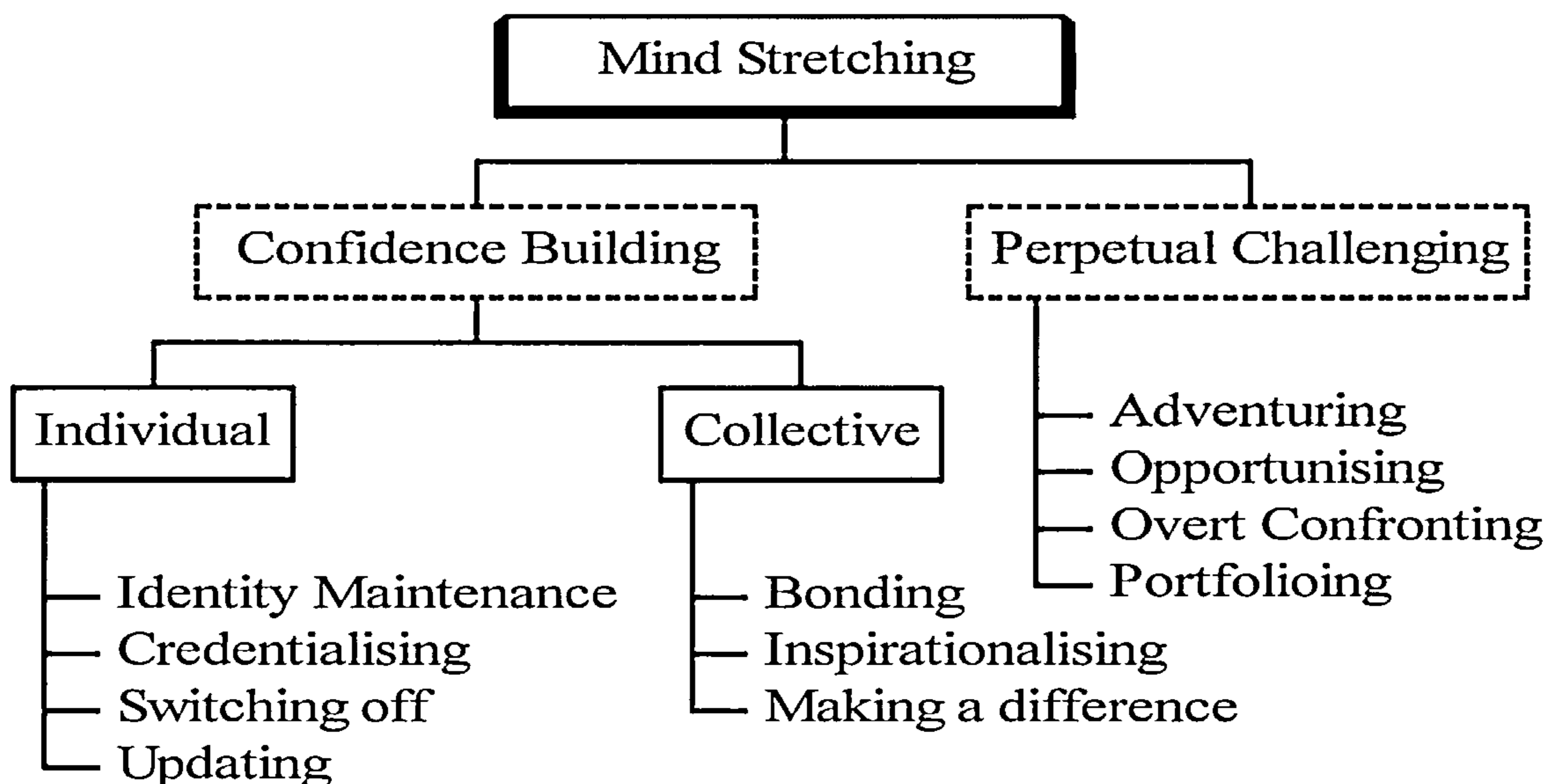


Figure 4.1 Mind stretching and its sub-core variables

In this chapter, I explain how the theory has emerged by following the major stages of the Grounded Theory, namely coding, theoretical memoing, constant comparing and sampling which were explained in more detail in the previous chapter. Nevertheless an outline of both the research activities and conceptualisation breakthroughs which had an impact on the emergence of the core variable is illustrated in the following figure (Figure 4.2):

9/97	Research objectives are identified
9/97	Decision taken to use Grounded Theory
10/97	Access gained to Company A - Corporate Identity Consultancy
10-11/97	First set of interviews conducted, notes taken, open coded and categorised
11/97	Grounded Theory Workshop - Brussels
12/97	Second set of interviews conducted, open coded and categorised
1/98	Third set of interviews conducted, open coded and categorised
3/98	First synthesis of data and presentation of data for verification
3/98	Access for further research in Company A was terminated due to commercially sensitive information identified by the writer
6/98	Access negotiated and gained with Company B – A multidisciplinary Design Consultancy
6-7/98	Interviews conducted, open coded, categorised
7/98	Paper presented at Academy of Marketing – Doctoral Colloquium (1998)
10/98	Second synthesis of data and presentation of data for verification
11/98	Major breakthrough in the conceptualisation of data and second presentation given
1/99	Second set of interviews conducted
2/99	Access negotiated
2/99	Access denied to Computer Games company
3/99	Access denied to Internet Consultancy
3/99	Meeting with CEO of a Computer Games company for access
3/99	Access denied to the Computer Games company
4/99	Access gained to Company C – Architectural Firm
4/99	Grounded Theory workshop - Paris
4-5/99	Interviews conducted with employees from the Architectural firm (Glasgow office)
6/99	Major breakthrough in the conceptualisation of data – core variable identified
6/99	Paper presented at the ICCIS June Symposium (1999)
7/99	Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing – Conference (1999)

Figure 4.2: A chronological framework regarding the major stages of analysis, fieldwork access and publications

4.2 The process data analysis

In this section I explain the early stage in the discovery of a grounded theory, referred to as data analysis. In Grounded theory, the analysis begins as soon as the first data are collected and is of high importance since it has an impact on the forthcoming interviews and observations. Data analysis is achieved by fracturing the data through open coding. Nevertheless, it is firstly essential to identify the different types of data evident in this study.

4.2.1 Types of Data

Glaser (1998, p. 9) identified five types of data, namely baseline, properline, interpreted, vague and conceptual. I illustrate examples from this study related to those five types as well as an explanation of how each type of data was used in the synthesis stage.

Baseline

From an interview with an architect:

CA: How is it permitted in this company to celebrate your individuality?

JH: People get credit about their work. Most of the designers are egotistical, so they need to be told that they are good within the company, by clients and by fellow designers.

This type of data comprises the best description that an interviewee can offer (Glaser, 1998, p.9). Such data are of high importance to the understanding concerning the needs and expectations of creative employees within a project based environments. Therefore, the identification of those issues is significant to the generation of a grounded theory.

Properline

The executive director of the corporate identity consultancy pointed out during a meeting with a prospective client: *“I think that this is part of our company’s culture: People should do their work in a pleasant way whatever that means. People should have fun while they are working”*.

In this case the participant tells what he thinks his audience wants to hear rather than what actually happens. In this particular circumstance the presence of both the prospective client and myself forced him to distort reality.

Interpreted

A newly appointed graphic designer expressed the view that: *“I think that I have autonomy, maybe this is the reason that the founders have asked me to come here, to approach issues in my way, which is quite interesting up to an extent”*.

This incidence justifies the general idea of autonomy by trying to give an explanation regarding the presence of employees with different backgrounds. In particular this employee's view is mostly influenced by the fact that he is not a certified graphic designer.

Vague

A consultant from the corporate identity consultancy when asked about the internal relationships among employees expressed the view that: *“Difficulties in trying to understand what to expect and expected from others is like a club or a university rather than a company”*.

The interviewee considered the question related to confidential information, therefore he is not interested in answering it. The employee's attitude towards the question raises more questions. For instance, is his apathy related to the changing nature of the corporate identity industry? It must be noted here that this industry was previously dominated by creative employees, but is now employing people with a strong business background. Therefore, is it part of the new culture of the company in terms of the consultants not to be interested in identifying the nature of relationships, which has a direct impact on the delivery of an innovative solution?

Conceptual

The founder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy in a discussion said that: *“Employees' tolerance threshold is based on reinforcing. Meaning that the more you are stressed, the more you get used to that”*.

The founder provided a conceptualisation regarding the challenges offered to their employees. He suggests that the frequency of this specific action has a direct impact on the way employees deal with stress or pressure.

It can be concluded from this section that when qualitative analytic techniques are chosen, distinction of the data is essential. The success of this process has significant impact on the generation of the theory. For instance, the most important types of data are

baseline, interpreted and conceptual since they contribute directly to the analysis and synthesis of the data. However, properline and vague data should be treated in a positive way as their identification leads to the development of new questions related to the employees' unwillingness to give a clear answer to questions. The analytic and synthetic techniques used in this research will be shown in the following sections backed up by examples, so that the reader can achieve a holistic view of how data were treated, and conceptually brought forward so that a grounded theory can be generated.

4.2.2 Generating open codes

The analytic process starts by generating the open codes. At this point I read the transcripts from the interviews and fracture the data into elements. My focus was to label the phenomena, while at the same time I had to perceive the potential relevance to the area under investigation. Therefore, the identified open codes were given a label, which would capture the meaning of the data. During that stage open codes, which pertained the same phenomenon, were grouped to form eight major categories as shown in the Table 4.1.

<p><u>Clients-related</u> Client searching, liaison, budgeting</p> <p><u>Services-related</u> Brand creating and managing, management of soft-issues, business transformation</p> <p><u>Process related</u> Visualising, visual audit,</p> <p><u>Management</u> Disciplining, leading, offering excellence, motivating, evaluating, recognising</p> <p><u>Internal issues</u> Interacting, integrating, team forming, supporting, relationships among employees, team dynamics, internal networking</p> <p><u>Individual components to creativity</u> Autonomy, risk taking</p> <p><u>Organisational components to creativity</u> Diversity, non conformity</p> <p><u>Company's information</u> Company's culture, positioning and competitive advantage</p>
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Table 4.1 Initial Open Coding

This distinction helped me identify the major concerns of the people being studied and therefore gain a deeper insight of what kind of data should be collected from the other companies during this study. For instance, open codes related to the services offered or processes related to the development of a corporate identity were considered as less relevant to the nature of this study. On the contrary, open codes related to individuals and organisational components to creativity as well as management practices and employees' relationships were considered of major importance to the development of the core variable, and therefore needed to be further explored.

The generation of open codes is explained by referring to transcripts of interviews with employees from the corporate identity and the design consultancy respectively.

Data: Meeting with a consultant

Consultants are motivated by the recognition expressed by the clients, the company as well as by the work itself. There is also a sense of achievement,..it is a very exciting job.

From this excerpt an open code was drawn.

Recognising

Explanation: The ego of these employees is their driving force to work more and eventually to produce an outcome of high quality. Additionally, everybody wants to do good work so that in the future he/she will have the chance to be involved in better projects or work with senior employees in the company whom they admire. The work itself is also a very important factor in motivating the consultants to perform more.

Indicator: External recognition plays an important motivational factor to innovate

Data: Meeting with the founder of the corporate identity consultancy

Good work is evaluated internally by the peer group or by the management, but also employees' work is evaluated externally by clients and the industry in general.

From this excerpt an open code was generated:

Evaluating

Explanation: It refers to the different ways of assessing employees' capabilities. Employees within creative organisations are evaluated against their thought process. The thought process refers to employees' intellectual and creative/innovative ability to tackle clients' problems.

Indicator: Different ways of evaluating employees' performance (internally and externally)

The aforementioned extracts comprise my first attempt to develop theoretical memos, which are informative explanations of open codes. They were very basic in the way they were written and didn't encapsulate the way "recognising" and "evaluating" is achieved within the organisation. Therefore, they don't refer to any properties of the behaviours identified.

Moreover, my limited experience at that stage regarding the use of grounded theory caused certain problems. For instance, the aforementioned memos don't include any conjecture, which would help the development of new insights to the area in question. Although these codes identify an important motivational factor, they fail to identify the processes behind them. Furthermore, the labels used at that stage weren't fitting the phenomena explained, which made it clear that they should be changed up to the point that the fit is enhanced.

Nevertheless, grounded theory when followed rigorously has the ability to correct itself as the researcher develops both his awareness about the area under investigation and his

knowledge regarding the methodology. This is shown in the following memos related to these concepts.

Being Evaluated

The company tries to be as fair as possible when evaluating the work of its employees. That is why it applies various ways of doing that. The most important can be summarised as follows:

- **internal evaluation** through annual reviews, colleagues' opinion, profit generated, whether the employee adds expertise to the existing capabilities of the company
- **external evaluation** through clients' perception, impact to clients' business, awards

The founder of the company said that: *“Good work is evaluated internally (by peers and senior executives), by the client or through awards, and whether the employee adds to the expertise of the company.”*

A junior consultant added that: *“Evaluation is done through annual reviews, as well as by colleagues.”*

Another senior consultant expressed the view that: *“Good work is evaluated through the relevant profit generated. Losses often happen because the company tries to intellectualise as much as it can; therefore, it employs more people, which means that there is a time loss which equals money. Good work is also evaluated by the impact that an new idea will have to the client's market, i.e. whether the new idea helped the client to grow, differentiate, win clients, and eventually make a profit.”*

Being recognised

Indicators of recognition can be divided into two properties, namely being internally and externally recognised. The first involves financial and verbal expression of recognition as well as exposing good work so that everybody can be aware of it. The external indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients' business.

The company's founder argued that: *"the company recognises good work and rewards it through bonuses, share schemes, or by just telling employees how good they are and treating them fairly."*

A project manager added that: *"The company lately decided to put work on the wall, so that everybody could see."*

A senior consultant noted that: *"Recognition is created through respect by the principal and the community, press is also important as well as to the impact that the new idea has to its client's business."*

The aforementioned extracts comprise examples of how properties were identified from each theoretical memo. In return, the properties have to be clustered into categories within each theoretical memo.

4. 3 The synthesis of data

The synthesis of data starts by constantly comparing each theoretical memo for similarities and differences. For instance, I identified strong similarities between the open codes of "evaluating" and "recognising". Nevertheless, the principle challenge then was to move the analysis to the next conceptual level and identify the process behind it. An example of a memo synthesising the aforementioned open codes, while at the same time the depth of analysis progresses, is shown below.

Credentialising

Definition

It is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch.

Empirical interpretations

There are two categories of credentialising, namely evaluating and recognising. This means that employees are tested by the internal employee market as they establish themselves in the company, while at the same time their reputation is gradually developed.

Evaluating refers to the different ways of assessing employees' capabilities. Creative employees are evaluated against their thought process. The thought process refers to employees' intellectual and creative/innovative ability to tackle clients' problems. The head of the interior design said that: *"So from that point of view, because there are guidelines laid down we have to assess people on their ability to deal with that information and to handle it. But they also have to show an ability to deal with the problem, there is a whole process that each of the employees has of evaluating what the problem is and understand what the key issues are in terms of resolving the problem, and then knowing how to go about and answer it. So that is the whole thought process of evaluation, identification and resolution of the problem. Knowing that there is an aesthetic side against which employees are evaluated and goes on an ongoing process"*. The importance of the creative/innovative abilities against which employees are evaluated was noted by the head of the graphics, who said that: *"Evaluation of work is informally done. An aesthetic evaluation also happens."*

Employees' contribution is evaluated both by their *peer group* and *extra peer group* based on objective and subjective measures. The head of the interior design noted that: *"Work is assessed on an ongoing and informal basis"*. The aforementioned indicator highlighted two properties of evaluating, namely the *ongoing* and *informal* nature of the evaluating process. Extra peer group evaluation includes client feedback for the final

outcome of the project as stated by the managing director of the company who said that: *“Work most of the times is evaluated by the client (whether he/she is happy or not with the company’s work). Sometimes clients’ feedback is formal by sending a letter to the company”*. From the previous indicator it becomes apparent that evaluation can also be *formal*. Peer group evaluation includes both subjective and objective measures against which employees’ performance is evaluated. For instance, objective measures are limited to the amount of profit generated by the project, as illustrated in the following indicator. The cofounder of the company expressed the view that: *“Financially, creatively, whether they fulfil the requirements of the client as well as fulfil our own criteria”*. The managing director expressed a similar view by saying that: *“One of the success criteria is whether a project had a profit”*. On the contrary, subjective measures refer to whether employees enhance the company’s expertise by being innovative as shown in the following quote from the cofounder of the company: *“ Also whether they tried a new technique or a new theory about typography design or when we can say that we are proud of that, or enjoyed the process of creating this design”*.

After employees have been evaluated **recognition** follows. Indicators of recognition can be divided into peer recognition and extra peer recognition. The peer recognition involves financial and verbal expression of recognition, as well as exposing good work so that everybody can be aware of it. *Peer group recognition* involves verbal expression of recognition as stated by the cofounder of the company: *“We always try to say to someone when he/she has done particularly well “great, really good”, it is important to give encouragement, it is absolutely important”*. A similar view was expressed by a graphic designer who said that: *“There is also praise from other people when the job is done, when the job is done well”*. The external indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients’ business. An architect highlighted the importance of *extra peer group recognition* by saying that: *“It is also important to get good feedback from people within your profession, from clients within the industries the company is involved and design magazines”*. The managing director of the company expressed the view that recognition is often expressed informally, as shown in the

following indicator: “*Recognition is expressed informally*”. From the previous indicator it is apparent that the category of recognising has a possible property, namely *informally recognising*.

It must be noted here that finding out definitions for the categories is of high importance to the analysis since it develops a deeper and more accurate explanation of the phenomena under investigation. Therefore, the derived label has further stimulated my thinking concerning the aforementioned category and its relationship with other categories, which will eventually lead to the development of the sub-core variables and the core variable. Nevertheless, the aforementioned selective code, which is created by a number of open codes with logically similar characteristics, refers to a fraction of data analysis. Therefore, I repeated the same process for the other open codes so that the synthesis could occur, which would lead to emergence of the basic social processes as explained in the following section.

4.3.1 Stage one – Initial synthesis of data from the corporate identity consultancy’s employees

My first attempt to synthesise the data occurred when I was asked to produce a paper regarding my understanding about the area under investigation for the Doctoral Colloquium. Further synthesis of the categories formed the selective codes, which led to the emergence of the basic social processes identified at that time. During that event, which was held in July 1998, I had the opportunity to present a paper with the title “The mind framing process within creative organisations”. This paper was related to my conceptual understanding of the data up to Easter 1998. Mind framing is about creating the conditions where creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their personal potential within project teams. Mind framing has two sub core variables, namely self-autonomising and aspirationalising. This process and its six categories are explained by excerpt from the memos as exhibited below.

Mind Framing

Mind framing is about creating the conditions where creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their personal potential within project teams, (See Figure 4.3 below). Unlike most companies, creative organisations have to allow people for personal freedom. Therefore, people need to be in a certain mindframe by balancing the two sub core variables, namely self-autonomising and aspirationalising. This is helpful not only in the context of design organisations, but also within all companies who seek new ways to be more creative. Nowadays, there is a need for creative companies to organise themselves in order to maintain efficiency and creativity, while at the same time the need for generating profit has to be met.

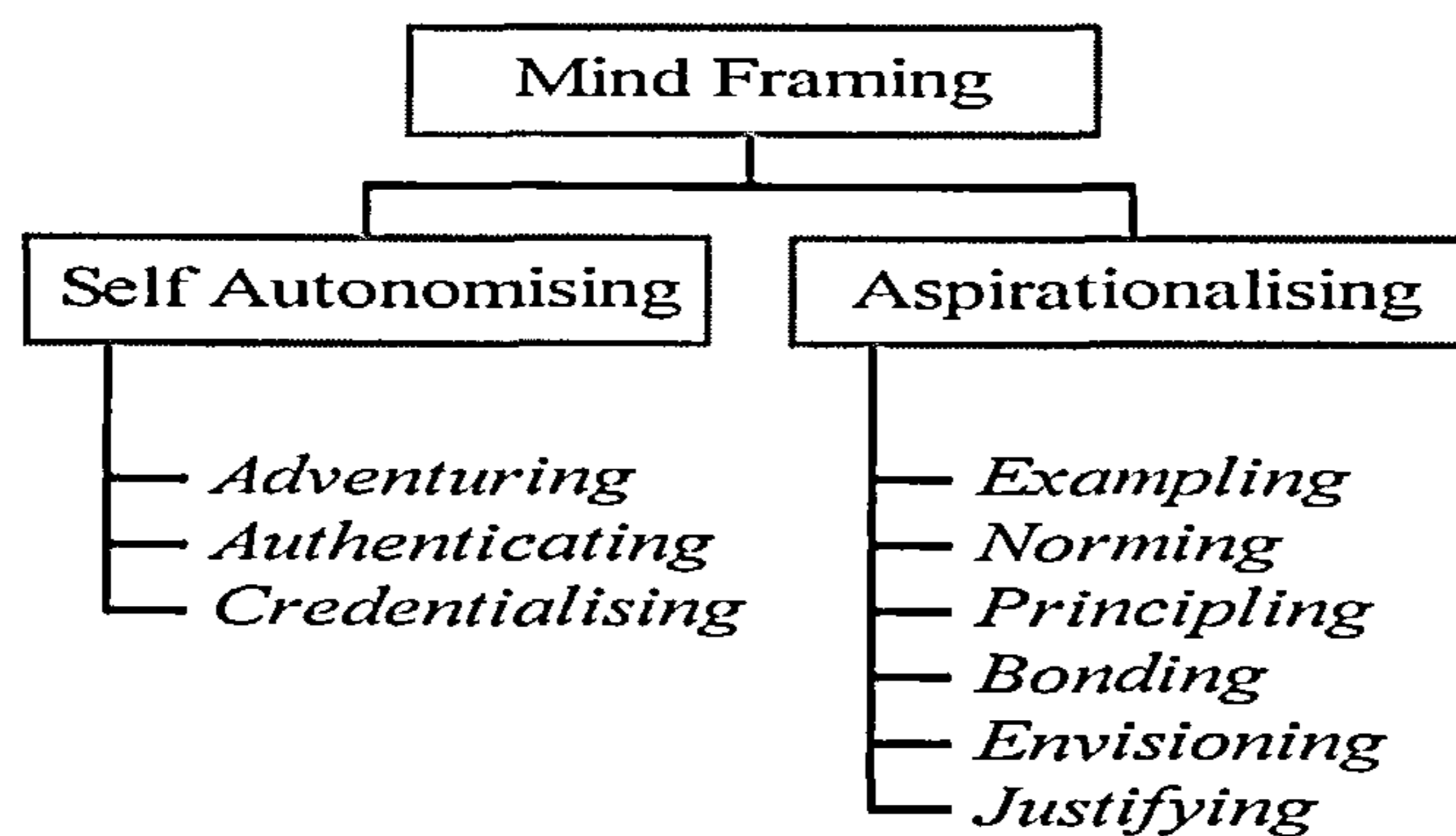


Figure 4.3. The Basic Social Process of Mind Framing

Self autonomising

Self-autonomising refers to the way the mind framing process affects individuals. This emerging basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to celebrate their individuality so that they can achieve their full potential. There are three categories of self-autonomising, namely adventuring, authenticating and credentialising. These categories are based on the data generated from the research so far.

Adventuring

Adventuring is where individuals are encouraged to utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process, so that they can generate innovative solutions. In this study seven properties of adventuring have been identified. In particular, the properties of working with ambiguity, commitment to the end-product, having a sense of achievement, risk-taking, mistake making and being intuitive were discovered, based on the data generated from the study. Additionally, the property of experimenting has been based on conjecture derived through the constant comparison process. It must be noted that all creative work requires an element of dissonance and psychological regression. Therefore, employees must come up with an idea or a design, which, although it is based on information derived through market research or by the client, is not known from the beginning whether it will be successful or not. The following example highlights a possible property of adventuring, namely the property of **working with ambiguity**. The managing director of the company said that: "*the company is looking for employees who can work with ambiguity*". A consultant expressed the view that the ambiguous environment within the company is often imposed by the company, by saying that: "*employees must do as much as possible, exhaust their experience, being given tasks beyond the breaking point*". Therefore, employees need to have **commitment to the end product**, which constitutes another property of adventuring. A consultant expressed the view that: "*people are motivated to work with other employees whom they do not really like in a project since the work is more important*". A similar example involved a project manager saying that: "*A project is a project, the goal is important; you should not leave your personal preferences to be the obstacle on that*".

Moreover, **having a sense of achievement** is another property of adventuring. At this stage, employees are not aware of the final outcome, hence they need to have an internal drive or a sense of achievement, which will help them to go through the whole process and generate an innovative solution. A consultant said that: "*Designers are motivated by an interesting project. There is also a sense of achievement; there is an internal high*".

pressure to perform better". This is a consultant who feels that the sense of achievement is an essential part of the adventuring process: *"company's employees are making a mark, they leave something behind"*.

Furthermore, both designers and consultants need to be **intuitive** of what they can visually and strategically do in order to handle clients' problems. This view was justified by a designer saying that: *"the designers have to visualise the idea or highlight the problem"*. This property is very important as far as the outcome is concerned, since it will influence the way the company's employees use words and images to create new solutions. Nevertheless, in order for employees involved in the creative process to come up with innovative ideas, they need to be in an environment, which cherishes risk-taking. The founder of the company mentioned that: *"You need to have the courage to give to your clients whatever you think is right not whatever they would like to hear"*. Two designers also expressed the same view: *"Sometimes, the company acts in a brave way; becomes more creative, teaches the client to accept the best"*. The examples highlight a possible property of adventuring, specifically the category of **risk-taking**. Nevertheless, the adventuring process may not have the expected result as an outcome, and an idea or a design can come up which distinguishes the client's company but not for the right reasons. Therefore, adventuring includes the property of **mistake making**. A consultant expressed the fact that: *"The company will offer a second try to an employee who made a mistake."*

Although no relevant information was identified, it is the researcher's belief that there is one more property of adventuring, namely **experimenting**. Towards the development of an innovative solution, employees have to generate several concepts in terms of images and words, which can fit to the parameters set by the client and the industry within which it operates. However, the risk associated with the experimenting process can be minimised since employees from different backgrounds and disciplines are involved.

Authenticating

Authenticating is where individuals are able to demonstrate their abilities, skills and personality within their working environment. There are four properties of authenticating, specifically being yourself, gaining autonomy, cherishing diversity and encouraging individuality. Creative organisations demand a lot of thinking and expression, since employees must come up with a new idea or a different expression of an existing one. Therefore, it is essential to employ people with strong personalities who will be able to formulate and implement new ideas. Such companies must hence encourage diversity and non-conformism by cherishing each employee's skills, abilities, expertise and personality. But in order for the teams to work effectively, there should be a general awareness of the skills, personalities and specialisation available within the company. The open and unstructured culture within the company allows people to be themselves. A consultant expressed the fact that: *"There is not a restriction in behaviour rather than let it be. The company helps people to show what they are, to be genuine and authentic".* A similar example involved a consultant saying that: *"...minimum structure and hierarchy allow people within the company to be themselves and therefore be more creative".* These examples highlight a possible property of authenticating namely the category of **being yourself**. Therefore, employees need to demonstrate several distinctive qualities as expressed by the consultant, who said that: *"It is very important to demonstrate ability to do and a point of view, which will allow you to develop your credibility (it must be shown)".* Furthermore, a consultant added that: *"People hired are expected to be different, not agreeing, diversity feeds creativity, the company as well as the teams are intellectually strong".* A similar example was pinpointed by another consultant, who had the view that: *"It is also important to show that you do not depend on anyone and that you can do it on your own".* Looking at these examples the researcher feels that authenticating includes the category of **gaining autonomy**. Some of the consultants asked, expressed the view that: *"there is an autonomy in choosing projects, people to work with..".* A designer expressed a similar view. He said that: *"there is certain autonomy in the workplace, for example you can say that you would like to work with someone or in a project and they will allow you to do that".*

However, an internal cultural environment, which allowed the individual personalities of the company's personnel to flourish, was initiated. Employees from both disciplines express the view that: "Individualism is very important. There are a lot of strong personalities that is why sometimes personality clash is the result. Diversity feeds creativity, and it is therefore very important to establish a non-conformist culture". In the course of discussion with a senior executive the subject of the company's culture came up. He mentioned that: "It is very individualistic company, with different people coming from different backgrounds". These examples suggest two properties of authenticating, namely **cherishing diversity** and **encouraging individuality**. These two properties aim to enhance the creative collaboration by encouraging individual contribution. An innovative environment should encourage diversity rather than suppress it. This is true since the flow of different stimuli in terms of images, words or ideas expressed by company's employees can comprise the basis upon which constructive judgement and discussions can take place before reaching a final decision.

Credentialising

Finally, credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch. There are two properties of credentialising, namely being evaluated and being recognised. This means that employees are tested by the internal employee market as they establish themselves in the company, while at the same time their reputation is gradually developed. This is done so that they can be involved in high profile projects or in order to work with other employees whom they admire. The company tries to be as fair as possible when evaluating the work of its employees. That is why various evaluation practices are applied. More specifically, employees are evaluated both by **their peer group** and **extra peer group** based on objective and subjective measures. On the one hand, objective measures against which employees' performance is evaluated include the amount of profit generated in a project and whether the employee in question adds to the expertise of the company. A senior consultant expressed the view that: "Good work is evaluated through the relevant profit generated. Losses often happen because the

company tries to intellectualise as much as it can; therefore, it employs more people, meaning that there is both a time and money loss. Good work is also evaluated by the impact that a new idea will have to the client's market, i.e. whether the new idea will help the client to grow, differentiate, win customers, and eventually make a profit". The founder of the company said that: "Good work is evaluated internally (by peers and senior executives), and whether the employee adds to the expertise of the company". On the other hand, subjective measures against which employees' performance is evaluated, include the comments made by his/her peer group. A junior consultant added that: "Evaluation is done through annual reviews, as well as by colleagues"

After employees have been evaluated, recognition follows. Indicators of **recognition** can be divided into peer recognition and extra peer recognition. Peer recognition involves financial and verbal expression of recognition, as well as exposing good work so that everybody can be aware of it. External indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients' business. The company's founder argued that: *"the company recognises good work and rewards it through bonuses, share schemes, or by just telling employees how good they are and treating them fairly". A project manager added that: "The company lately decided to put work on the wall, so that everybody could see". The recognition expressed by the extra peer group, such as the community and the client, was also revealed. A senior consultant noted that: "Recognition is created through respect by the principal and the community, press is also important as well as to the impact that the new idea has to its client's business".*

Aspirationalising

Aspirationalising is concerned with the way the mind framing process affects project teams. This is a basic social process whereby an organisation manages to inspire project teams to deliver excellent creative robust work. Six categories of aspirationalising have been identified. In particular, the categories of exemplifying, norming, principling and bonding were based on the data generated from the research so far. Moreover, the

categories of envisioning and justifying have been based on conjecture derived from the constant comparison method process.

Exemplifying

Creative organisations are involved in the development of innovative solutions. Therefore, employees should be shown or given an explanation how similar problems to the issues in question were dealt in the past. Exemplifying provides employees with a guide, which assists them to develop a creative solution. The founder of the company commented that: “ *A leader should set examples, show or explain how things are done, be meticulous, be an example for other employees. There is not a complex hierarchy. Nevertheless, patterns, level of quality and relationships with the clients must be set*”.

Norming

Norming is where employees adopt a clear view of the way they have to behave, so that their creative collaboration is improved. A clear understanding of the company's norms therefore aims to enhance creative collaboration within project teams. A consultant said that: “*There are certain norms of which employees should be aware such as being co-operative, kind, polite and helpful*”.

Principling

Employees have to follow some general guidelines. These set the boundaries in an attempt to minimise potential problems that might arise within project teams, taking into consideration their diversity and the different disciplines involved in creative environments. A consultant added that: “*There is an unwritten code of behaviour and practice. There is a set of principles established by the senior executives and the founder, for example: integrity, good work, honesty, being different, individuality, quality expected*”. A similar example involved a senior executive justifying the importance of having principles within the company by saying that: “*It is expected from the new employees first of all to have the prerequisite skills and then to have a point of view, to fit into the culture (which is very open, not a hierarchical one), be energetic, committed to what they are doing, be nice people*”.

Bonding

Bonding involves individuals associating with others with whom they think they have similarities. Seven properties of bonding have been identified in this research so far. Specifically, the properties of natural selection, personality fit, interreliance, sensitising, familial relationships and networking were discovered, based on the data generated from the study. Additionally, the property of creating synergy has been based on conjecture through the constant comparison process. Bonding is encouraged in an attempt to enhance excellence within project team members of creative organisations. The process of bonding is influenced by several factors, such as experience, cultural fit, cultural background, upbringing, education, and even sexuality. Employees have accumulated knowledge concerning other people's skills, expertise and personality, through networking. Therefore, they are in a position to choose the employees with whom they think they would like to co-operate. One property of bonding, namely **natural selection**, is exhibited. A consultant expressed the view that: "there is a natural selection in choosing team members, and this is influenced by sexuality, experience, whether you fancy the other person or not". Employees' **personality fit** constitutes another property of bonding. This was highlighted by a consultant saying that: "*Selection criteria can include relevant experience, cultural fit (cultural background, sex, upbringing, education, likes or dislikes), as well as personality*". These bonds will help them, while they are working on a project, to overcome any individual differences. The founder of the company expressed the fact that: "*Each employee is relying on the other during the project*". The aforementioned example suggests the property of **interreliance**. The company is in favour of this situation, since employees are then in a better position to handle clients' problems. Specifically, they are aware of other employees' personalities, expertise, skills and capabilities. Moreover, **sensitising** is another property of bonding. A designer expressed the view that: "*the job comes in and then it is decided whether this project is appropriate for a particular person, meaning that there is an awareness of individuals' skills and capabilities*". Another property of bonding is that of **familial relationships**. In the course of discussion with a project manager, the subject of the

company's culture arouse. The project manager said: "*there is a family thing in the company; people know if they work together, they will perform better for the welfare of the whole company*". A similar argument was highlighted by a consultant who added that: "*it is very difficult to understand what to expect and what is expected from others; it is like a club or a university rather than a company*".

The family and club characteristics encourage the development of bonds within the company, but in order to achieve that, employees need to be involved in **networking**, which is a property of bonding. Networking occurs when employees within the company interact with others in order to develop contacts, so that they are fully aware of other employees' capabilities, potential, specialisation and personalities. Networking can take the form of cliquing and informalising as illustrated by the following quote explained by a consultant: "*There are employees who are sticking together in different projects, forming informal networks of people*". A senior executive added that: "*It is expected from the new employees... as well as to form their associations*". A similar example involved a consultant arguing that: "*Cliques are formed, fights also happen but a balance is reached in the end*". It should be noted that certain cliques are created, which are not of a hostile nature, but indicate greater support among their members. Although hostility is not intended, it often happens that this is misunderstood and communication problems are caused.

Although no relevant indicators were identified, the researcher believes that there is one more property, specifically **creating synergy** based only on employees' expertise. The internal cultural environment supports a competitive environment among employees, which will help them to perform better than the last time. Therefore, some teams are developed in order to strengthen their position within the company, so that they can be given more autonomy in their work. Nevertheless, the bonding process should be adopted by the company's employees in a constructive way, rather than as a means of causing hostility among teams and its members within the company.

Envisioning

Envisioning is where an individual adopts the same vision with other employees within creative project teams. Unless everyone within the company shares the same vision, collective inspiration is jeopardised. This is true since otherwise there would not be a coherency when setting objectives or goals to be achieved.

Justifying

Giving reasons regarding the adoption of a certain mind frame instead of another can enhance the development of aspirations of excellence within creative organisations. Individuals involved in creative organisations are intelligent and have strong personalities, and hence the justification of any mind frame imposed by the company is essential to ensure effective teamwork.

The aforementioned categories and their properties comprise the first explanation of behaviour of employees being studied at that time. The analysis at that point highlighted the importance of some issues, such as employees' knowledge and thinking style. Nevertheless, issues such, as how creative organisations motivate their employees to explore uncertainty were not fully developed. This first analysis of data as well as the positive remarks gained in the doctoral colloquium gave me the confidence to carry on the research by further collecting data around certain areas of interest. For instance, the way creative organisations motivate and maintain high calibre employees were of high importance of my topic guide. Since I was confronted by a large volume of data during this stage of research, I began thinking of emerging variables and their properties, conditions, causes and consequences, as well as their relation to other variables.

4.3.2 Stage Two - Synthesis of data from interviews with employees of the design consultancy

By gaining access to the multidisciplinary design consultancy I had the opportunity to identify the issues related to their business. This helped me to supplement the existing data, while at the same time I had to complement the current theory. This resulted in the

generation of a second cluster of behaviours and therefore the gradual emergence of theoretical categories from the data and the identification of initial relationships. For instance, the further conceptualisation enabled me to identify similar clusters of properties, which led to the emergence of two distinct social processes. One dealt with “Perpetual Challenging” and the other with “Confidence Building”.

Perpetual challenging

Perpetual challenging refers to the different ways through which creative organisations enhance their employees’ internal drive to perform every project as a new challenge so that innovative solutions can arise.

The research so far has identified four sub-core variables of perpetual challenging, namely, adventuring, overt confronting, portfolioing and opportunising, as shown in the following figure (Figure 4.4):

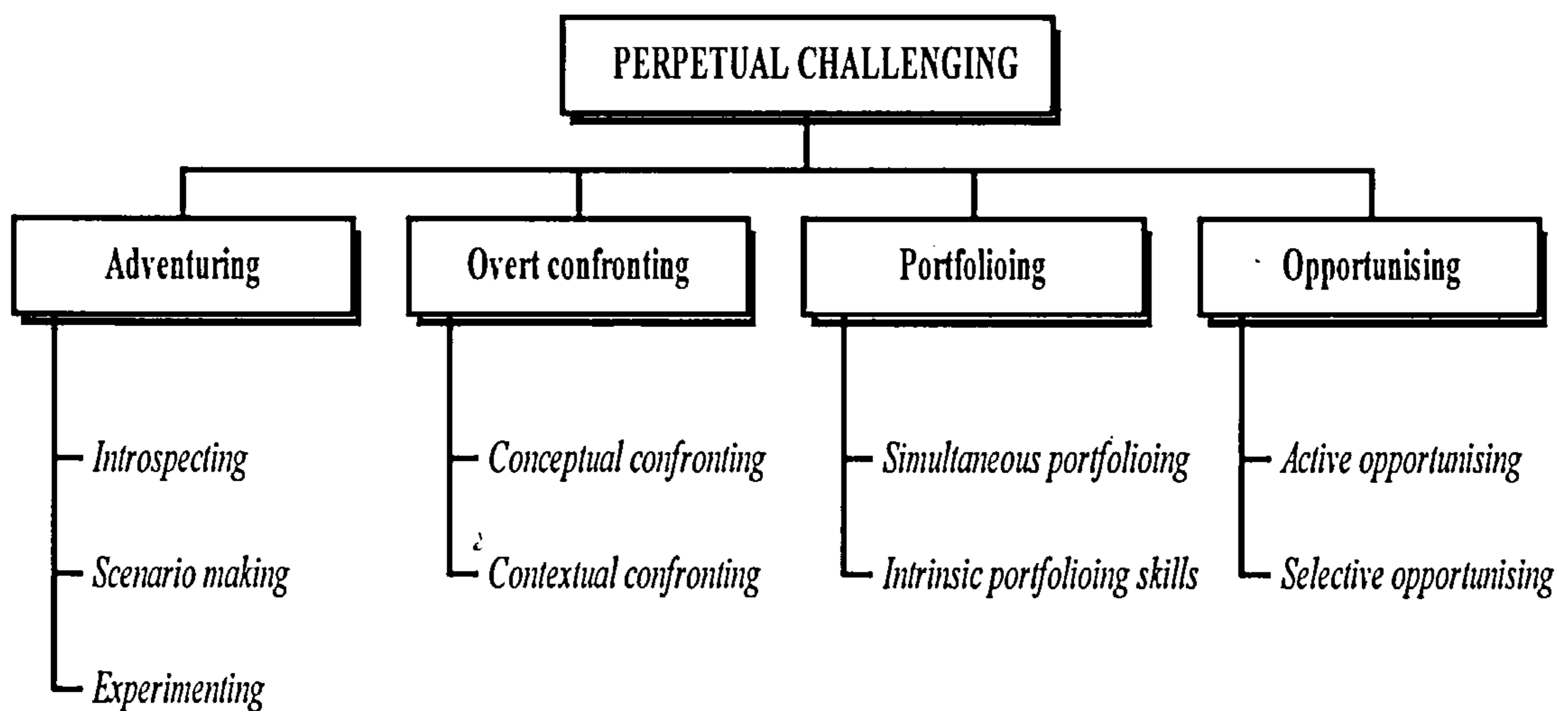


Figure 4.4. Perpetual challenging and its components

Adventuring

Adventuring is the process through which individuals are encouraged to explore uncertainty, so that they can generate innovative solutions. There are three categories of adventuring, namely "*introspecting*", "*scenario making*" and "*experimenting*". Introspecting occurs where creative employees explore uncertainty by working from what is already known. Scenario making refers to the development of possible routes to tackle a particular situation. This situation can range from a creative problem to the general strategic direction that the company has to take by identifying the threats and opportunities of the industry within which it operates. After the development of different scenarios, experimenting follows when employees utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process.

Overt confronting

Overt confronting refers to the deliberately set of work-related debates among employees used so that their creative thinking is fully utilised. Two categories of overt confronting emerged from the analysis: "*conceptual*" and "*contextual*" confronting. Conceptual confronting refers to the employees' ability to question each other's ideas so that their full potentials are utilised. Contextual confronting refers to the way creative organisations put pressure on their employees and offer them work with higher difficulty.

Portfolioing

Portfolioing is where creative employees are involved in a diverse range of projects or teams related to these projects. There are two categories of portfolioing, namely "*simultaneous*" and "*intrinsic portfolioing skills*". The portfolioing process does not only occur within creative organisations but also among all project-based environments, where employees are involved in different tasks or communicate with different audiences either internally or externally. It is part of the human nature to deal with different things at the same time. The second category of portfolioing, namely intrinsic

portfolioing skills, has derived from the previous indicators. This category refers to employees' different skills and abilities required for completing their work.

Opportunising

It is the creative employees' ability to be involved in projects, which are identified, as commercially or creatively interesting and therefore need to be cultivated. Active opportunising refers to the way creative employees are involved in generating more commercial and creative projects. Selective opportunising refers to the decisions taken as to what projects should be considered as suitable for the company's portfolio and which were derived from existing clients or are the result of referencing.

Confidence Building

This basic social process explains the different ways in which creative employees are encouraged to gradually develop a belief in themselves. Employees' confidence can be built through self-autonomising and influenced by the collective charisma.

Self-autonomising

Self-autonomising explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to celebrate their individuality so that they can achieve their full potential. There are three categories of self-autonomising, namely identity maintenance, credentialising and switching off. These categories have been based on the data generated from the research so far.

Identity maintenance

Creative organisations demand a lot of thinking and expression, since employees must come up with a new idea or a different expression of an existing one. Therefore, it is essential to employ people with strong personalities who will be able to formulate and implement new ideas. Identity maintenance is where employees are able to establish their authenticity by demonstrating their genuine abilities, skills and personality. This process will provide them with the opportunity to gain more personal initiative within their working environment. Two ways are adopted by creative organisations in order to

induce their employees to maintain their identities. Firstly, there is *explicit identity maintenance*, which refers to the continuous cherishing of diversity and encouraging individuality, as well as freedom giving through which creative organisations allow their employees to maintain their genuine abilities, skills and personalities. Nevertheless, the encouragement of individuality by creative organisations should occur up to the point that it does not have a negative impact, such as developing egocentric personalities. Secondly, employees' *identity* can be *maintained implicitly*, by developing a forum where different forms of expression are apparent.

Credentialising

Credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch. Credentialising can be internal and external. *Internal credentialising* refers to the evaluation and recognition of creative employees by their peer group. There are different ways of assessing employees' capabilities. Creative employees are evaluated against their thought process. The thought process refers to employees' intellectual and creative/innovative ability to tackle clients' problems. Employees' contribution is evaluated by their peer group based on objective and subjective measures. For instance, objective measures are limited to the amount of profit generated by the project. On the contrary, subjective measures refer to whether employees enhance the company's expertise by being innovative. After employees have been evaluated, internal recognition follows. The peer recognition involves financial and verbal expression of recognition, as well as exposing good work so that everybody can be aware of it. *External credentialising* refers to the establishment of employees within their industry. The external indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients' business.

Switching off

Switching off refers to the ways by which creative employees forget about certain problems temporarily in order not to be bogged down and then continue their work after a while with a clearer mind. The temporary breakout from preconceived ideas or gained

knowledge will give space to experimentation or approaching the issue in question differently or in an innovative way.

Collective charisma

Employees also build their confidence from their company's status. Two categories of collective charisma have been identified. In particular, the categories of bonding and the categories of making a difference have been based on the data generated from the research so far.

Bonding

Bonding involves individuals associating with others with whom they think they have similarities. Bonding is encouraged in an attempt to enhance excellence within project team members of creative organisations. Two types of bonding emerged from the research. *Active bonding*, which refers to the deliberate ways employees use to form associations with each other through coaching, sensitising, collective switching off, personality fit and interreliance and *passive bonding*, which refers to the development of rapport due to the way the working environment is set. For instance, by sharing the same space, it is easier to develop working relationships and eventually rapport.

Making a difference

Making a difference is the creative organisations' ability to inspire people to do their best work by constantly infusing a belief of the power of individual creativity. The basic social process of making a difference can occur actively and passively. The *active* form of encouraging company's employees to do their best work includes making creativity their priority, role modeling and creating a sense of ownership. The *passive* one refers to the development of inspiration among employees, which is implicit in the working environment, such as developing a forum for discussion.

The basic social process of confidence building proposes that the individual strengths demonstrated during the self-autonomising process will contribute to the collective charisma. In return, the developed collective charisma will have a direct impact on the

way employees' input is enhanced by learning from each other and maximised since their work is considered to have substantial impact on other people's lives. By being involved in this continuous process employees are able to build a belief in themselves.

These two sub-core variables were linked under the core process of sustaining chaos and presented to the owners of the design consultancy. Although their feedback was positive about the aforementioned processes, they argued that there is a certain degree of control and management of the process. It must be noted that the two sub-core variables, i.e. perpetual challenging and confidence building were saturated. Therefore, I had to continue synthesising the data through theoretical sampling and constant comparison so that saturated categories could become the core variable being explained in the following section.

4.4 The emergence of the core variable

During that stage I continued comparing the memos written regarding the architectural company, while at the same time I had to review my initial concepts concerning the area under investigation. This technique has assisted the identification of the core variable, since both my insight in the area under investigation and my knowledge regarding the methodology have been enhanced. Hence, I tried to identify the process behind the identified sub-core variables and move the level of conceptualisation further by coming up with a concept, which would capture the essence of the way creative organisations develop confident and skilled employees to face new challenges. The return visits to Company B and the interviews from Company C yielded data, which tended to disconfirm the importance earlier placed on sustaining chaos. In particular, the return visit to Company B and interviews with Company C suggested that more deliberate and managed actions were far more responsible for the development of employees' skills and knowledge rather than sustaining chaos. At the same time what became apparent was that there was a link between the two sub-core variables and the "mind framing" concept as explained in the previous section. Although this concept is about creating the conditions where creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their personal potential within project teams and therefore develop a belief in themselves, it doesn't focus on the

different ways through which employees' abilities can be stretched. Therefore, I continued comparing memos so that the core variable would emerge. The outcome of this process generated the process of "mind stretching" which was identified by the cofounder of Company B. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is encouraged as shown in the following memo. This is the first attempt to explain how "mind stretching" happens in creative environments.

Mind Stretching

Mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is encouraged.

In order for that to be achieved creative organisations are required to deliberately exploit uncertainty by balancing perpetual challenging with confidence building.

Perpetual challenging

Perpetual challenging refers to the ways in which creative organisations enhance their employees' internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge so that their individual contribution is maximised and an innovative solution can arise.

The research so far has identified four ways where perpetual challenging occurs within creative organisations, namely, adventuring, overt confronting, portfolioing and opportunising.

Adventuring

Adventuring is the process through which individuals are encouraged to explore uncertainty, so that they can generate innovative solutions.

Adventuring occurs through: Introspecting, which refers to the creative employees' ability to explore uncertainty by working from what is already known. Scenario making refers to the development of possible routes to tackle a particular situation. This situation can range from a creative problem to the general strategic direction that the company has to take by identifying the threats and opportunities of the industry within which it operates. Norm questioning and gap filling are some of the ways through which creative individuals develop different scenarios. After the development of scenario making, experimenting occurs. Creative employees utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process. This is the ability to test the different scenarios generated by different concepts in terms of images or ideas, which can fit to the parameter set by the clients or the industry within which they operate, and eventually decide the most appropriate one.

Opportunising

Opportunising is the creative employees' ability to be involved in projects, which have been identified as commercial or creative interesting and therefore needed to be cultivated. There are two forms of opportunising, namely active and selective opportunising. Active opportunising refers to the way creative employees are involved in initiating new commercial and creative projects. Selective opportunising refers to the selection of the projects, which are under consideration and which were derived from existing clients or are the result of referencing.

Overt confronting

Overt confronting refers to the deliberately set of work related debates among employees so that their creative thinking is fully utilised. Overt confronting can be conceptual and contextual. *Conceptual confronting* refers to the employees' ability to question each other's ideas so that their full potential is utilised. On the contrary,

contextual confronting refers to the way in which creative organisations put pressure on their employees and offer them work with higher difficulty.

Portfolioing

Portfolioing is where creative employees are involved in a diverse range of projects or teams related to those projects. *Portfolioing* can be *simultaneous* by being involved in different stages of a diverse range of projects. However, it can be *sequential* where employees are involved in a single project until they finish it so that they can move to the next one. Nevertheless, in order for the portfolioing process to have the expected outcome, employees need to have *intrinsic portfolioing skills*, which are the different skills and abilities required for completing their work. It is the nature of creative environments to require from their employees to be able to balance their creativity with their managerial skills and abilities so that the work is finished on time and with the highest creative contribution, meaning that creative employees' lives is a rotation from one project to another, from one client to the next and from using certain skills and talents to one project to try some different to others.

Confidence Building

This basic social process explains the different ways in which creative employees are encouraged to gradually develop a belief in themselves. Employees' confidence can be built through self-autonomising and influenced by the collective charisma.

Self-autonomising

Self-autonomising explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to celebrate their individuality so that they can achieve their full potential. There are four categories of self-autonomising, namely identity maintenance, credentialising, outward looking and switching off. These categories have been based on the data generated from the research so far.

Identity maintenance

Identity maintenance is where employees are able to establish their authenticity by demonstrating their genuine abilities, skills and personalities. This process will provide them with the opportunity to gain more personal initiative within their working environment.

Two ways are adopted by creative organisations in order to induce their employees to maintain their identities. Firstly, there is *explicit identity maintenance*, which refers to the continuous cherishing of diversity and encouraging individuality, as well as freedom giving through which creative organisations allow their employees to maintain their genuine abilities, skills and personalities. Freedom giving can range from responsibility gaining to decision making. Nevertheless, the encouragement of individuality by creative organisations should occur up to the point, which doesn't have a negative impact, such as developing egocentric personalities. Secondly, employees' *identity* can be *maintained implicitly* by developing a forum where different forms of expression are apparent and by letting employees to have a recognisable anonymity in their workplace.

Credentialising

Credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch. Credentialising can be internal and external. *Internal credentialising* refers to the evaluation and recognition of creative employees by their peer group. After employees have been evaluated, internal recognition follows. *External credentialising* refers to the establishment of employees within their industry. The external indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients' business.

Outward looking

There are three categories of outward looking, namely being proactive-inquisitive, scope broadening and direct experiencing. The first category refers to the internal drive of creative employees to quest new areas of knowledge. The second category of outward looking, specifically scope broadening is of high importance for creative employees. In

order for employees to enhance their creativity they need to have a general awareness of what is happening in the world. Creativity can take many forms in society and that is why it is important for creative employees to be open-minded and seek for its expressions outside their particular field. Therefore direct experiencing can be either the result of an organised-conscious effort or it can be passive and subconscious throughout creative employees' lives.

Switching off

Switching off refers to the ways by which creative employees forget about certain problems temporarily in order not to be bogged down and then continue their work after a while with a clearer mind.

Collective charisma

Employees also build their confidence from their company's status. Two categories of collective charisma have been identified. In particular, the categories of bonding and the categories of making a difference have been based on the data generated from the research so far.

Bonding

Bonding involves individuals associating with others with whom they think they have similarities.

Bonding is encouraged in an attempt to enhance excellence within project team members of creative organisations. Two types of bonding emerged from the research. *Active bonding*, which refers to the deliberate ways employees use to form associations with each other and *passive bonding*, which refers to the development of rapport due to the way the working environment is set.

Making a difference

Making a difference is the creative organisations' ability to inspire people to do their best work by constantly infusing a belief in the power of individual creativity.

The basic social process of making a difference can occur actively and passively. The *active* form of encouraging company's employees to do their best work includes making creativity their priority, role modeling and creating a sense of ownership as well as feel part of a legacy that has a future. The *passive way* refers to the development of inspiration among employees, which is implicit in the working environment, such as developing a forum for discussion.

The basic social process of confidence building proposes that the individual strengths demonstrated during the self-autonomising process will contribute to the collective charisma. In return, the developed collective charisma will have a direct impact on the way employees' input is enhanced by learning from each other and maximised since their work is considered to have substantial impact on other people's lives. By being involved in this continuous process employees are able to build a belief in themselves.

The basic social process of "mind stretching" within creative organisations has emerged by being involved in the following activities:

- I had to follow rigorously the stages of the grounded theory methodology and keep myself open to the data.
- Constant memo writing regarding the themes of mind stretching. This started with a brief memo labeled as mind framing and evolved as the core variable.
- The use of both selective coding and theoretical sampling with interviews of the design and architectural companies.
- Focus on certain areas of investigation, such as employees' motivation and development, while at the same time excluding other areas concerning their marketing activities.

- The extensive use of causes, consequences and cutting points of the concepts identified.
- My introspection regarding the ideas generated and their strong similarities and links with others was regular.
- Meetings with people who have been involved in this research and whose feedback highlighted the areas of importance
- Regular meetings with my supervisor and with other Ph.D. researchers who applied the grounded theory methodology, whose feedback was essential for the emergence of the sub-core variables as well as the core variable.

4.5 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the different stages of data analysis and synthesis so that the sub-core variables as well as the core variable could emerge. Therefore, it was essential to explain how the data were derived from the corporate identity consultancy, design consultancy and the architectural company and then analysed. In order for that to be achieved, I had to make reference to open codes, selective codes and memos so that the reader could understand the progress from the initial concepts to the development of the core variable through the stages of analysis. The next chapter explains in more detail the basic social process of “mind stretching” by making reference to all the concepts that make this basic social process to occur throughout creative organisations.

CHAPTER 5: MIND STRETCHING: THE SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDED THEORY

Abstract

This chapter offers an explanation of the emergent substantive grounded theory of mind stretching. The first section (5.1) defines mind stretching and outlines the theory as a whole. The second section (5.2) illustrates why mind stretching occurs. The third section (5.3) analyses the two sub-core variables, namely perpetual challenging and confidence building. The next sections (5.4 to 5.14) examine each category by referring to indicators from theoretical memos in order to show the properties within each category. Each of these sections aims to define the category, to outline its properties and to illustrate its implications. Section 5.15 discusses the major cutting point of this emergent substantive theory. The final section (5.16) discusses the implications of mind stretching.

Excerpts from theoretical memos are included when explaining the categories in order to communicate the theory to the reader in a better manner. They are written in italics and are framed, while when it is required they are accompanied by an introduction to situate them into the specific context, followed by an interpretation. Moreover, phrases or words of high importance to the theory are underlined.

5.1 Introducing “Mind stretching”

The process of mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is built. Mind stretching assists therefore creative employees to extend their creative potentials by balancing perpetual challenging with confidence building. This substantive theory has emerged through the study of organisational behaviour of creative professionals.

Mind stretching comprises an emergent substantive theory, which means two things. Firstly, that the theory’s analytical range is limited to the context from which it has emerged. Secondly, that some modifications of the theory as it stands at this point may occur as new data are introduced.

The term “stretching” means to extend one’s self. “Mind” refers to the creative potentials, such as knowledge, intellectual abilities and thinking styles, which contribute substantially to the creative thinking.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of mind stretching within creative environments.

“But I don’t want a company, which is run by rules, but a company where people should use their common sense. Because from the moment that you give rules, people stop thinking, which is a bad idea. I want people to be awake most of the time”.

This excerpt shows the importance of encouraging intellectual alertness within creative environments. It also shows that employees’ capabilities and skills must be stretched in every occasion either implicitly, which is the case of abolishing work-related rules, or explicitly by challenging them.

The head of the interior design volunteered a similar opinion with regards to the importance of mind stretching.

“..it can be a designer’s advantage to have different ideas because design is about ideas. You must have a lot of ideas to be a good designer. The most important tool designers have is their ideas”.

The process of mind stretching is of high importance for both creative organisations and their employees. Creative organisations through mind stretching identify ways for enhancing their employees’ creative potentials, which can then be applied in a project. This in return will have a direct impact on the quality of employees’ work since they will be more equipped to come up with more innovative solutions. On the other hand, creative employees who feel that they can find all the resources to develop within their working environment, are more likely to feel committed and spend more time and effort in a project and therefore unleash more of their creative potential.

This theory is primarily a process study within the theoretical code of strategies (Glaser, 1978, p. 76). Mind stretching identifies four ways for challenging employees’ capabilities balanced by seven categories of building their confidence. These categories form an overall process as shown in the following figure (Figure 5.1).

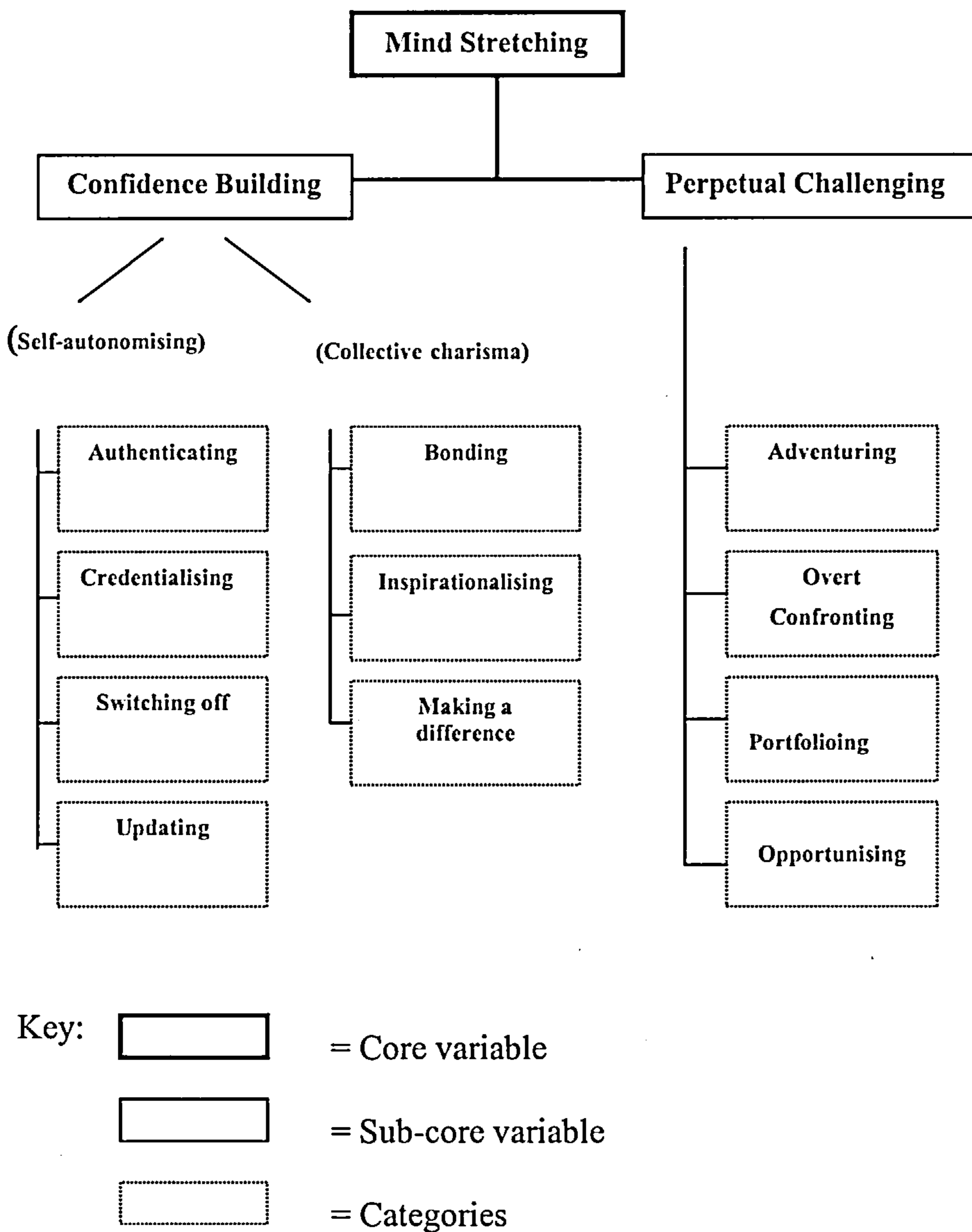


Figure 5.1: The substantive grounded theory of “Mind Stretching”

5.2 Why mind stretching occurs

The substantive grounded theory of mind stretching is concerned with how employees’ knowledge, intellectual abilities and thinking are enhanced within a creative environment so that they will be able to come up with an innovative solution.

Mind stretching seems to exist as a means of maintaining efficiency and creativity, while at the same time the need for generating profit is met. In other words, creative employees must be equipped to handle the new challenges that they are facing by learning to take advantage of ambiguity. While they are doing that, they also need to be very confident, to have the strength to tolerate uncertainty. I have included excerpts from my theoretical memos to help explain why mind stretching is happening.

The rapid technological advancements, such as new design software and the extensive use of the Internet have changed the way work is done, the forms of communication as well as the contents of messages. Furthermore, technology must be considered as a tool assisting innovation, not as a means of replacing it. Creative organisations must understand that the adoption of certain types of technology cannot be considered by itself a competitive advantage since sooner or later such technology will be available to other organisations.

It is commonly accepted that clients are becoming more knowledgeable of their own businesses, their competition as well as the services offered. Their struggle to continuously differentiate their products or services has increased their expectations from consultancy work.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question to why employees' capabilities must be stretched.

“...they are encouraged to be inquisitive and to continue to inquire for information about anything, you never know what the client is going to ask you to do next”.

The rapid technological advancements and the fierce competition for market share have contributed to the unprecedented increasingly pace of change. Therefore, organisations should be ready to re-arrange their resources to meet the new demands.

An architect of the architectural company whom I interviewed offered this indicator.

“It is a very competitive business, there are so many companies, margins become tighter. The way buildings are built changes so rapidly”.

Employees within creative environments increasingly look for autonomy so that they can use their personal initiatives. Therefore, creative organisations are required to identify ways for motivating and developing their high caliber employees.

The head of the interior design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy explains.

“Employees are progressive, positive, self-committed and are keen to progress”.

All the aforementioned reasons have a direct impact on the increasing uncertainty that creative organisations have to face nowadays. Creative organisations, therefore, must adopt proactive practices in order to innovate. In other words, opportunities in the future will be discovered by individuals who are used to stretching their potential in every situation rather than habitually reacting to it. However, in order for that process to be successful, people at the same time need support so that their confidence is strengthened.

5.3 Mind stretching’ sub-core variables

Mind stretching has two sub-core variables, namely “perpetual challenging” and “confidence building”. This section starts with an explanation of perpetual challenging and finishes with analysing the sub-core variable of confidence building, as they have emerged from this grounded theory study.

5.3.1 Perpetual challenging

Perpetual challenging refers to the ways in which creative organisations deliberately develop opportunities where employees can exploit uncertainty. This in return enhances

their employees' internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge, so that their individual contribution is maximised and an innovative solution can arise.

Here articulated by a graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“If you challenge every project completely differently, regardless of whether they come from the same industry or not, everything is a new job right from the beginning. I’ve got another brochure coming up, it is a property brochure and I did a property brochure eight months ago, but certainly I won’t approach it in the same way as that one”.

By doing so every project is considered unique and therefore is given the appropriate maximum creative input. Creative employees should challenge every project regardless of whether they have been previously involved in something similar to that. The client is different every time and hence the message that they aim to communicate to their target audience is different as well.

The sub-core variable of perpetual challenging suggests that creative organisations utilise many processes within their working environment in order to assist their employees to break out from their preconceived ideas. The categories of perpetual challenging, namely adventuring, overt confronting, portfolioing and opportunising, are shown in the following figure (Fig. 5.2).

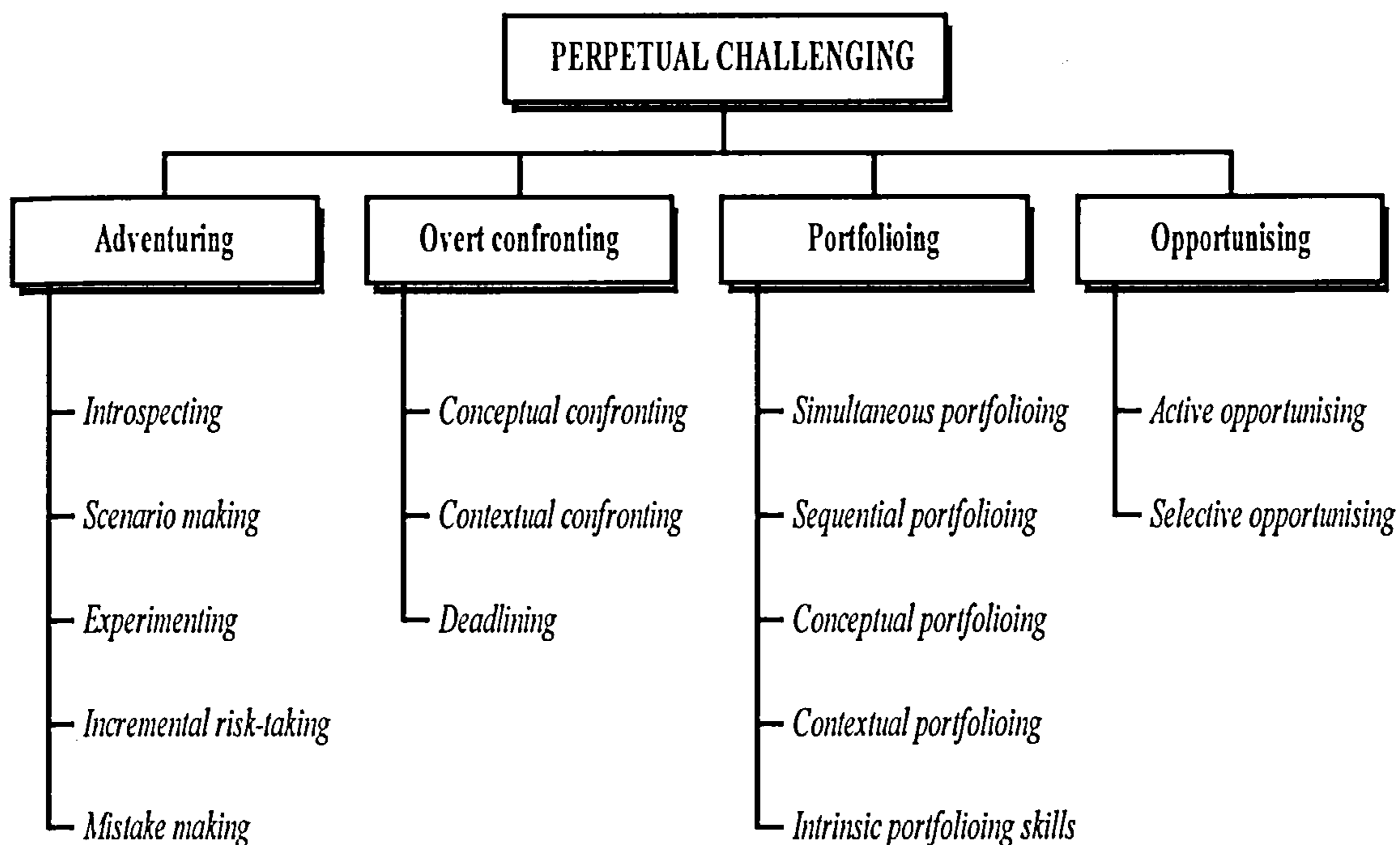


Figure 5.2: Perpetual challenging and its components

5.3.2 Confidence building

As explained so far creative employees need to be surrounded by a certain degree of uncertainty. In order for this process to be successful, creative employees need to develop self-reliance, which will help them to take advantage of ambiguity and come up with an innovative solution. Therefore, the sub-core variable of confidence building explains the different ways in which creative employees are encouraged to gradually develop a belief in themselves. Employees' confidence can be built through self-autonomising and collective charisma.

Self-autonomising refers to the confidence built in an individual basis. Employees' self-reliance is based on pre-understanding and by learning more about themselves. The research has identified four categories of self-autonomising, namely authenticating, credentialising, switching off and updating.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy pointed out that:

“Confidence takes a lot of time to achieve through experience and by knowing yourself very well”.

Furthermore, employees’ confidence can be developed from the company status. Collective charisma encompasses the processes that creative organisations use to reinforce employees’ confidence such as bonding, inspirationalising and making a difference, which in return will lead to the development of collective fulfillment.

It must be noted here that there is an interrelationship between self-autonomising and collective charisma as shown in the following figure (Figure. 5.3).

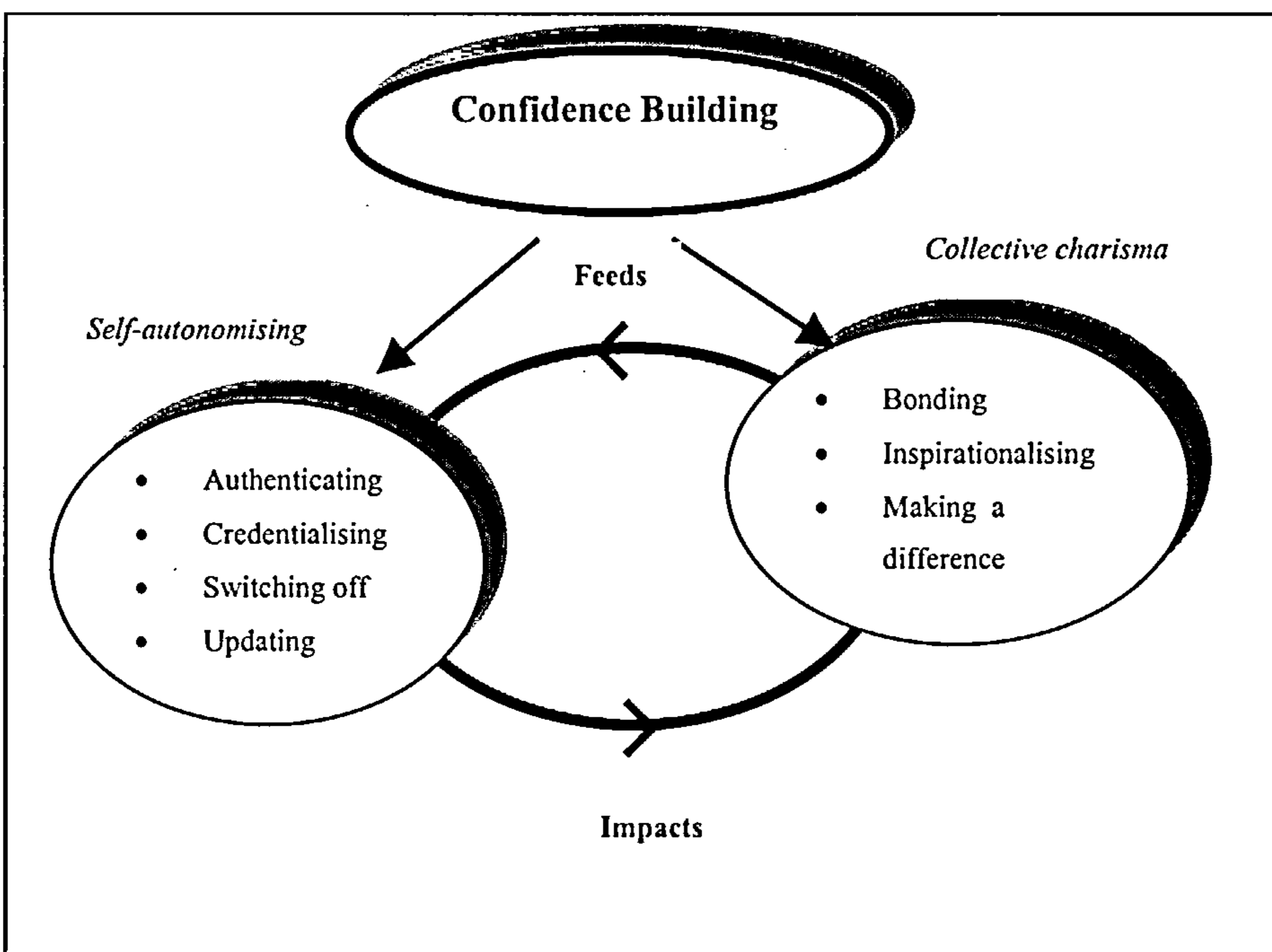


Figure 5.3: Confidence building and its components

The aforementioned diagram of confidence building proposes that the individualistic originality demonstrated during the self-autonomising process will contribute to the collective charisma. In return, the developed collective charisma was also found to have a direct impact on the self-autonomising process. When a favorable collective charisma is developed, employees are likely to be more committed and spend more time and effort in a project. This happens because they feel proud of contributing to their organisation's success, which reinforces their motivation to produce yet more creative work.

5.4 Adventuring

This is the first of the four sections, each devoted in explaining the category from the sub-core variable of perpetual challenging.

5.4.1 Definition of the category "Adventuring"

Adventuring is the process through which individuals are encouraged to explore uncertainty, so that they can generate innovative solutions. Adventuring is the only process, which occurs implicitly when employees' goal is the generation of new ideas.

The managing director of the architectural company pointed out that:

"Experimenting is necessary for progress. It is built in the natural design process".

It must also be noted that all creative work requires an element of dissonance and psychological regression. Therefore, employees must come up with an idea, which although it is based on information derived through data collection, it is not known in the beginning whether it will be successful or not.

This, from the memo "working with ambiguity", illustrates.

The managing director of the corporate identity consultancy during the interview said: "We are looking for employees who can work with ambiguity".

5.4.2. Properties of the category “Adventuring”

The five properties of adventuring identified so far are:

- **Introspecting**, creative employees explore uncertainty by working from what is already known. This comprises the starting point of the adventuring process. The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy offered this indicator.

“...about thinking that we know these things will work. We know that people are doing it like that and it works like that. So we say why don't we do it like this? So we are quite good in exploring unexplored territories and we are quite good in identifying or formulating things by looking at them in another way”.

My reflection on this is that creative employees, who aim to do original work, need to have the basic knowledge of their specific field. In other words, they need to know what has already been discovered, so they will be able to go beyond that point.

- **Scenario making**, refers to the development of possible routes to tackle a particular situation. This situation can range from a creative problem to the general strategic direction that the company has to take by identifying the threats and opportunities of the industry within which it operates. This technique is used in order to make employees think, rather than feeding them with the solution. By doing so, employees are in the position to evaluate the possible scenarios and make the final decision. In order for employees to find out what is already known, they are required to identify what they do not know. This can be achieved either by norm questioning or by gap filling, which are two major ways of scenario making, as shown in the following indicators.

The managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy offers this indicator.

“Scenario is about questioning the norm”.

The other way of scenario making was highlighted by the cofounder of the same company.

“It is like filling gaps. It is like looking at processes and breaking them down and saying that there is an opportunity here and there is a gap there”.

The outcome of either process will give a variety of possible alternative scenarios for the specific project or the future of the industry within which the company operates.

- **Experimenting.** After the development of different scenarios, experimenting follows. Experimenting occurs when employees utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process. It refers to the employees’ ability to test the different scenarios generated by different concepts in terms of images or ideas, which can fit to the parameters set by the client or by the industry within which their company operates, and eventually decide the most appropriate one. The head of the interior design highlighted the importance of experimenting in the creative process.

“We are not afraid to experiment, to say we will have a look; we would like to try something different, something that is new, not done before, something exciting and fresh, people will see and will stimulate a response”.

- **Incremental risk-taking** is the ability to stretch creative employees' adventuring process up to a certain point so that the client is not exposed to massive risk. There is always a risk attached when creative organisations are trying to do anything new.

This indicator is taken from an interview with the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

"..but I think that we try and use our own experiences to minimise the dangerous bits. We try to calculate risk every time when you incrementally push a job that much further, so we are constantly in a control, there is not a clear and absolute free fall".

This excerpt shows that creative professionals are aware of the risks associated with their work and therefore they are acting proactively by taking into consideration any potential pitfalls, so that the danger of massive exposure to risk is minimised. Nevertheless, the research has shown that incremental risk is very often cherished by creative organisations because it stretches employees' capabilities and consequently provides the basis upon which employees can develop new knowledge and skills to be used in other projects.

Creative organisations also cherish risk taking up to the point where they are in a position to justify it. The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question to the ways the firm uses to minimise risk associated with an innovative solution.

"We have to be able to explain the work, to underpin it with intuition, with method but there is also a risk".

- **Mistake making.** The adventuring process may not have the expected result as an outcome, and an innovative solution may not clearly distinguish the client's company or products from its competitors.

The managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of mistake making.

“There are creative and management mistakes at the beginning and technical mistakes and creative mistakes at the end of the project. It is much easier to solve problems at the beginning because at the end we have less control since we subcontract the work. Problems can also arise from bad management judgements and bad decisions related to the client or the contract”.

There are two issues arising from this excerpt. The first is that, mistakes differ in their nature. In this study three mistakes were identified, namely project, client and managerial. The second is that impact that mistakes have differ in terms of the control that employees have over them. For instance, mistakes at the beginning can be more easily and directly corrected whereas mistakes at the end of the project are more difficult to be resolved due to limited control over the outcome.

5.4.3 Implications of the category “Adventuring”

Two issues arise from the data.

The first relates to the nature of adventuring. The degree of the success of this process has a direct impact on the quality of the service offered to the client. In other words, it is required from employees, in order to come up with innovative solutions, to engage consciously in this process. Creative organisations must develop conditions where employees can take advantage of uncertainty in their projects to maximise their individual input. This indicator from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of the process.

“I like the chaos because you always have the chance to find order within it. You have to have an opportunity, because if you don’t, you get bored”.

The second relates to the consequence of adventuring. The more creative organisations encourage their employees to be involved in that process, the more employees’ knowledge and intellectual boundaries are pushed. In return, the accumulated knowledge and experience will assist creative employees to come up with a more efficient end product to meet clients’ expectations. On the contrary, organisations which don’t allow proper experimentation and choose to improve previous solutions will find it more difficult to innovate.

Furthermore, this study has shown that employees’ motivation and involvement are enhanced when they are involved in the adventuring process. The element of the new venture is a significant motivational tool for creative employees, since this comprises the only time in the creative process where they can conceptualise what they can visually or commercially do in order to handle clients’ or consumers’ problems.

Finally, employees, who are familiar with the adventuring process are better equipped to cope with uncertainty and stress, since the more they have to deal with it the more their tolerance threshold is stretched.

5.5. Overt confronting

5.5.1 Definition of the category “Overt Confronting”

Overt confronting refers to the deliberately set of work-related debates among employees which is used so that their creative thinking is fully utilised. The managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of overt confronting.

“We try to externalise: Today we had a fast direct design session and changed something that was a good idea to something, which is very exciting. I deliberately set a fight; I encouraged them because it removes a degree of complacency to be passionate about a subject”.

This excerpt highlights the deliberate nature of overt confronting within a creative organisation. The managing director knows from his experience the benefits of an overt conflict and tries to do his best to take advantage of it.

The main objective of this process is to enhance employees’ creative contribution in every project situation, as highlighted in the following indicator by a graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

His view on how employees’ capabilities are stretched was that: “By working with one another, we discuss projects and ideas are bounced between one another”.

5.5.2 Properties of the category “Overt confronting”

There are two emergent categories:

- **Conceptual confronting** refers to the employees’ ability to question each other’s ideas so that their full potentials are utilised.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question to whether she thinks that diversity causes any problems.

“I want to be constantly challenged. If there is any complaint I have got in my life is that people do not challenge me enough, because that keeps you fresh, because all you need is to continue learning”.

From that, it can be assumed that as the questioning of each other's ideas becomes more frequent, employees' creative thinking is better utilised. Conceptually confronting can take the form of dialoguing, as highlighted by the cofounder of the same company.

"I think that it is great to engage in a dialogue; dialogue is about everything and experiences, everyone has different experiences. But the more information you have to choose from the better the possibility that you will come up with a better solution".

Conceptual confronting can be internal, which refers to the questioning of each other's ideas within the company, and external, which occurs when informal and casual debates with people from other disciplines take place.

A senior consultant of the corporate identity consultancy gives an example of an internal conceptual confrontation.

"Sometimes, the consultant will challenge the designer and vice versa to get a good solution. Initially, there is disagreement caused by different perspectives, but at the end you reach an agreement and you get a good end product.

This indicator is taken from an interview with the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy:

"It is great to be challenged across disciplines. I would like to meet scientists. It widens your appreciation in what you do and lets you understand other ways of looking at the problems".

- **Contextual confronting** refers to the way creative organisations put pressure on their employees and offer them work with higher difficulty. The managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of contextual confronting.

“We put pressure to be good and more creative. We have big expectations, we push them to do quality work and become good managers as well. Everybody has to do some management and some creativity. But we are trying to give a variety”.

This approach suggests that creative employees should not only be given projects with higher level of difficulty but they should also be involved in new tasks so that their skills are enhanced.

- **Deadlining** is another way of putting pressure to employees’ work. Deadlining is the deliberate set of specific time boundaries for projects so that employees’ creativity is enhanced. The aim of deadlining is to encourage creative employees to focus on the problems and solve the issues in question, since otherwise the creative process will take as much time as the project lasts. Creative organisations therefore have to put pressure on employees to be economical in terms of deadlines and make decisions on time. There are two forms of deadlining, namely extra peer group and peer group deadlining.

The indicator below from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy demonstrates the two forms of deadlining.

“Deadlines are client and management related. It is like a game- “I dare you to finish that project by that time. Pressure is good in order to be decisive”.

A pre-set obstacle like a deadline can stimulate creativity, as employees’ focus can be narrowed to the issue in question, which needs to be solved immediately.

Deadlining is about forcing employees to prioritise the important parts of a job and deal with them first.

5.5.3 Implications of the category “Overt Confronting”

The main issue regarding overt confronting is its consequences. Firstly, overt confronting has an impact on the development of creative employees’ skills and knowledge, since they have to constantly question their ideas rather than take them for granted, which will limit the adventuring process and therefore their exposure to external sources.

Secondly, the generated conflict assists employees implicitly to check whether they have used efficiently their resources, as well as whether they have given their maximum individual contribution to their innovative solutions. This in return will enhance the quality of the outcome of their work since it has been double checked and potential problems were identified and therefore improvements were made.

Finally, employees’ tolerance threshold levels are broadened with regards to accepting other people’s point of view. In other words, employees learn to familiarise themselves with diversity, which is apparent in creative organisations.

5.6 Portfolioing

5.6.1 Definition of the category of “Portfolioing”

Portfolioing is where creative employees are involved in a diverse range of projects or teams related to these projects.

The portfolioing process is of high importance to the financial survival of any creative organisation. It is a crucial issue in any organisation to maintain a high level of cash flow so that all employees are kept financially satisfied. This can only be achieved as long as the creative organisations are involved in different projects.

This indicator from an interview with the head of the interior design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy is talking about their involvement in a diverse range of projects.

There is a whole range of projects that we are involved in. I think that it is something that as an architect or an interior designer you have to learn to deal with projects because from the point of view of running an office you have to maintain a cash flow and pay salaries".

5.6.2 Properties of the category "Portfolioing"

There are five properties of portfolioing revealed by the data:

- **Simultaneous** means that as it is part of the human nature, employees deal with different things at the same time. The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of simultaneous portfolioing.

"We work in projects simultaneously, because that is the way life is. It is better because it means you can spend a couple of hours in a project and then think of something else, so we don't get tired of thinking of the one problem all the time, which can become very boring and unproductive".

- **Sequential** means that employees are involved in one project at a time. In other words, they need to finish one project in order to move to the next one. This indicator below from an architect of the architectural company demonstrates "sequential portfolioing".

I have been involved in projects from the beginning to the end, where I was involved in developing the design.

There are two issues arising from this. The first is related to the degree of employees' involvement in a project. Employees' involvement may range from handling the whole project to being involved in a specific stage of a project. This indicator below from an architect demonstrates the partial involvement of an employee in a project.

We are also involved in different stages of a project, which helps you to be very aware that you are not overlooking anything.

The second refers to the nature of the variation of work. The latter aspect comprises the basis upon which the next two properties of portfolioing are based.

- **Conceptual** refers to the variation of work in terms of intellectual challenges that employees face within project based environment. This indicator from the head of the graphic design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy helps illustrate.

"Variety is also important; such as having new problems to cope with and the work is also exciting, varied, we have fun and that is also important".

This indicator from the head of interior design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy also illustrates this property.

"But because there is a richness in variation of work, employees have the opportunity to work with different people, different materials or different areas, for example, we worked with bars, hotels, clubs, offices and we are working with a whole range of design and a whole range of materials like copper, rubber, concrete, ceramics, fibre optics".

- **Contextual** also refers to the variation of work in terms of managing a project. In other words, it refers to the materials, time and people that can be used in a project and the industry within which the client operates. Here articulated by an architect:

“But most of the time work is project management. For instance, most of the times we spend 95% of our time in contractual management and only 5% in design”.

- **Intrinsic portfolioing skills** refer to employees’ diverse abilities required for completing their work. An architect of the architectural firm gives his perspective in terms of “intrinsic portfolioing” skills.

The job of an architect is a varied one. Architects must have social, technical, design skills as well as awareness of other people’s skills and business aspects”.

It is the nature of creative environments to require from their employees to be able to balance their creativity with their managerial skills and abilities, so that the work is finished on time and the highest possible creative contribution is achieved. Meaning that creative employees’ lives is a rotation from one project to another, from one client to the next and from using certain skills and talents in one project to trying a different set of skills and talents in other projects.

5.6.3 Implications for the category of “Portfolioing”

There are three issues emanating from “portfolioing”.

First is that the portfolioing process does not only occur within creative organisations but among all project-based environments, where employees are involved in different tasks or communicate with different audiences either internally or externally. However, the form that it might take may differ according to the employees’ position in an organisation.

Second, the portfolioing process is associated with the structure as well as the size of the organisation. Organisations that have a flat structure force their employees' working life to overlap between communicating with various audiences and being involved with different tasks. On the contrary, in companies characterised by a tall structure, employees are more used to deal with specific audiences or handle certain tasks.

The director of the architectural company offers this indicator.

"We are working on different projects at different stages. It is a multifaceted occupation. In small offices you have to be good in many aspects, on the contrary in big practices it is the opposite".

Third is the consequence of portfolioing activity. Creative employees' knowledge can be accelerated since they are involved in different types of projects. An architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy offers this indicator.

"You can learn by designing different things. Through different types of work you can learn and apply to different areas. You can bring things to other jobs".

This knowledge will comprise the basis upon which associations from one project to another can be made or the way certain parts or work can be avoided or handled. This in result will contribute in saving time and effort. The saved time can be used by creative employees towards the development of new ideas.

Furthermore, it boosts employees' morale since they are involved in different stages of a project. In other words, employees can be involved in different aspects of the creative process. This research has shown that employees who are involved in the same task for a long time become unproductive. This indicator below from an architect of the architectural company demonstrates this.

“You can get bored very quickly and many times it takes a long time to build something and you want something new to be involved”.

Nevertheless, another point that this study highlighted is that creative employees' individual contribution is maximised as long as they perceive themselves as responsible for the outcome of the project as a whole. Here articulated by an architect of the architectural company.

“...if you know that you will see your building on site, you put more work on the initial concept”.

My reflection to the last two excerpts is that creative organisations need to be very much aware of employees' work and therefore allocate projects according to their involvement in current projects. In other words, creative employees must be involved in different stages of a project so that they are not bogged down, while at the same time they must be allowed to give life to their creative solutions. This means that creative employees should be asked to complete the whole piece of work from the beginning to the end, from the development of the idea to its implementation. An architect from the multidisciplinary design consultancy describes the importance of handling a whole project.

“For me creative satisfaction is ultimately something that comes out in the way you imagined it and it gets built and comes together. It is when you are thinking about putting the world of a project together (colours, shapes, textures) and build together and look as good as the design”.

From the previous indicator, it is apparent that the employees' involvement in one project from the beginning to the end enhances their creative satisfaction, since they are in the position to “see” whether the final outcome was up to the standards of the initial concept.

To sum up, as it was shown from the previous excerpts, creative organisations' ability to generate a diverse range of projects has a direct impact on employees' individual contribution as well as workplace welfare. As long as employees can be involved in diverse range of projects and are allowed to implement their ideas, their creative satisfaction and individual contribution are enhanced.

5.7 Opportunising

5.7.1 Definition of the category "Opportunising"

Opportunising is the creative employees' ability to be involved in projects, which are identified as commercially or creatively interesting and therefore need to be cultivated.

This example is from an interview with the managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy who is highlighting the importance of opportunising.

"There are problems with difficult solutions, or there is something new, so you need to learn. There is also financial opportunity except from the creative opportunity. The ideal project is the one that has a creative as well as financial opportunity".

Therefore, opportunising can take two forms, namely commercial and creative. Commercial is where people identify new opportunities upon which income can be generated. On the contrary, creative opportunising is the employees' ability to identify interesting issues in every project so that their individual thinking is utilised. The aim of this concept is to increase external stimuli so that creative environment does not become like a factory production line producing the same thing. The head of the interior design offers this indicator.

"Every job is different. There are not two jobs that we ever did and they were the same. No two days here are the same. We are not like a factory production line where you do the same thing for the rest of your life. From the creative side, every job is different, there is a different brief, different requirement from a different client, there is always a creative stimulus".

By doing so, creative employees take advantage of the occasion to experiment with new ideas, materials or images, which give them the opportunity to come up with innovative solutions or different expressions of existing ones.

5.7.2 Properties of the category “Opportunising”

There are two emergent properties:

- **Active opportunising**, which refers to employees’ conscious and deliberate actions towards the generation of commercial and creative projects.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy discusses the strategic direction of her company.

“At the moment, we are trying to rely more on ourselves and generate more projects, become our own customer rather than depending on client to be brave enough to give us the briefs we know we can do well. I can see what the trends are within the industry, which is to move from being a standard design consultancy to being something completely different, which is grown by us creating our own opportunities to do best work and relying less on the client”.

This excerpt suggests that active opportunising can be achieved through “pitching”. In other words, the combination of personal aspirations and the understanding of emerging trends lead to the initiation of new projects to be explored. This view is also justified by the director of the architectural company.

“We are unlocking opportunities by initiating projects all the time (develop first an idea and then look for funding).

- **Selective opportunising** refers to the decisions taken as to what projects should be considered as suitable for the company's portfolio and which have been derived from existing clients or are the result of referencing. Selective opportunising can be achieved through project filtering, which refers to creative organisations' assessment of potential projects against the opportunity to creative experiment or innovate.

The managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of selective opportunising.

"Sometimes we have to turn down a client in order not to compromise the mix of the projects. For instance, we are working now on two bars, coffee shop and night-club so we will have to turn others down because we don't want more clubs at this point".

5.7.3 Implications of the category "Opportunising"

Two issues arise from the data.

First is the recognition that opportunising is an important factor for both the financial and creative welfare of a company. In other words, creative organisations must balance projects which are creatively interesting with projects that will contribute financially to the company. Creative organisations must understand the importance of opportunising since it is one of the sources towards gaining new knowledge, experience and contacts as well as monetary rewards.

This indicator from my participation in the corporate identity consultancy helps illustrate the importance of opportunising.

The designers are reluctant to be involved in the design of a corporate identity from a bank, which has recently merged with another since they had specific guidelines to follow.

It suggests that although a project can be very profitable it may not be of interest to creative employees and therefore it can take a longer time to finish. Nevertheless, that does not mean that these projects must not be pursued further; it just means that managers and supervisors should be aware of their employees' work and therefore delegate projects accordingly. Through the process of "bonding", which is analysed in section 5.12, supervisors become aware of other employees' needs, aspirations and wants and therefore accommodate challenges to satisfy them.

The second issue relates to the consequences of opportunisting. Opportunisting enhances employees' morale and satisfaction. Employees who are involved in interesting work tend to be more satisfied.

The director of the architectural company demonstrates the impact of new projects to employees' satisfaction.

"We want to keep our enthusiasm through projects; attract work that people would like to do".

Employees' knowledge and experience are enhanced since opportunisting assists in increasing external stimuli.

Here articulated by the head of the interior design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

"We are not like a factory's production line where you have to do the same thing for the rest of your life. From the creative side, every job is different, there is a different brief, different requirement from a different client".

5.8 Authenticating

This is the first of the four sections explaining the way confidence is built in an individual basis.

5.8.1 Definition of the category “Authenticating”

Authenticating is where individuals are able to demonstrate their genuine abilities, skills and personality, which will give them the opportunity to gain more personal initiative within the working environment. Therefore employees have to demonstrate their point of view that makes them different from others and that they have the appropriate knowledge and expertise which makes them independent.

A consultant of the corporate identity consultancy illustrates the category of authenticating:

“It is also important to show that you do not depend on anyone and that you can do it on your own.”

Creative employees must feel comfortable both within their working environment, the work that they are doing as well as with the company’s clients. Employees who can manage to fit in such an environment will be able to show their real selves and abilities. This indicator is taken from an interview with the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“There is no real rule about it other than that it is important to be comfortable with the work that we have to do and the client that we are working with”.

5.8.2 Properties of the category “Authenticating”

There are three properties of authenticating:

- **Gaining autonomy**, is about employees' ability to gain the right of personal independence within a project based environment. Creative organisations demand a lot of thinking and expression, since employees must come up with a new idea or a different expression of an existing one.

This is illustrated in the following “identity maintenance” memo.

A graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question to what he most liked about the company when he joined it. *“The way everything worked. The way freedom was given to the designers, nobody tells anybody what to do. In the case that you are told something, is always in a very positive manner; it wasn't “just do this or that”.*

Creative employees have autonomy over their work, for instance they are given the freedom to adopt their own working practices in order to solve the issue in question. From the previous excerpt it can be suggested that autonomy can be contextual. I have labelled that as contextual autonomy since it is the employees' workplace freedom within a project based environment. Autonomy can also be conceptual, for instance related to the individual freedom given to employees to tackle the issues in question.

The graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of conceptual autonomy.

“I think that I have autonomy, maybe this is a reason why the owners have asked me to come here, to approach things in my way, which is quite interesting to an extent”.

Therefore, it is essential to employ people with strong personalities who will be able to formulate and implement new ideas. But in order for the teams to work

effectively, there should be a general awareness of the skills, personalities and specialisation available within the company.

- Creative organisations must hence **cherish diversity** and non-conformism by valuing each employee's skills, abilities, expertise and personality, which is another property of authenticating. Creative organisations should encourage diversity rather than suppress it. This is true since the flow of different viewpoints, stimuli or creative thoughts can comprise the basis upon which constructive judgement and discussions can take place before reaching a final decision.

A graphic designer explains the importance of diversity within a project based environment.

“Music playing around, people shouting, clients being in the middle of the room. This is the way it should be done, this all helps creativity. If you are stuck in a desk and everyone is quiet and you are not allowed to see people running around, how can you do anything? you need this madness around you and sometimes you need to sit and concentrate and it can be infuriating, but it is all about different forms of expression, there is noise, everything is going on and I thought that is a place where I can work quite easily”.

- **Encouraging individuality.** Creative organisations should initiate a cultural environment, which allows the individual personalities to flourish.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights its importance.

“One of the employees thinks that his music is more important than anything else, if people want to do their things then, that is fine as long as we do not lose money by it, it is OK”.

5.8.3 Implications of the category “Authenticating”

The identification of this process raises the following issues for exploration.

First, the authenticating process comprises a way of assessing employees’ skills, abilities and knowledge and therefore should be adopted by all creative organisations. Its proactive value, since problems are identified early in the creative process, can be used to solve problems immediately.

Second the authenticating process is directly related to the size of an organisation. For instance, individual contribution in a large organisation can disappear since the company’s overall personality will dominate it. This occurs since large organisations want to maintain their corporate reputation that they spent so much time establishing it and therefore are less willing to take risks and jeopardise it.

The head of the graphics of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of authenticating.

“In smaller organisations it is important to have individual input”.

Third, the diversity within a working environment helps to maximise employees’ tolerance threshold. This suggests that the more the employees are exposed to co-workers with different background, skills, education and abilities, the more they become used to it. This in return helps the minimisation of conflicts among employees, since negative stereotypes tend to disappear when people work in close co-operation, especially on problems where cooperation increases their chances of success.

Fourth relates to the consequences of authenticating. The organisational allowance for diversity and individuality within a project-based environment enhances employees’ morale and satisfaction.

A consultant of the corporate identity consultancy offers this indicator.

“The environment makes me feel more comfortable and happy and when I have this, I can be more creative”.

Moreover, employees’ knowledge and experience are enhanced. An architect of the architectural company volunteered this opinion in the interview.

“It is very good for learning and often a senior person might not have access to the information and therefore a light understanding”.

Furthermore, employees’ diverse skills, personalities and viewpoints enrich creativity. Authenticating enhances the propensity of employees to come up with a better solution through cherishing diverse viewpoints and encouraging communication.

An architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy articulated this view.

“It is very important to have different viewpoints. From a creative side, someone might suggest something and somebody else might disagree and therefore come up with a better solution than the first one”.

5. 9 Credentialising

5.9.1 Definition of the category “Credentialising”

Credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch. In other words, the internal employee market tests employees’ skills and abilities as they establish themselves in the company.

5.9.2 Properties of the category “Credentialising”

There are two emergent properties of credentialising.

- **Multi-modal evaluating** means that there are several different forms of employee assessment. Employees' performance can be evaluated against two major dimensions.

Conceptual evaluating refers to the creative employees' assessment against their thought process. The thought process refers to employees' intellectual and creative/innovative ability to tackle clients' problems.

The head of the interior design of the multidisciplinary design consultancy offers this indicator.

“So from that point of view, because there are guidelines laid down we have to assess people on their ability to deal with that information and to handle it. But they also have to show an ability to deal with the problem, (there is a whole process that each of the employees has of evaluating what the problem is) and understand what the key issues are in terms of resolving the problem, and then knowing how to go about it and answer it. So that is the whole thought process of evaluation, identification and resolution of the problem”.

Conceptual evaluation also assesses whether employees add to the company's general expertise. The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question to how the firm evaluates its employees' performance.

“Also whether they tried a new technique or a new theory about typography design or when we can say that we are proud of that, or enjoyed the process of creating this design”.

Contextual evaluating is assessing employees' other workplace-related skills and abilities, such as time management, selling and social skills both with clients and team members.

This indicator is taken from an interview with a senior consultant of the corporate identity consultancy.

“Good work is evaluated through the relevant profit generated”.

Peer group evaluating means that employees' performance is evaluated internally. This is articulated by a junior consultant of the corporate identity consultancy.

“Evaluation is done through annual reviews, as well as by colleagues”.

Extra peer group evaluating includes client feedback. This indicator from the managing director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy shows “extra peer group evaluating”.

“Work most of the times is evaluated by the client (whether he/she is happy or not with the company's work). Sometimes clients' feedback is formal by sending a letter to the company”.

From the previous indicator it becomes apparent that evaluation can also be **formal**, which comprises another way of evaluating employees' performance.

Informal is an ongoing evaluation inherited in project based environments. In other words communication among team members is also used in assessing every employee's progress, as explained by an architect of the architectural company.

“It is ongoing. There is very close communication, you are not left alone for a month working on a project”.

- **Recognising** is the creative organisations’ appreciation of their employees’ individual contribution. After employees have been evaluated, recognition follows. Recognition can be either internal or external. The internal recognition is expressed financially, verbally and non-verbally. Financial forms of recognition refer to performance related pay, bonus and share schemes established by the creative organisations.

The founder of the corporate identity consultancy gives an example of peer group recognition.

“The company recognises good work and rewards it through bonuses, share schemes, or by just telling employees how good they are and treating them fairly”.

From the previous indicator the verbal form of recognition is apparent. Nevertheless, recognition can also be expressed non-verbally by exposing good work in the working environment so that everybody can be aware of it.

This indicator from a project manager of the corporate identity consultancy shows the non-verbal expression of recognition.

“The company lately decided to put work on the wall, so that everybody could see it”.

The external indicators of recognition can be industry awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients’ business.

Here articulated by an architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“It is also important to get good feedback from people within your profession, from clients within the industries the company is involved and design magazines”.

5.9.3 Implication of Credentialising

The consequence of the credentialising category is that it enhances employees' satisfaction. Creative employees need to be shown that their work capabilities and skills are recognised either internally by the peer group or externally by the industry within which they operate. An architect of the architectural company justifies this view.

“Acknowledgement if you worked in something or your work is shown to other people. But it must come from within. If you are not motivated, you don't get any satisfaction”.

5.10 Updating

5.10.1 Definition of the category “Updating”

Updating explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to build a belief in themselves by staying attuned with what is happening in the world.

The cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy, as shown in the following indicator, highlighted the importance of the updating category.

“What I would like to do is to organise more foreign travel, more adventures to go to in order to get more information. I think that this is a good idea, because you can only output what comes in, so the more experiences you have the better. However, it would also be nice to do things together such as drive together to somebody else's town and drink their beer in order to learn new things, experience new things”.

The main aim of this category is to increase external stimuli so that employees' perspectives are refreshed and stimulated. Here articulated by an architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“We are quite motivated, optimistic of the future, keep up with markets and trends”.

5.10.2 Properties of the category “Updating”

There are three emergent properties updating.

- **Mobilising.** It refers to the internal drive of creative employees to quest new areas of knowledge.

This indicator below is from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“Through self knowledge, and through encouraging them to be inquisitive and to continue to inquire for information about anything, you never know what the client is going to ask you to do next”.

- **Scope broadening** refers to the creative employees’ general awareness of what is happening in the world, rather than focusing on learning what is happening in their specific industry.

Here articulated by the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“I would rather we did not read magazines and become bogged down with what happens in design, it is important to be much wider than that and have an interest in economy, current affairs, music and anything”.

Creativity can take many forms in society and that is why it is important for creative employees to be open-minded and seek for its expressions outside their particular field.

- **Direct experiencing** is creative employees' personal observation or participation in an event, which as a result has the enrichment of their knowledge.

This indicator is taken from an interview with an architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

"We often go to bars, clubs or retail outlets to see how people are physically working and how everything looks visually or how things are done. For the best outcome, the company has to focus also on other things like service. For example, service should be like that.."

From the previous indicators, it is apparent that direct experiencing can be the result of an organised-conscious effort. This organised effort can range from a brief training session to attend relevant to their interests and skills presentations. An architect volunteered this opinion in the interview.

"There is also a continuing professional development where we have to undertake seminars from manufacturers"

Moreover, direct experiencing can be passive and subconscious throughout creative employees' lives. A graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates this by answering my question on how he updates his knowledge.

"You get it from everything: from walking to the underground, by looking at shops, architecture, signs, magazines. Design is all around and by looking around you see shapes, logos, packaging design in the supermarket. You are empty as a designer and you are constantly aware of that or you should be and your mind is overloaded every single day as you are watching television, going to see a film. It's all visual impact and you basically take, subconsciously, a bit from that"

These indicators highlight the importance of updating in creative organisations. This is true since this process enhances individual contribution, which will have a direct impact on the service, offered to the client.

Creative employees therefore need to be sensitised to the environment that surrounds them. That means that in order for employees to adopt all the different external stimuli, they must be open-minded as well as have the skills and abilities to observe things or buildings. If creative employees are not so skilled in this process, the input gained will be limited or of relatively low importance to the creative process.

5.10.3 Implications of the category “Updating”

Updating is of high importance to the creative process and has several consequences. Firstly, the gain of new knowledge can minimise mistakes occurring in the creative process. The way things are done within the creative industry change all the time; therefore the continuous update of knowledge can save both time and effort, since employees become more efficient in their work by avoiding major pitfalls.

An architect of the architectural company illustrates this.

“If you are not up to date you might end up doing major rework in a building design”.

Secondly, employees who update themselves are more likely to think about issues, which are currently important for the industry within which they work. For instance, an architect who is aware of the environmental issues in architecture can approach a design more effectively than that perspective.

An architect of the architectural company gives an example of that.

“Often the work that we do is boring but as you build more knowledge you can add more interesting perspectives”.

Finally, from the previous indicator it can be apparent that employees' morale can be enhanced since they can add more interesting perspectives in what they are doing.

5.11 Switching off

5.11.1 Definition of the category "Switching off"

Switching off refers to the ways by which creative employees forget about certain problems temporarily in order not to be bogged down and then continue their work after a while with a clearer mind. The temporary breakout from preconceived ideas or gained knowledge will give space to experimentation or approaching the issue in question differently or in an innovative way.

Creative organisations demand a lot of thinking and expression. Therefore creative employees must be able to know when it is the time to switch off. Creative employees who don't switch off regularly have the danger of becoming counter productive in their work. The co-director of the architectural company offered this opinion in the interview.

"The biggest problem is work overload, architecture is labour intensive".

5.11.2 Properties of switching off

The two properties of switching off, which have been discovered so far, are:

- **Extra peer group switching off** refers to the casual contacts among people outside the working environment, where creative employees have the opportunity to discuss issues that are not related to their work.

An architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of extra peer group switching off.

“It is good to get away and have conversations with people not interested in design, that is why I play football once a week, where I have the opportunity to forget about work”.

Most of creative employees have diverse interests or hobbies. This indicator from my participant observation in the multidisciplinary design firm helps illustrate.

The company’s owners are very much interested in motorcycles, the head of the interiors in football, an architect is playing soccer and a young designer is playing music.

- **Peer group switching off** refers to the temporary breakout from work-related issues through socialising with other employees. From my participant observation in all the three companies socialising among employees was evident which ranged from casual after work outings to formal dinners.

5.11.3 Implications of the category “Switching off”

The main issue regarding switching off is its consequences. Firstly, switching off enhances creative thinking. I think that this process is important for increasing the possibility of generating new ideas since employees are exposed to different stimuli by being involved in diverse activities or socialising with people with whom they might not share the same interests.

An architect highlighted the importance of switching off in terms of enhancing creative thinking.

“You tend to think of things all the time. It is important to have time away of the office in another environment talking about other things as a human being. If you are aware of what other people are doing, it will help you as a human being to become more rounded – to have an understanding of many aspects”.

Secondly, employees must learn to become very disciplined in respect of the time and effort spent. An architect from the architectural company gives an example of switching off and explains its importance.

“It is healthy to take lunch off, trying not working too many hours so that you won’t become counterproductive. You should avoid working in weekends”.

In other words, employees must have the confidence to switch off and not feel guilty about it. The temporary break out from the situation will help them to regain the energy and the enthusiasm and return to the issue in question, which needs to be solved with a fresher mind.

5.12 Bonding

This is the first of the three sections explaining the way confidence is built in a collective way.

5.12.1 Definition of the category “Bonding”

Bonding involves individuals associating with others, with whom they think they have similarities. People can feel they have similarities in a personal or business level in terms of their education, lifestyle or career interests and aspirations.

This indicator is taken from an interview with the director of the graphics of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“As long as you get along with other people within the company then there is not a problem. As long as the personalities are compatible. It has to do with the individual rather than with his/her discipline. We also have a similar understanding of the design process. We get along with each other by communicating, conversing and listening to each other”.

Bonding is encouraged in an attempt to enhance excellence within project team members of creative organisations. Bonding is influenced by several factors, such as experience, cultural background, upbringing, education and gender.

Here articulated by a consultant of the corporate identity consultancy.

“..there is natural selection in choosing team members and this is influenced by sexuality, experience, whether you like the other person or not”.

5.12.2 Properties of the category “Bonding”

There are two properties of bonding.

- **Active** refers to those conscious and deliberate actions which lead to the development of bonds among employees within a project-based environment. Active bonding processes take a variety of forms within a creative environment, such as sensitising, networking, interreliance, showing concern about employees’ welfare and coaching.

Sensitising refers to the way employees become aware of other people’s abilities, skills and specialisation as well as work status, so that their creative collaboration is enhanced.

In the course of a discussion with a designer of the corporate identity consultancy, he offered this indicator.

“..the job comes in and then it is decided whether this project is appropriate for a particular person, meaning that there is an awareness of individuals’ skills and capabilities”.

By doing so creative employees are in a position to know both how everybody else is performing in an individual basis, as well as the way projects are evolving.

Networking occurs when employees within the company interact with others in order to develop contacts, so that they can become aware of other employees' capabilities, potentials and personalities. This research showed that most of the times socialising is casual and informal among team members. It can also take the form of reviewing, interfering, dialoguing and exchanging ideas.

This indicator from the head of graphics of the multidisciplinary design consultancy demonstrates the informal nature of networking.

“But by being around and seeing what is happening you can have an opinion due to the informality to review the work at any time”.

Another architect describes the diverse range of forms that networking takes place within project based environments.

“The company's owners are very good in letting you have a large input. They interfere and listen, but I always listen to what they have to say”.

Furthermore, it is of high importance for team leaders to **show their concern about the welfare of their employees** and be open when team members have problems.

This indicator from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy shows “concern about employees' welfare”.

“... whether there is a personal problem or a problem with office politics, health or any other issues different from work, then they will come to me or the managing director”.

It is important for creative employees to know that they have somebody who can support them in a difficult situation either in situations where this is a personal or a professional problem.

Coaching refers to the way individuals share their knowledge, skills and capabilities when they are working in project teams. Coaching can take the form of backing up and exchanging advice. Here articulated by an architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“You get backup, most of the times you have to deal with your own problems, but generally you get advice, just ask and go through it”.

- **Passive** refers to the subconscious development of bonds among employees. For instance, the open plan workspace leads to the development of a forum for discussion among employees.

An architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of working within an **open workspace**.

“Open plan, relaxed environment, people are dispersed, there is communication, which is the only way to know how things are done in the office. Better communication enhances the way you run the office otherwise things would take more time. For example, if you have a problem, you can ask the head of interior design or the managing director to help in your problems”.

The head of the interior design gives an example of how the workspace design affects the development of rapport and relationships among employees.

“On the contrary in this company, where there are six of us, I just go around and have one to one discussions on an ongoing basis everyday, it is easier for us to develop a working relationship and rapport while at the same time we understand how projects are evolving and therefore it is easier for evaluation”.

From the previous indicator it is apparent that the size of the unit is important in the development of general awareness regarding other employees' skills, capabilities and work progress.

5.12.3 Implications of the category "Bonding"

Two issues arise from the data.

The first relates to the nature of bonding. It must be noted that there is a difference between developing working teams and cliques. This research has identified that sometimes the formed teams can become cliques. For instance, in the corporate identity consultancy and the architectural company it was apparent that certain cliques were created which were not of a hostile nature, but indicated greater support among their members. This indicator from a consultant of the corporate identity consultancy demonstrates "cliquing".

"Cliques are formed, fights also happen, but a balance is reached in the end".

Although hostility is not intended, it often happens that this is misunderstood and communication problems are caused. This indicator from my participant observation in the corporate identity consultancy helps illustrate the significance of being a member of a clique.

Although a designer who has been in the company for many years and his contribution is massive (view expressed by another designer) was excluded by the board of directors, since he did not adopt to the new circumstances, which demand for younger or new people with new ideas, enthusiastic with energy in order to be related with the new image of the corporate identity consultancy.

The second related with the consequences of bonding. If the aforementioned processes of bonding are adopted, then it is less likely that employees are becoming protective of their own ideas, and therefore are in the position to accept criticism. An architect volunteered this opinion in the interview.

“People can become very protective of their own ideas so that team working can happen properly. Becoming very protective can be minimised by talking more. The less they have to talk about it, the less they feel the threat and it makes it easier to talk to the client because you have put the ideas of your head in an organised manner and you have to rationalise some of the ideas. It will make you more confident and communicate better”.

From the previous indicator it is apparent that employees who bring forward their ideas to criticism are more likely to become confident since their ideas are becoming more robust.

Furthermore, the development of a forum for discussion can enhance employees’ knowledge. The exchange of knowledge and experiences can act synergistically in favor of employees’ development. This indicator below, from an architect of the architectural company, shows the importance of exchanging ideas.

“If everybody can be involved and make suggestions, it would be better because some of the suggestions can be very helpful. In small projects where you are working on your own, it would be good to discuss it”.

It is suggested that communication of different ideas among employees will lead to better solutions. This occurs since more options lead to the generation of more solutions, which can be the basis for coming up with a new idea.

5.13 Inspirationalising

5.13.1 Definition of the category “Inspirationalising”

It is the creative organisations’ ability to inspire people to do their best work by constantly infusing a belief of the power of creativity.

A graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlighted the importance of inspirationalising.

“It comes back to the founders of the company, their strong belief in the importance of design and that comes across all the time when you talk to them, when you talk about projects, when you are briefed on jobs and that in return helps me to see that my bosses are that much involved in the design. It gives me the belief that we are doing something worthwhile and we are not just creating fancy brochures”.

5.13.2 Properties of the category “Inspirationalising”

The three properties of inspirationalising revealed by the data are:

- **Making creativity organisational priority.** It might be common sense but creative organisations need to make their priority how creatively they handle every project, rather than focus on the selling and marketing aspects of their businesses.

This indicator is taken from a graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“...on the contrary this company always had its principles in the importance of all design, whether it would be product or furniture design, exhibition design, interior or graphic design. They are all inter-linked in some way and that is very creative”.

- **Role modeling.** People at supervisory or managerial positions need to have enthusiasm and belief in what they are doing and should project that to their employees.

The director of the graphics of the multidisciplinary design consultancy gives an example of role modeling.

“Creativity is enhanced because the people at the top of the company have the enthusiasm and the belief in what they are doing. If these people did not care, why should I? You need this kind of people at the top of the organisation to lead the whole group”.

From the previous excerpt it can be understood that role modeling can happen by teaching through words and examples. The first form can range from informal discussions within the company to formal lecturing.

Here articulated by a graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“It is promoted initially in the way founders of the company talk about the design and its place in culture. They promote that when they are giving lectures. Creativity stems from that, creativity comes from people within the company, it is really the belief in what they are doing”.

However, in order for the outcome to be powerful, creative organisations need not only talk about creativity but also act upon it.

This indicator from a young designer shows the importance of approaching a new project from a fresh perspective.

“I think that the most important thing is that the owners are innovative, interesting, not flashy and do the most of what they are doing, they are also different. For example in this exhibition they have approached the brief in the way that made it interesting”.

- Creative employees need to know that they operate in an environment where failure is not penalised, as long as the process and analytical methods are effectively applied. This constitutes another property of inspirationalising, namely **safety netting**.

This view was offered from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy.

“We encourage people to take risks, they should have an opportunity to fail. Designers should not be too secure, they should be at risk because everything changes. But you have to give them the confidence by supporting them. As long as the process is sound and analytical methods are used, which is the way you define the essence of the client’s problem”.

From the previous indicator, it is clear that employees should be in an environment, which tolerates mistakes. Creative organisations should be aware of the fact that the creative process may not have the expected result as an outcome. An idea can come up which distinguishes the client’s company, but not for the right reason. Therefore, companies should consider failure as a way to achieve innovation rather than as a means of criticising negatively an employee’s poor performance.

5.13.3 Implications of the category “Inspirationalising”

This research has identified the importance of employing managers that are or have also been employed in academic positions. They considered the combination of a business and academic background as important for two main reasons.

Firstly, they become aware of the developments outside their working context and learn philosophies and methods used by other companies. The gained knowledge is then disseminated within the working environment so that everybody can take advantage of it. Giving employees the appropriate skills to handle new challenges builds their

confidence, provides new competencies and strengthens their commitment to the organisation.

Secondly, the employment of experienced and knowledgeable individuals on supervisory or managerial positions implicitly provides employees with good role models with whom they can associate and helps them gain confidence about their work.

5.14 Making a difference

5.14.1 Definition of the property “Making a difference”

Making a difference is about the creative organisations’ ability to instill a belief in their employees that their work will greatly contribute to the success of their clients’ business or will significantly influence the way things are done in the industry.

The director of the architectural company offers this indicator.

“I didn’t realise that by being big the company made me very influential.”

The previous indicator suggests that a company which has a great presence in its industry makes employees feel that they have a greater contribution in their areas of expertise.

Another graphic designer of the multidisciplinary design consultancy reflects his observations with regards to the importance of this category by answering my question to what the company’s culture is.

“It is very much design led, in the belief where the design works in our culture, how it changes our society and that is the culture of our company. Because we can see the value of what we are doing in society, how it changes it and how it is always about people’s understanding”.

5.14.2 Properties of the category “Making a difference”

There are three properties:

- **Overt reassurance** refers to the explicit encouragement. Showing employees that they are in the right direction helps them to be in a position to implement their ideas. An architect of the architectural company illustrates this property.

“..one of the important things about being creative is to be encouraged, to be told that what you are doing is valuable so that you know you have done something good and so do it next time”.

The forms of encouragement tend to be expressed verbally in an informal way. This example from the cofounder of the multidisciplinary design consultancy illustrates.

“Employees’ confidence is enhanced by reassuring them in a very human way like you would do with a friend or whomever because everybody is the same”.

- **Adequate resourcing** includes everything that creative organisations must have available to assist employees’ work in order to come up with an innovative idea. The research has shown that there are two forms of adequate resourcing, namely contextual and conceptual. Contextual resourcing refers to those resources, which are necessary to the employees in order to perform their work, such as the appropriate software and hardware, money, time as well as facilities.

The director of the architectural company gives an example of contextual resourcing.

“Projects have a different scale, therefore a different character. We try to resource adequately (it depends on the job). In terms of hardware, software and money we have everything we need”.

On the other hand, conceptual resourcing refers to those resources, which are necessary for the development of employees’ creative thinking, such as subscription

to relevant magazines and journals as well as attendance to related seminars, conferences and activities.

The head of interior design in the multidisciplinary design consultancy also notes the existence of “conceptual resourcing”.

“We also subscribe to a number of design magazines, so that there is a constant source of material in the office to which people can refer; there are some offices where they get little of literature, which is terribly inhibiting for staff who should work there, whereas in our shelves there is a number of magazines.”

He argues that, although staff are not generally encouraged to be influenced by existing design work presented in industry magazines, a reference point can stimulate the development of novel ideas. Creative employees should go beyond the referencing process and base their work on authentic experiences rather than secondary information.

- **Creating a sense of ownership** is about creating a collective sense of achievement. All the companies involved in this study develop a corporate culture where every member working in a successful project gets recognition.

This indicator of an architect demonstrates a collective sense of achievement.

“Everybody is a part of the team. If a project is successful, everybody takes part in the success. Recognition is more like a collective thing”.

5.14.3 Implications of the category “Making a difference”

The main issue regarding making a difference is its consequences.

All the creative organisations studied in this research illustrated that employees who are involved in projects with exposure to the community are more likely to become committed to their work and therefore invest more time and effort in producing more creative work. In order for individual creativity to flourish employees need to be in an environment which will allow them to approach the solution from their own perspective, the process, which I have labeled as “authenticating”.

Employees’ morale will also be enhanced since they would know that their individual contribution would have a substantial impact on other people’s lives or clients’ businesses.

5.15 The cutting point of organisational tolerance

This section explains the organisational tolerance shown in terms of the mind stretching process. Organisational tolerance reflects the degree up to which creative organisations allow employees to develop within the working environment.

The aim of the mind stretching process is to extend their creative employees’ creative potential. This process occurs by balancing the perpetual challenging with confidence building process. These two sub-core variables are interdependent and must be considered as two processes, which happen simultaneously. These processes aim to develop confident and intellectually strong individuals.

In other words, employees should be given the opportunities to exploit uncertainty in order to generate innovative solutions. Employees, however, must be challenged up to the point that they don’t feel threatened by loss of control and hence perform poorly. Therefore, creative organisations should show a belief in employees’ work , which will help them stretch their creative thinking.

Creative organisations therefore need to build employees' confidence up to the point where they don't encourage egocentrism. The propensity of employees to become egocentric can be minimised as long as they are involved in new and more challenging projects. It must be noted here that egocentric personalities in a project-based environment have a negative feedback in team building and therefore the bonding process. Employees' confidence must also be considered as a continuous process and therefore employees should be given challenges if they want to remain confident. Creative employees need to feel that they are in control and capable of giving solutions that really work, which will make them proud and work for the client. If not, creative employees are more likely to become fearful of what they can come up with.

To sum up, creative organisations use mind stretching up to the point where employees don't feel threatened by a new challenge in terms of the perpetual challenging process. In terms of confidence building process, creative organisations allow employees to develop up to the point where they don't become egocentric personalities.

5.16 Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the mind stretching process along with its sub-core variables and their categories. The process of mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is built. Mind stretching assists therefore creative employees to extend their creative potentials by balancing perpetual challenging with confidence building. Perpetual challenging refers to the ways in which creative organisations deliberately develop opportunities where employees can exploit uncertainty. The sub-core variable of confidence building explains the different ways in which creative employees are encouraged to gradually develop a belief in themselves. Employees' confidence can be built through self-autonomising and collective charisma.

The next chapter focuses on comparing the emergent grounded theory of “mind stretching” with existing bodies of literature. Its aim is to assist integrating this new theory to other research and theories.

CHAPTER 6: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

Abstract

The objective of this chapter is to compare the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching with existing bodies of literature. The chapter is divided into three sections.

The first section (6.1) outlines the procedures used in order to locate the theory of mind stretching within the area of organisational creativity.

The second section (6.2) reviews and categorises existing theories within the area of organisational creativity.

The third section (6. 3) compares the mind stretching process with theories offered within the area of organisational creativity. This section is presented in two parts. The first part aims to integrate mind stretching within the established organisational creativity theories, while the second one focuses on identifying the literature gaps.

6.1 Approaching the literature review

6.1.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the theory of mind stretching was thoroughly explained. This chapter moves beyond that explanation by comparing the aforementioned theory to established knowledge within the organisational creativity area.

At this point it must be noted here that a formal grounded theory would have to include data from a diverse range of contexts, which would have to be compared with a broad range of literature. However, mind stretching is a substantive theory and therefore the primary area of interest is around the organisational creativity literature.

6.1.2 Structuring the literature review

As mentioned above, I started the comparative literature review by focusing on bodies of literature within the context of the substantive area, which in this case is organisational creativity. This will comprise the first part of this chapter. I therefore had to ensure an adequate comparison between the emergent substantive theory and existing contextual knowledge.

However, as the literature review search was progressing, many other themes of interest from the substantive area were identified. Specifically, the categories and the properties of the theory of mind stretching had to be compared with existing bodies of knowledge, which comprises the other half of this chapter. My decision to do that was very much influenced by the fact that the emergent theory comprised concepts drawing on different perspectives. For instance, mind stretching is a theory that encompasses individual, work-group and organisational aspects of creative organisations, which have to be treated differently since each contributes a different viewpoint to the emergent concept. In terms of this second part of the literature review, I decided that my approach shouldn't involve a rigorous comparison with relevant authors since my aim is to review relevant writings rather than make conclusions.

6.1.3 Adopting a categorising framework to assist comparison

Adopting a categorising framework facilitated the literature review. Its aim was to assist me to understand the nature of other organisational creativity knowledge and therefore explain its relationship with mind stretching.

Organisational creativity and related literature was divided into five main categories based on the research approach adopted, namely prescriptive, descriptive, metaphoric, conjectural and empirical based authors.

Research methodology

The five aforementioned categories have been selected, since they reflect the whole spectrum of methods used by authors to gain an insight in the area. A brief explanation of each category follows.

Prescriptive authors tend to produce models and checklists identifying how to be creative but have not conducted any form of empirical analysis to justify their conceptual frameworks.

Descriptive authors tend to be even more vague offering a few "words of wisdom" without producing a model or diagram summarising their thoughts.

Metaphoric authors are people who are always using analogies and metaphors to try to explain their work.

Conjectural authors offer writings that neither give advice nor have any empirical basis for their work. "Conjecture" includes writings where the author articulates his or her opinion or viewpoint regarding an area of knowledge. In other words, the output of a book or a paper within this category is not underpinned by any method.

Empirical authors have based their research on data they have generated. There are at least five main sub-categories here

(a) Inductive

(b) Deductive

(c) Deductive then inductive

(d) Inductive then deductive

(e) Vague data (not explicit what type of data they have used)

The “**inductive**” methods include all the synthesised data developed to give an innovative insight to an existing area of knowledge. For instance, grounded theory research as well as case studies comprise part of this category.

Secondly, the “**deductive**” method involves research projects, which aim to verify or reject the hypotheses generated. This category mostly involves research of quantitative nature.

“**Deductive then inductive**” category includes research which has initially begun with a focus on validating findings, whose outcome comprises the basis upon which an exploratory research takes place to enhance current knowledge.

“**Inductive then deductive**” includes exploratory research, which is followed by a second stage, which aims to verify or reject the findings, mostly from a survey.

“**Vague**” encompasses all kind of research whose empirical basis is not clear. In this category I have included books and research papers whose data are underpinned by research without clarifying the methodology applied.

My decision to adopt such a framework of categorising studies in the organisational creativity area was influenced by my need to identify differences and similarities

between the theory of mind stretching and the work of others who have researched in the same area using different methodological approaches.

6.1.4 Summary

This first section aimed to explain the way the comparative literature review was approached. It described the framework applied so that similarities and differences between mind stretching and relevant theories would be easily identified. It must be noted here that the framework used is a product of my personal interpretation. In other words, it was used to assist me to make sense of the organisational creativity literature as well as to identify other emergent areas of interest.

The next section focuses on comparing the theory of mind stretching with existing theories within the organisational creativity area.

6.2 Review of organisational creativity studies

This section aims to review and synthesise the major organisational creativity theories as identified by the literature review. The comparative literature review starts by referring to prescriptive authors related to creativity.

Prescriptive authors

As it was mentioned in the previous section of this chapter prescriptive authors tend to produce models and checklists without backing them up with empirical analysis. The comparative literature review has indicated several authors whose writings fall into this category.

One of the earliest studies into creativity was that of Wallas (1926) who identified four stages of creative thinking. The first one, which is labelled as “preparation”, refers to the time when an individual is faced with the issue in question and problem and refines his or her goal. Consequently, employees suspend fully conscious work on the problem, a process which is known as “incubation”. The aforementioned stage will lead to the

“illumination” stage, known otherwise as the “Eureka!” moment, when a creative person becomes suddenly aware of the core answer to the problem. However, a creative individual must use his/her logical thought process to turn the sudden insight into a novel and valuable solution, apparent as such to other people, a stage called “verification”.

Wallas’ (1926) model is of little direct relevance to innovation as it is purely cognitive. Nevertheless, its importance lies in the influence it has had on other models both in the creativity and innovation fields.

Basadur et al (1982) also propose a three-stage model, which they label as the “complete process of creative problem solving”. There are three stages to this model; namely, problem finding, problem solving and solution implementation. At each stage, a two-step process of ideation-evaluation occurs. Ideation refers to the uncritical development of ideas, while evaluation refers to the selection of the best of the generated ideas based on his/her judgement.

This model is more sophisticated than Wallas’ (1926) in that it distinguishes between the behaviours that occur in creative problem solving and the thought processes involved (ideation and evaluation). Wallas’ model on the other hand is only concerned with thought processes. The partial support found by the authors for their models suggests that they require further empirical testing and development.

Another model has also been proposed by Teresa Amabile, a leading academic in the field of corporate creativity. She initially proposed a componential framework of creativity, which includes three major components, as shown below in Figure. 6.1.

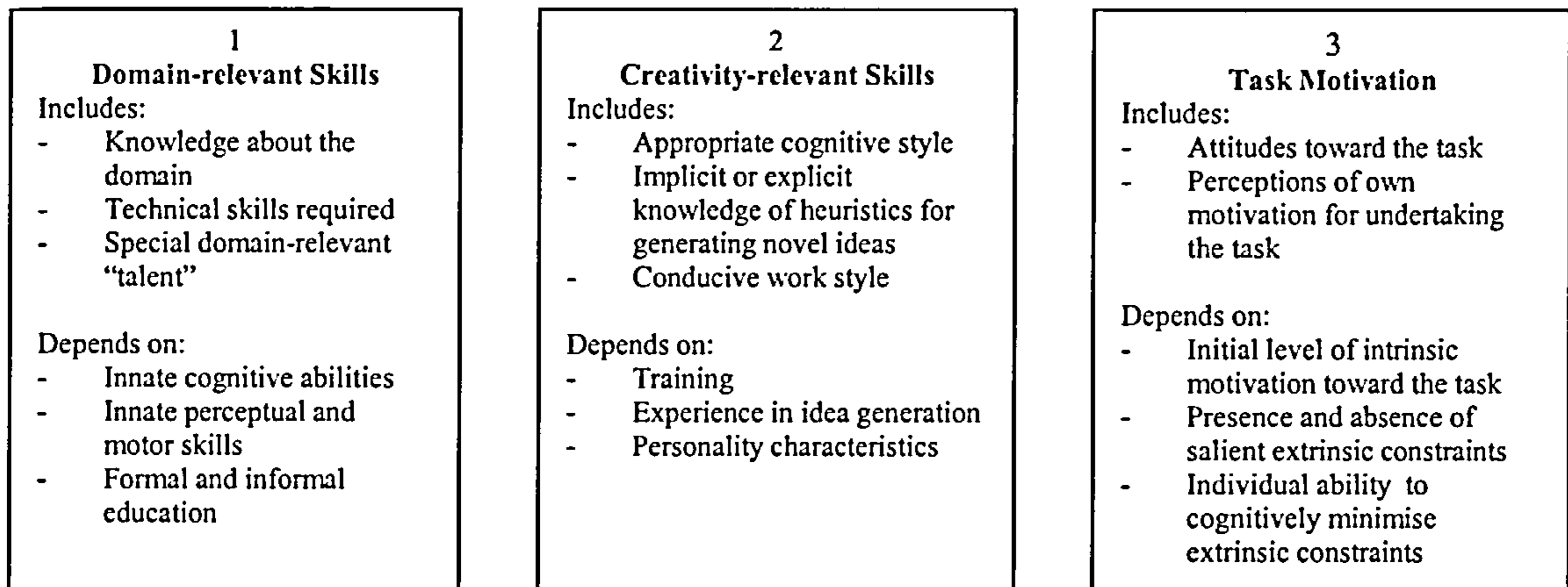


Figure 6.1: Components of Creative Performance

(Source: Amabile, 1983, p. 362)

Amabile (1983) suggests that **domain-relevant skills** comprise the creative employee's set of possible solutions from which the new answer is to be synthesised, and information against which the new solution is to be evaluated. This component includes familiarity with and factual knowledge of the domain in question, such as facts, principles, viewpoints about a diverse range of issues in the domain, knowledge of different paradigms, and aesthetic criteria.

Amabile (1983) proposes that an individual's use of **creativity-relevant skills** determines the extent to which his/her ideas will overcome solutions in the domain.

The third component of creative performance as suggested by Amabile (1983) is that of **task motivation**. Amabile (1983) argues that a person can have all the expertise knowledge and the creative thinking in the world, but he/she still has to be motivated to make something happen. It is the motivation that determines how people actually

perform. Amabile (1997) proposes that although an employee's development of expertise and practice of creative thinking skills can be influenced to some extent by the social environment, the powerful and most direct power of the environment is doubtless that of motivation.

After explaining the different components of creative performance Amabile (1983) conceptualised a schematic representation in order to develop a theory of the creative process (Figure 6.2). This framework aims to describe how a creative employee might assemble and apply information in order to generate an innovation solution.

Amabile's (1983) componential model with its five stages explains the individual creative process as shown in the following figure (Figure. 6.2).

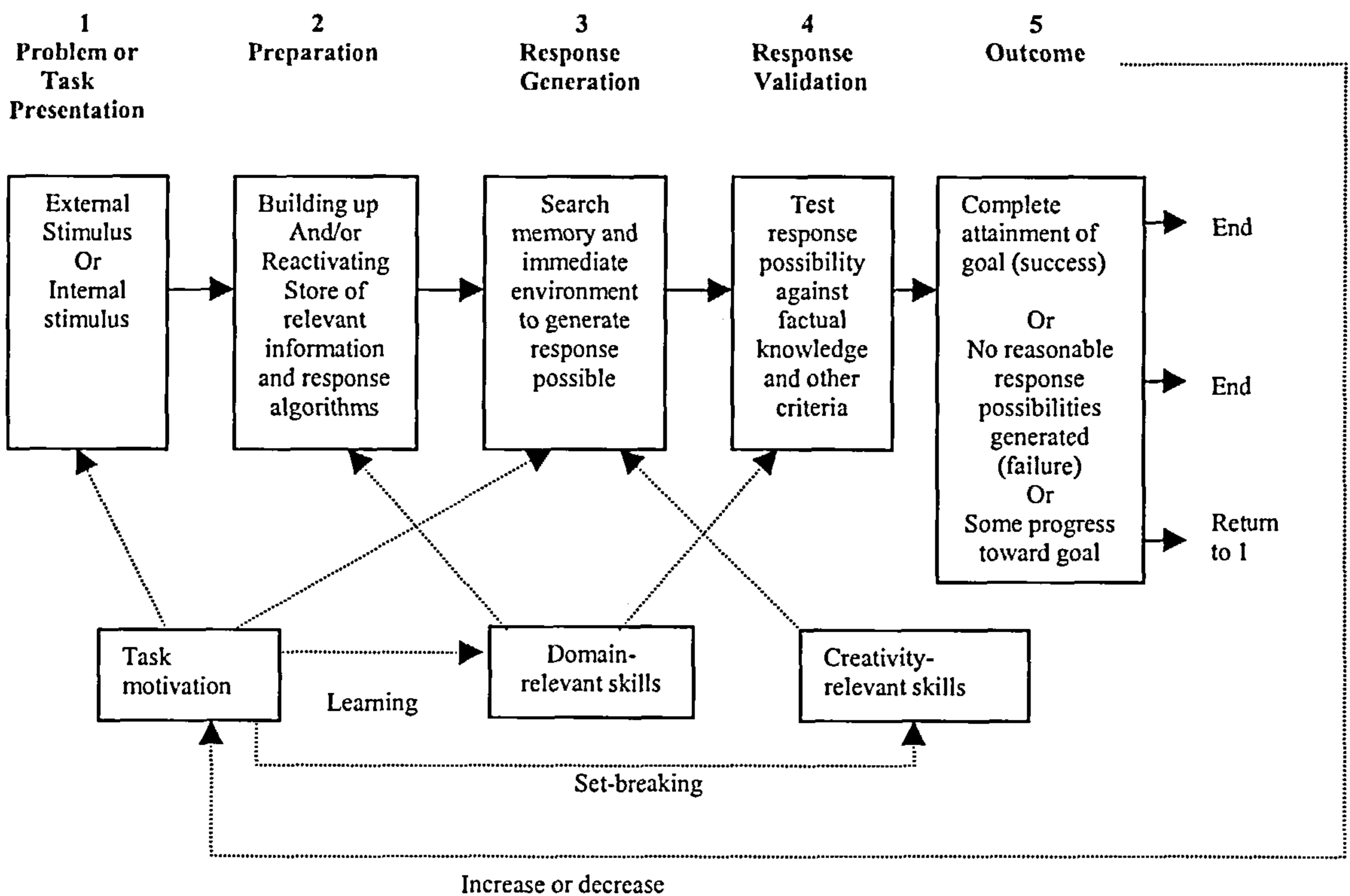


Figure 6.2 – Componential framework of creativity
(Source: Amabile, 1983, p. 367)

The initial stage in the process is that of problem or task presentation. This is the stage where the task to be undertaken or the problem to be solved is presented to the creative person. Amabile (1988) suggests that skills in the task domain therefore play an important role here. For instance, if one is highly intrinsically interested in the task, this will be sufficient for him/her to begin the creative process.

The second stage is preparatory to the actual development of solutions. At this stage the creative employee develops or reactivates a store of data relevant to the problem or the opportunity identified.

In the next stage, during the idea generation, the individual comes up with a diverse range of possible responses or ideas appropriate to the issue in question. The creative employee's creative thinking will determine both the quality and quantity of ideas developed.

The fourth stage represents the idea validating process that must be carried out based on checking each generated idea for its appropriateness or correctness for the issue in question.

Lastly, the final stage is concerned with assessing the outcome based on the test performed in the previous stage. If it is accepted or rejected, the process terminates here. If, however, the response is not wholly appropriate but does not constitute significant progress towards solution, the process returns to the initial stage of problem or task presentation, while at the same time the information gained from the attempt will be added to the existing repertoire of domain relevant skills.

Her model is closer to Wallas (1926) rather than to Basadur's et al (1982). Although Amabile's (1983) model is a social psychological model, it needs to incorporate social influences and interactions.

Roger's (1983) conceptual model of the innovation-decision process has also been identified by the literature review. Rogers (1983) proposes a five stage model of "the innovation-decision process", the stages being knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. His proposed process focuses mostly on the diffusion of policies. Rogers' (1983) model is more concerned with mental events than actions in a social context. However, one limitation of the model as it stands is that it is not applicable to cases where an individual invents an innovation rather than adopts one from outside.

Moreover, Thorne (1992) offers a conceptual model by stressing the importance of the cycle of creativity in which teams continuously:

- Challenge the status quo
- Create a vision
- Commit themselves to the problem
- Find solutions to the problem

Furthermore, Woodman et al's (1993) "interactionist" model integrates personality, cognitive and social psychological perspectives. They took a similar theoretical perspective on creativity in organisations, but they extended their model to two additional ways. They included external influences as well as intraorganisational influences. Their conceptual complex framework of individual, group, and organisational characteristics develops the context within which individual and group behaviours are played out (Figure 6.3). Many of these characteristics can be investigated in terms of their ability to enhance or constrain the creative accomplishment of individuals and groups (Amabile, 1988; Burnside, 1990).

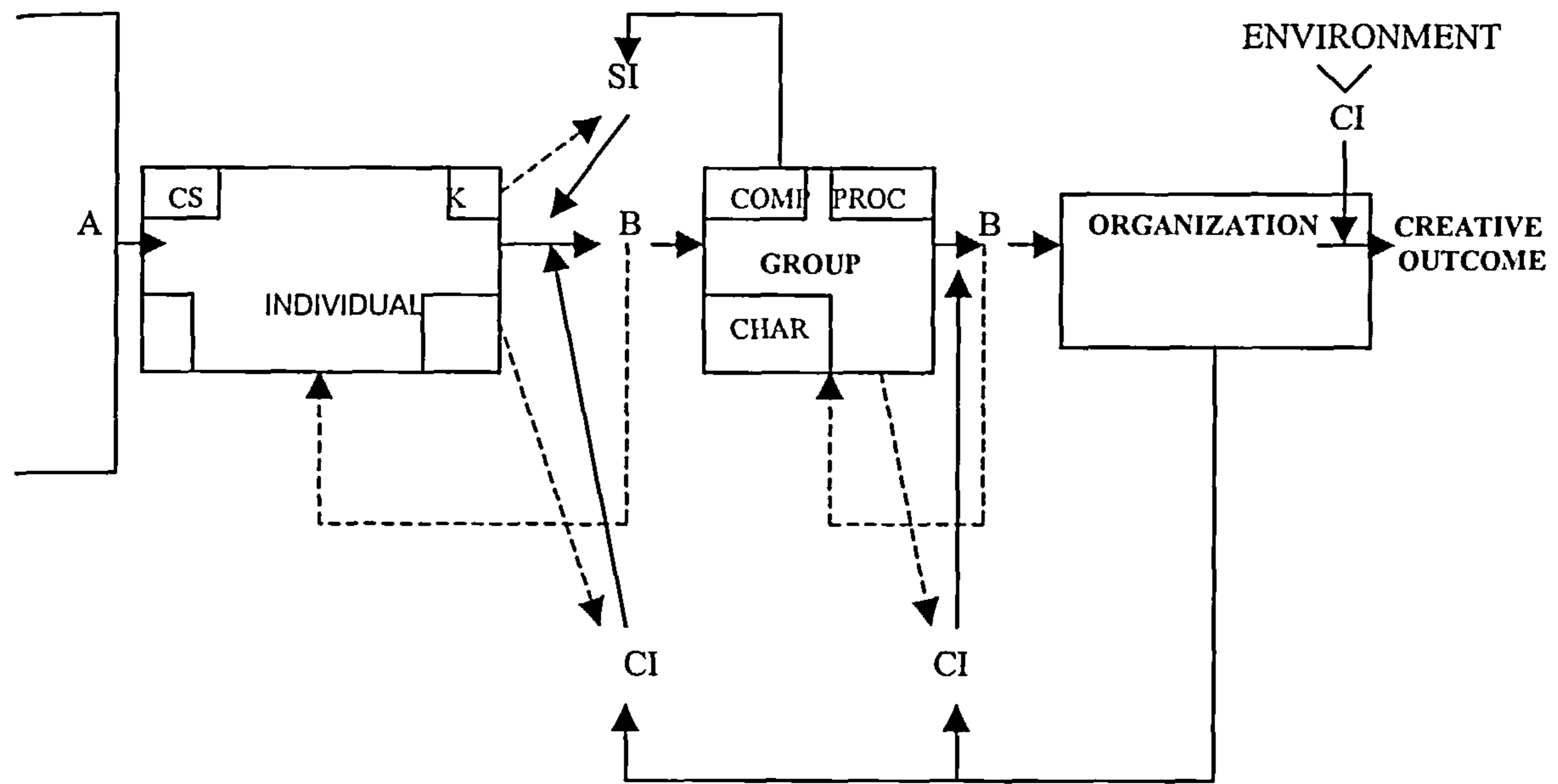
Woodman et al (1993) propose that creative behaviour is produced by a complex interaction between the person and the situation. From an interactionist perspective, the organisational creative process is composed of both salient behaviours and creative situations. They suggest that personal factors should include cognitive styles and

abilities, personality traits, and individual characteristics, such as values and motivations. The creative situation is defined as the sum total of social (competition and social facilitation) and environmental (contextual) influences on creative behaviour (p. 310). Their conceptual model, however, highlights the fact that both situational and personal factors are influenced by antecedent conditions, such as early socialisation and gender. Woodman & Schoenfeldt (1990) argue that personality and cognitive characteristics of the individual personality and cognitive characteristics of the individual probably determine the current situation in which the creative person finds himself or herself.

Other authors tried to explain in their research why antecedent conditions are important to the exploitation of their full potentials. Miller (1996) offers an explanation of this by referring to the stages where sequentially creative potentials are drained out from them. He argues that children's creative research has been socialised out of them through organised education. Subsequently, learning is restrained to a few areas of the brain and becomes compartmentalised and linear. By the time they reach adulthood, they believe they are no longer creative and have few options for solving problems. In other words, they have the perception that they no longer have a strong sense of self-empowerment. Miller (1996) believes that employees, who adopt such an attitude to work, will most probably perceive work as drudgery. Ray and Myers (1986) stress the importance of what they call the "voice of judgement". In simple terms, it is the voice inside that provides employees with a running explanation on their actions. The collective judgement of society as a whole, including rules of fashion, social class and etiquette, also affects our thinking. They propose that it is possible to overcome this influence, however, by monitoring one's thoughts and being aware of the restraints, which they impose.

From a group perspective Woodman (1995) suggests that the creative performance of groups in a complex organisation depends on the following three factors:

1. the creative performance of group members
2. aspects of the group that enhance or constrain creativity (diversity increases group creativity, highly participative structures and cultures seem to increase group creative performance).
3. contextual influences that enhance or constrain creativity



INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY: $C_I = f(A, CS, P, K, IM, SI, CI)$

GROUP CREATIVITY: $C_G = f(C_I, G_{COMP}, G_{CHAR}, G_{PROC}, CI)$

ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY: $f(C_G, CI)$

Legend:

A= Antecedent Conditions

B= Creative Behavior

CS= Cognitive Style/
Abilities

P= Personality

K= Knowledge

IM = Intrinsic Motivation

SI= Social Influences

CI= Contextual Influences

G_{COMP} = Group Composition

G_{CHAR} = Group Characteristics

G_{PROC} = Group Processes

Figure 6.3: An Interactionist Model of Organizational Creativity

Source: Woodman et al. (1993), p. 295

Amabile's (1997) componential theory of organisational creativity and innovation integrates individual creativity with the organisational work environment (Figure. 6.4). The work environment within an organisation is strongly affected by management at all levels can make the difference between the production of new, useful ideas for innovative business growth and the continuance of old, progressively less useful routines. The aim of the componential theory of creativity and innovation in organisations is to adequately capture all the major elements influencing creativity and innovation within organisations. In her model the three upper circles in the figure refer to the organisational work environment, on the other hand, the three lower refer to the components of individual creativity. The theory proposes that both individual and group creativity are the major source of innovation within a company. However, the social environment, which influences the individual components is of significant importance to the theory.

According to contextual theories of organisational creativity, it is the psychological meaning of environmental events that largely influences creative behaviour (Amabile, 1988; Woodman et al, 1993).

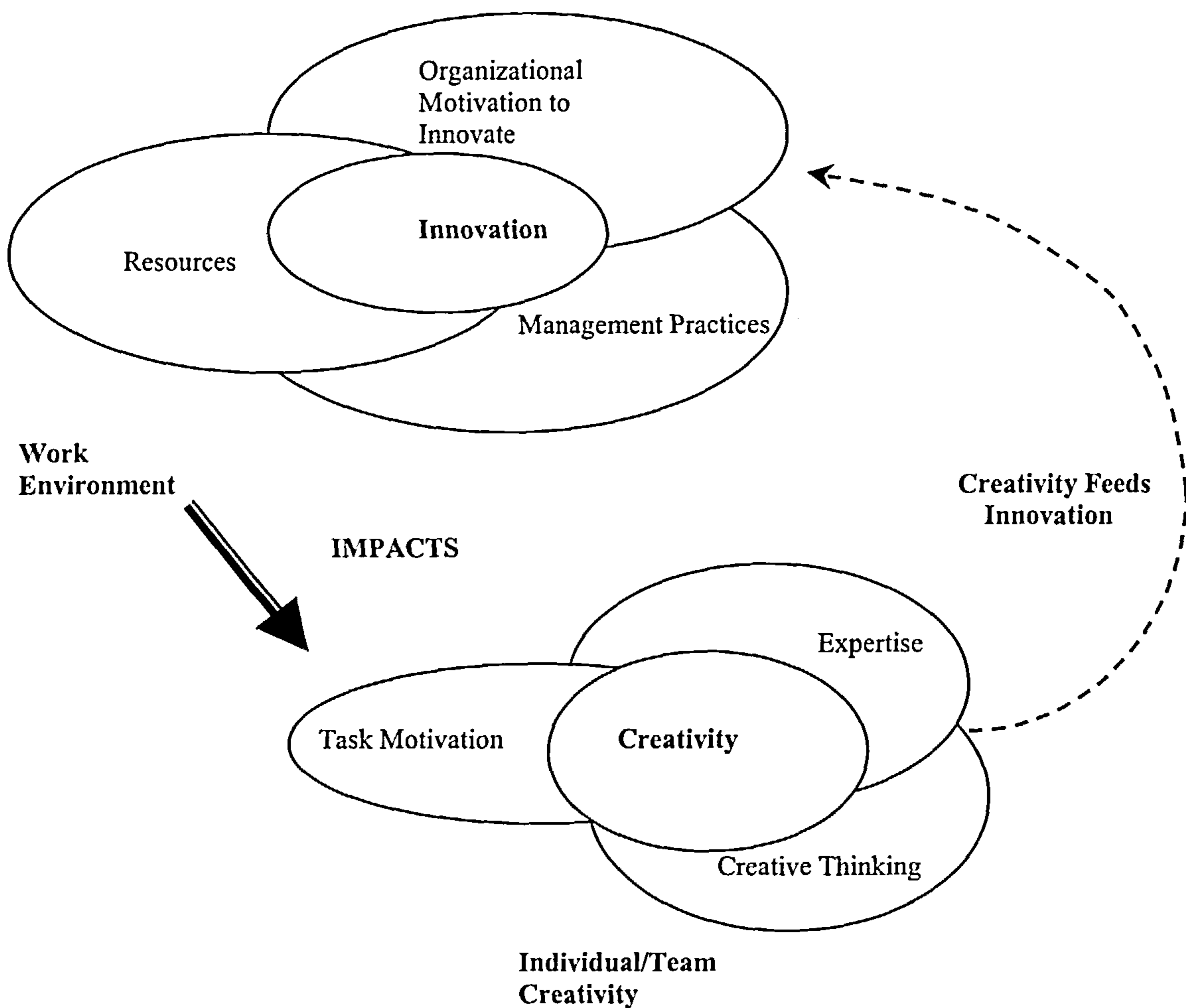


Figure 6.4: The Componential Theory of Organizational Creativity and Innovation

Source: Amabile (1997), p. 53

Metaphoric authors

Metaphoric authors are writers using analogies and metaphors in explaining an area under investigation. For instance, Sternberg and Lubart's (1991) model proposes that creative employees behave in a manner that is conceptually similar to that of the financial investors who aim to "buy low and sell high". In other words, creative employees need to invest their creative potential in coming up with ideas which are initially low in value since they are unusual, however, will be recognised and gain value.

This theory, as suggested by Amabile (1996) rests on a social consensus operational definition of creativity (Sternberg and Lubart, 1991, p. 3):

“a stock is valuable because investors collectively desire to possess it, and product is creative because appropriate judges collectively agree on this evaluation”.

The investment theory describes a set of six resources that are considered important for creativity, such as: intelligence, knowledge, intellectual style, personality, environment, motivation.

Although Sternberg et al's (1997) journal article in California Management Review with the title “Creativity as an investment” is around the same principle, it is worth drawing attention to three main issues. Firstly, they provide a theoretical explanation of the different types of intellectual abilities. The first type refers to the synthetic ability to perceive connections and refine issues in question. The second intellectual ability is labelled as “analytic” and it is about the employees’ ability to judge the value or potential of an idea. The last one refers to the practical ability, which encapsulates all the necessary skills to implement and “sell” an idea. Furthermore, Sternberg et al (1997) point out that the company has to adopt a long-term perspective and give a person time to develop. As far as the employees’ intellectual abilities are concerned, Sternberg et al (1997) suggest that leaders should be responsible for mixing and weighting the talents needed over the life cycle of an idea or product. For instance, in the idea generation stage synthetic abilities must be encouraged. After that stage choosing which ideas to pursue further demands for the application of the analytic abilities. However, when the selection of the most promising ideas is made, practical issues must be considered to transform an idea into reality.

Secondly, Sternberg et al (1997) perceive knowledge -domain specific and general information- as a basic requirement component for individual creativity. Whitfield (1975) notes that knowledge acts as a store of building data for novel combinations. In other words, without “input” there can be no “output” because there is nothing on which

to “operate”. Sternberg et al (1997) take this statement a step forward by suggesting that people are not generally creative in every field but rather in the area of their specialisation. They also add that extensive knowledge of a specific field requires a considerable amount of time to be accumulated. People who aim to generate innovative ideas need to know the basic knowledge of the field in order to move beyond the status quo. Therefore, Sternberg et al (1997) note that in order to move beyond that, one needs to be aware of what the status quo is. Moreover, Stein’s (1989) work focused on identifying both positive and negative effects that previous experience and learning had on creativity. Even though previous experience or knowledge could lead to a “functional fixedness” that prevents individuals from producing creative solutions, on balance it is hard to conceive any creative behaviour that is somehow “knowledge free”.

Thirdly, Sternberg et al (1997) suggest that a common mistake is made when managers try to manage uncertainty associated with creative projects by trying to control them or somehow establish some order. They propose that as uncomfortable as it is, it is important to let the messiness exist.

Moreover, Sternberg and Lubart’s (1991) investment theory proposes that social environment influences creativity in three ways. Firstly, the social context is considered relevant to the evaluation of ideas. Secondly, they suggest that both physical and social context can spark ideas. Finally, they propose that the social environment provides a context where creative ideas are either encouraged or suppressed.

From another perspective, Harrington’s (1990) ecological model claims that the social system is elaborately involved in the creative process from the role it plays in recognising/overlooking, creating/destroying, and extending/limiting the creative potential. Harrington (1990) proposes that a “creative ecosystem” should include all the elements for creativity, including the presence of challenging, solvable projects, new techniques and perspectives to apply to the problem, norms supporting ideas exchange,

communication among people with complementary skills, and a diverse range of rewards to meet different motivations.

The notion that creativity needs a supportive environment to prosper finds a resonance in the writings of Kao (1996) who likens metaphorically creativity to playing jazz. He applies the metaphor to suggest ways that managers can stimulate creativity in their employees, originate new ideas and develop them into realisable value.

Descriptive authors

This category includes authors who are more interested in providing a few “words of wisdom” rather than in producing a model or a diagram. Relevant to the mind stretching theory, scholars within this category have focused on five main themes, namely task, organisational climate, social construction, interpersonal interactions and training.

Task

Employees are expected to work faster in creative environments, forcing horizontal extensions in terms of the amount of time devoted to work. Therefore, as suggested by Persing (1999), employees are expected to engage in an expanding variety of activities, tasks, and roles more or less at once, leading to vertical loading or “multiplexing” in the workplace. Bluedorn et al (1992) and Hall (1990) define polychronicity as the performing of two or more tasks or activities simultaneously. On the other hand, monochronic individuals attend to things serially or one at a time, and polychronic individuals attend to things concurrently or several at a time. Bluedorn et al (1992) and Hall and Hall (1990) suggest that at the level of the individual, polychronicity is involved with the number of related and unrelated tasks, activities, and stimuli an individual is able to attend to, participate in, and is involved with literally at one time or within relatively brief time spans.

It is expected that individuals in intellectually intensive workplace will have more tendencies toward polychronicity rather than toward monochronicity. In other words,

within creative workplaces, the relationship between polychronicity and creative performance will be stronger for polychronic individuals who experience higher freedom in selecting tasks and schedules than for polychronic individuals who experience lower discretion in choosing tasks and schedules. Reversing the analysis there exists no particular rationale for suggesting that monochronic workers are not creative at all (Persing, 1999). However, extensive studies from several authors (McGrath and Kelly, 1996) suggest that scientists, engineers, and others involved in creative, intellectually difficult work appear to dislike external controls and manipulations that directly or indirectly shape their work toward polychronic behaviour

Hackman et al (1975) note that when employees' jobs are complex rather than simple, employees are more willing to be motivated, more satisfied, and therefore more productive. Complex jobs give employees the discretion to focus simultaneously on multiple dimensions of their work, permit them to conduct their activities without extensive external controls or constraints, and may also enhance their interest in persisting with their novel approaches and completing creative activities. Simple or routine jobs, in contrast, may inhibit such focus and excitement, and thereby thwart the creative potential of these employees.

Organisational Climate

Smolensky and Kleiner (1995) propose that a primary suggestion for igniting the creative spark is to create an atmosphere conducive to innovation. This advice applies in two areas, namely physical environment and corporate attitude. To find original solutions to an issue in question requires employees to have the freedom to break the rules (Nemeth, 1997) and feel safe about their ideas (McGowan, 1996). This means building an organisation where failure is tolerated, with no fear of submitting a foolish idea (Eisner, 1996; Smolensky and Kleiner, 1995). Likewise, Peters (1997) stresses that innovative companies are not afraid to allow failure – as a means of achieving ultimate success.

Social construction

In his article, “*Creating a healthy work environment in the midst of organisational change and transition*”, Kreitzer et al (1997) points out that a growing number of studies demonstrate that people working in stressful, hostile, authoritarian, abusive and neglectful organisations are more likely to be absent, have stress-related illnesses, experience depression, fear, loss of morale, and a decreased self esteem.

Interpersonal interactions

It is surprising that although group creativity as a process clearly involves interpersonal negotiations and the reaching of agreements for implementation, little applied research has examined the behavioural influence and persuasion patterns at different stages in the process.

Nevertheless, the role of social information in the workplace is now well documented (Griffin, 1983; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Social information consists of verbal and non-verbal cues and signals that people provide to others regarding what factors they value in the workplace and how they evaluate those factors in their current situations. A crucial precondition is that the group is perceived as interpersonally non-threatening and safe (Kivimäki et al, 1997). In other words, behaviours that are grounded in informal bases of influence, such as friendliness and coalition building among group members are more likely to provide the basis for creativity enhancing group outcomes. Riley (1992) and Schmuck and Runkel (1988) emphasise the importance of trust in quality teams as the foundation for taking risks, exploring new and creative ideas, solving problems, and improving continuously. The risk factor is important to the development of creative thinking since fear of criticism is highly detrimental to both individual and group cognitive development (Manley, 1978).

Moreover, several authors (Fukuyama, 1995; Sethia, 1995; Flores, 1979) focused on highlighting the different forms of interpersonal interactions. For instance, Fukuyama (1995) highlights the importance of people’s ability to associate with each other and

suggests that is critical not only to economic life but virtually every other aspect of social existence as well.

Flores (1979), on the other hand, proposes that dialogue should be the more creative, open-ended activity of a group thinking. In discussion, people take and hold positions like debate; in dialogue, people suspend their positions and probe others for reasoning to discover new possibilities.

Sethia's (1995) research also focuses on another form of interpersonal interaction, collaboration. Sethia (1995) explains collaboration as the professionally valuable interpersonal interactions with dyads, triads, or larger groups engaged in the pursuit of a single common goal or shared general purpose with independent goals. His conceptual book article with the title "*The role of collaboration in creativity*", explains the different modes of collaborative interaction, such as:

- Co-creation or shared creation: may be regarded as the only "true form" of collaboration
- Complementary roles: a creative achievement can become a reality only when people with different professional skills roles combine their efforts. (artists, art dealers and art critics)
- Master-apprentice: This type of interaction is obviously important to the "apprentice" in that it offers the ideal setting for what Bandura (1986, p. 104) calls creative modeling:
"In most creative endeavours, the requisite knowledge and skills are learned by example and practice through some form of apprenticeship. Innovators don't cease to be observational learners simply because they gained some mastery of their craft. They continue to learn things from others that might add dimensions to their own creative work".
- Pace setters and followers: An individual, through his/her referent power, exercises a substantial influence on others in its field.

- Professional community-community member: The creative individuals therefore need communication and interaction with their professional community to keep aligned with the knowledge frontiers and to influence others about the significance of their own novel contributions

Training

Smolensky and Kleiner (1995) note that education is another creativity booster. Giving employees the appropriate skills to handle new challenges builds their confidence, provides new competencies and strengthens their commitment to the organisation. Woodman et al (1993) also note that the availability of creativity training programs could be regarded as part of the contextual influences that establish or encourage an organisational culture supportive of creative behaviour.

Conjectural authors

Conjectural authors neither give advice nor have any empirical basis underpinning their work. However, their insights into some of the areas also identified by the grounded theory of mind stretching makes them worthwhile mentioning.

Productive forgetting

Simon (1966) introduces the concept of “productive forgetting” and refers to it as the ability to abandon problem solving strategies, which do not work as well as putting aside problems temporarily. Harding (1967) also suggests that the flash of inspiration often associated with scientific and engineering problems comes when the scientist tries to rest by turning away from his problem. This not only rests the brain, but also keeps it ready to catch anything which will help in leading to a solution.

Organisational rules

Zaltman et al (1973) and Rogers (1983) point out that following rules and procedures in role performance is an inhibitor of creativity, because “rigid rules and procedures may prohibit organisational decision makers from seeking new sources of information”. In

the same line of argument Kanter (1983) and Van de Ven (1986) point out that creativity does not derive from order but from the attempt to impose order where it does not exist, to make new connections. Therefore, it is essential to any creative organisation to preserve rather than to reduce uncertainty and diversity.

Rewards

Bouwen and Fry (1988, p. 13) also argue that “*part of managing novelty is therefore concerned with how the enterprise allows and rewards such courageous persons to emerge and attract others’ attention*”. In addition, Adair (1990) offers the advice that the content of reward packages might include one or all of the following. First, stimulating contacts through colleagues able to provide intellectual stimulation. Second, the encouragement of creative individuals to take calculated risks since they respond well to this environment. Third, the organisation should provide the freedom to innovators to work in the broad areas that interest them, provided the organisation’s mission is properly focused and communicated. Fourthly, recognition since appreciation can be much more important to the individual than money.

Empirical authors

There has been no study directly assessing organisational creativity from a holistic perspective. However, several authors have broken down the attributes or features that enhance creativity within organisational settings and conducted studies of exploratory or deductive nature. Empirical research in the area of organisational creativity appears to mainly focus on three main themes, namely individual, group and organisational aspects of creativity.

Individual aspects of creativity

Personality traits of creative behaviour

Recent decades have witnessed a burgeoning academic literature on the personality dimensions of creative behaviour. These types of studies have attempted to list personality correlates of creative productivity as well as biographical data that might be

predictive of later creative behaviour. Specifically, Welsh (1975) proposes a list of personality characteristics of creative students, while Barron and Harrington (1981) and Amabile (1988) offer a list of personality traits as they have been identified by their research with R&D scientists.

The literature is replete with assertions of personality traits, which are reasonably stable across related fields, as being associated with creative achievement (MacKinnon, 1960; MacKinnon, 1962; Hall and MacKinnon, 1969; Cummings and Oldham, 1997). These include: risk-taking, self-confidence, tolerance of ambiguity, suspension of judgement, autonomy, non-conformity.

It is acknowledged within the literature that creativity requires a risk-taking personality (Sternberg et al, 1997; Michael, 1979; Glassman, 1986). Creative employees are more willing to take a stand and challenge the status quo.

Moreover, Buel's (1965) deductive research with employees from a pharmaceutical organisation stresses the importance of self-confidence to creative achievement. A similar view was highlighted by MacKinnon's (1960, 1962) extensive inductive and then deductive study with architects. He suggests that highly creative persons are inclined to have a good opinion of themselves, as evidenced by the large number of favourable adjectives which were used to describe themselves. In addition, Keller and Holland's (1978) deductive research suggests that a creative employee must have faith in his/her own abilities and skills so that he/she can face an open-ended problem for which there is no known answer. He/she has to make a creative step forward if he/she is to resolve it by depending only on his/her own skills and knowledge. MacKinnon (1962) explains the importance of self-confidence by pointing out that it is the employees' belief of the worth and validity of their creative efforts, which helps them to override periods of frustration during a creative endeavour.

Furthermore, Cummings and Oldham's (1997) deductive research notes that creative employees are likely to tolerate ambiguity. MacKinnon (1960) argues that creative employees are likely to admit complexity and even disorder into their perceptions without being made anxious by the resulting chaos. MacKinnon (1962) attempts to explain this personality trait by proposing that it is not so much that creative employees like chaos per se, but that they are challenged by the richness of the disordered, which gives them the opportunity to form new order.

In addition, deductive research by Buel (1965) and McDermid (1965) shows that creative employees have a desire for autonomy in work and social environment. Several authors point out that creative employees are more likely to approach a question from their own perspective and seize the opportunity to test their own ideas (MacKinnon, 1960, 1962).

The employees' desire to do and say things that suit their own way of working gives rise to another trait labeled as non-conformity. Subsequently, creative employees show high levels of social independence or lack of concern for social norms (Keller and Holland, 1978). MacKinnon (1960, 1962) adds that employees' independence in thought and action contribute significantly to creative achievement. The social independence by the aforementioned authors is taking a step forward by Majaro (1992), who in his writings suggests that creative employees are more likely to take an active role and challenge authority, by demanding for more information and explanation, than less creative individuals.

From my research it became apparent that creative employees are more likely to be sensitive to things around them, either physical or conceptual, than non-creative employees. Their sensitivity is probably a combination of a conscious exploration and analysis of their environment and an intuitive response to low level cues. The literature review illustrates that creative achievement is associated with another personality factor, known as intuitiveness. Specifically, Whitfield's (1975) empirical study, which doesn't

specify the research instrument used for data collection proposes, points out that intuitiveness is not under conscious control and cannot be turned on and off at one's will. The creative person notices and learns much more about a situation than the average person by extending the range of experience open to him through the use of several sensing channels instead of one or two. Hall and MacKinnon (1969) on their deductive research with architects add that creative employees show a preference for openness and receptivity, both to experience and new ideas, as well as for concern with deeper meanings and possibilities inherent in situations.

MacKinnon (1960) also suggests that creative employees are adventurous and therefore show a higher willingness to use their imagination to create possibilities of what a solution might be. He proposes that creative people will play with their ideas, let their mind wather, visualise ideal solutions and look for stepping-stones back to reality.

It can be concluded that all other conditions being equal, employees whose personality shows the aforementioned characteristics are likely to generate more creative outcomes or make contributions which are more creative rather than employees whose general personalities reflect other characteristics.

Cognitive styles

Writings in this area comment on several features of cognitive style, which appear to be relevant to creativity:

- Majaro's (1992) empirical study which does not specify the research instrument used for data collection proposes that *mental flexibility* is perceived as an important cognitive feature associated with creative achievement. A flexible mind is essential to the creative thinkers if they are to remain free and unblocked by imagined or habitual constraints, yet be capable of high discrimination and concentration when the complexity of the problem demands it.

- The ability to *link remote “associations”* among elements or ideas to generate an innovative solution was considered by Mednick (1962) as an important cognitive style. Employees with generally creative personalities are more likely to approach their work settings with a wide range of interests that encourage them to seek out resources from varied constituencies and enable them to recognise divergent information and opinions (Cummings and Oldham , 1997; MacKinnon, 1962).
- *Suspension of judgement* is another cognitive feature to be relevant to creativity. Majaro (1992) draws attention to this cognitive feature and proposes that truly creative people can tolerate this uncertainty and hold back from accepting the first possible solution if it is not considered proper in the sense of rightness and elegance. Creative people should try to manage that, since the creative process can be damaged or even destroyed if an idea is “placed in the dock” too early.
- *Originality of thinking and freshness* was highlighted by Majaro (1992) and MacKinnon (1960) as a fundamental cognitive style required in order for innovative solutions to be developed. They consider originality as the ability to give unusual answers to questions or atypical responses to specified problems. They move beyond this initial understanding of this concept and propose that employees who consistently generate a richer list of unusual perceptions should be those people who demonstrate a higher level of original thinking.

Another important study conducted in the same line of interest is that of Kirton’s. By adopting an inductive and then deductive research approach, Kirton (1989) proposes that conceptualisation of cognitive style was the outcome of linking personality traits associated with particular modes of problem-solving, decision making, and creativity and their corresponding behaviour patterns. He identified two employee problem-solving styles. People with adaptive styles work incrementally on problems, within established rules and frameworks, to generate new and useful outcomes that generally reinforce the given paradigm of the problem. On the other hand, however, employees with innovative styles are more likely to ignore established frameworks, to reframe the problem itself, and therefore to generate more frame-breaking outcomes in their

problem-solving efforts. Keller and Holland's (1978) deductive research suggests that innovators produce more creative outcomes than adaptors. Because employees with innovative problem-solving styles exhibit less fear of or respect for traditional boundaries, they may well take risks with their solutions and extend outcomes in ways that are more novel and more useful to the firm.

Group aspects of creativity

In recent years a growing number of published studies focus on illustrating the influence of different factors upon creativity at the work group level.

Group size

Scholars in this area suggest that group size influences creativity. In particular, deductive research by both Bouchrad and Hare (1970) and Renzulli et al (1974) who study brainstorming sessions related to the group size found out that the output of creative ideas on a per-employee basis decreased as group size increased. Therefore, Thornburg (1991) proposed that creative production percent (CPP) improves with a decrease in group size until it reaches the group size of two, or dyads. Moreover, Thornburg's (1991) deductive study with students points out that creativity demands for responses that break away from the usual or functional intellectual set. Therefore the one-to-one brainstorming in dyads appears to be superior.

Group member diversity

Amabile's (1998) empirical study, which does not specify the research instrument used for data collection, proposes that when teams include people with various intellectual foundations and approaches to work - that is, different expertise and creative thinking styles - ideas often combine exciting and useful ways. Thornburg (1991, p. 326) defines diversity as: "*the number of different orientations brought to bear on a problem and to interact in a problem situation*". Diverse groups are perceived as having more potential in generating alternative orientations for approaching an issue in question, cross-fertilising group members; ideas and promoting creative thinking.

Moreover, Parmeter and Gaber's (1971) deductive research with scientists stresses the importance of having stimulating colleagues within a project-based environment, since the presence of diverse stimuli provides fresh insight into existing or identifying activities. However, Cummings and Oldham's (1997) deductive study suggests that employees with creative personal characteristics need to be surrounded by colleagues who help excite them about their work but do not distract them from it. Some consistency in research results suggests that homogeneity among group members, while desirable from some perspectives, is not particularly facilitative of creative group outcomes.

A series of deductive studies by Amabile and Glazebrook (1982) and Amabile (1983) suggest that another normal reaction that dampens creativity, particularly in group situations, is employees' negativity bias in evaluating others' intellectual work and their tendency to perceive critics as more intelligent than praise-givers. Thus, team members are more likely in the meeting to look for flaws and the decision maker over-weights the comments of the critics because the critics are perceived smarter than idea generators.

Group cohesiveness

Wallace and West's (1988) deductive research argues that cohesiveness is the principal discriminating variable between high and low innovative healthcare teams. In his deductive study with scientists, Pelz (1956) identifies that employees' performance is higher not only when they contact with colleagues from different settings, but when they are also close to at least one colleague who "talks the same language". Amabile (1998) suggests that employees must express a willingness to help their teammates through difficult periods and setbacks. Every group member must recognise the unique knowledge and perspective that other members bring to table.

Group Leadership

From the literature it became apparent that there is a general consensus supporting a democratic-participative style as being a facilitator of innovativeness in work groups

(Pelz, 1956; Nyström, 1979; Wallace and West, 1988). Cummings and Oldham (1997) argue that a “supportive” supervisory management style is more likely to contribute to creativity than a “controlling” one since it enhances individual motivation.

A controlling style is more likely to decrease individual motivation simply because it does not allow the creative processes to flow (Deci and Ryan, 1987; Deci et al, 1988). Thacker’s (1997) empirical study, which does not specify the research instrument, used for data collection also proposes that group members should perceive that the team leader is trying to be supportive of creativity, otherwise the creative processes of the group may be stifled. Thacker (1997) therefore suggests that the team leader must provide an “open field” on which members can feel free to roam with new ideas and suggestions, or conversely, provide a tightly constructed set of rules and guidelines, under which members have little latitude to express new thoughts and ideas.

The literature review has recognised certain elements that team leaders must possess so that they can develop the conditions upon which work group creativity can flourish. Amabile and Gryskiewicz’s (1989) deductive study points out that management practices for creativity include the ability to constitute effective work groups that represent a diversity of skills, and are made up of individuals who trust and communicate well with each other, challenge each other’s ideas in constructive ways, are mutually supportive to the work they are doing, rather than because they have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience. Therefore, the teams formed need to share goal congruence towards their objectives together. Both Anderson’s et al (1992) deductive research and Jones and McFadzean’s (1997) inductive research argue that team leaders should be competent facilitators assisting the group to reach objectives. However, they should also be in a position to balance employees’ freedom and responsibility, without domination or control, while at the same time they will be willing to show concern for employees’ feelings and needs, generously recognise creative work by individuals and teams and encourage them to voice their own concerns, provide feedback, and facilitate skill development (Amabile, 1998, Pelz, 1956). Mikdashi’s

(1999) deductive study also points out that managers must first perceive the need for positive challenge in order to satisfy self-actualisation and fulfillment, i.e. the need for creativity. However, he adds that one can say that the need for autonomy, i.e. freedom in participation in decision making which falls between self-esteem and self-actualisation should be positively encouraged. Taking into consideration the intraorganisational verbal and non-verbal exchanges among team members, it is required that supervisors must employ positive conflict management techniques so that they influence positively group outcomes.

The aforementioned leaders' actions assist employees' feelings of self-determination and personal initiative at work to be developed, while at the same time they encourage employees to consider, develop, and ultimately contribute more creative outcomes.

Group longevity

Katz's (1982) deductive research with fifty R&D teams over several years identified an inverse relationship between longevity and innovativeness; the longer groups have been in existence, the less innovative they become.

Organisational aspects of creativity

Organisational climate

Morgan (1991) suggests that to a large extent the organisational climate is concerned with "atmosphere" or "mood". Moreover, Bower (1965) describes a "working atmosphere" favourable to creativity and innovation as requiring participation and freedom of expression, but also demanding performance standards.

Furthermore, Majaro (1992) proposes that every firm aspires to become more creative and innovative, not simply for the influences of global forces, but because of the beneficial outcomes on its business and its prospects. Duncan's (1972) deductive study points out three important dimensions of climate for organisational change: need for change, openness to change and potential for change. He found a significant positive

correlation between openness to and potential for change, but significant negative correlations between need for change and the other two variables.

Feurer et al's (1996) inductive research within Hewlett Packard suggests that creativity is best achieved in open climates where there is:

- Interaction with small barriers
- A large number of stimuli
- Freedom to experiment
- The possibility of building on earlier ideas

Leadership style

There is a consensus that a democratic, participative leadership style is conducive to creativity (Nyström, 1979), whereas more autocratic styles seem likely to diminish it. Bouwen and Fry (1988) suggest that in managing novelty effectively it is not enough simply to avoid those practices and procedures that inhibit it; there is a need to actively attend to the management of ideas.

Organisational culture

Based on Locke and Kirkpatrick (1995), Morgan (1991), Johnson and Scholes (1984) and Cook (1998) organisational culture is regarded as: "*the deeper level of basic values, assumptions and beliefs, which are shared by the organisation's members and are manifested by actions especially from leaders and managers*". In other words, organisational culture is perceived as a set of collective norms, which influence the behaviour of members within the company. Irani et al's (1997) inductive research proposes that these values, assumptions and beliefs are manifested in many ways, such as: the rites and routines that take place within an organisation; the language used; the stories, legends and myths that are told and retold and finally the symbols that are found throughout the company. Kay (1989) acknowledges that organisational culture, in the positive sense, is a most valuable and necessary asset. However, when it is lacking, it is

generally perceived as a negative asset, which suggests that employees with negatively perceived values have set the tone.

In his inductive study Brand (1998) identifies a range of cultures found within companies ranging from the “innovative” culture (divergent and learning) with its opposite of “controlling (convergent and efficiency conscious) to “supportive” culture (empowering and caring) with its opposite of “directive” (profit before people).

Kay’s (1989) empirical study in the high tech industry, which doesn’t specify the research instrument used for data collection, generates similar findings. He proposes that to succeed in such an environment, a company needs a set of principles based upon a common set of values, an organisational culture, to provide the desired guidance. That is to say, every employee needs to understand and accept the principles and values, which apply to everyone in the organisation. Nevertheless, two other important aspects were derived from his research, specifically the matter of trust and respect for the individual. By adopting a common set of values, people and situations are more likely to be predicted. However, lack of predictability leads to distrust. Therefore, respect for the individual is that part of the value system, which most frequently comes into play in dealing with people. Kay (1989) therefore suggests that many of the unexpected crises can often be avoided or resolved satisfactorily if respect for the individual is the major value when coming up with decisions.

So, how can organisations develop a creative culture? Several authors have offered a plethora of perspectives in an attempt to answer this question. To begin with, Locke and Kirkpatrick (1995) suggest that the process begin with the leader’s vision. They refer to a vision as a transcendent goal that represents shared values, has moral overtones, and provides meaning; it reflects what the organisation’s future could and should be.

Cook (1998) proposes that leaders must communicate vision effectively through any available formal and informal channels of communication and constantly encourage

employees to think and act beyond current wisdom. Moreover, this vision must be communicated from the highest to the lowest levels of management (Delbecq & Mills, 1985; Kimberley & Evanisko, 1981). In other words, an organisational culture, which supports creativity, should nourish innovative ways of representing problems and finding solutions, as well as regard creativity as both desirable and normal and consider innovators as role models to be identified with. The leader must abide by all aspects of vision, even in informal settings, because every action is observed and interpreted by subordinates.

The free exchange of information is perceived by many authors as crucial for creativity in social settings and, thus, norms that promote open information exchange should facilitate creative performance (Amabile, 1988). Conversely, norms can have a negative impact on creativity. For example, high conformity appears to be anathema to creative behaviour in many settings; therefore, rigid and/or punishing norms promoting conformity should restrict creativity (Amabile, 1988).

Cultures that encourage and support risk-taking should increase creativity (Amabile, 1988). Sternberg et al (1997) highlight the influence of organisational culture to the degree and attitude that employees show against risk taking. Kahneman and Tversky (1982) found that people are risk-averse when choosing between potential gains and risk-seeking only when choosing potential losses. People in general fear change and despite the fact that many people claim to value novel ideas, there is a strong evidence that they do not like, Zajonc (1968) states that one of the most solid findings in psychology is the “mere-exposure effect”: people like most what is familiar to them. The more they hear or study something, the more comfortable they become with it, and the more they like it.

Robinson and Stern (1997) also propose that a creative culture should encourage self-initiated activity, where individuals and teams own problems and their solutions so that

intrinsic motivation is raised. This includes unofficial activity, which occurs in the absence of direct official support.

Jones and McFadzean's (1997) inductive research adds that employees should be encouraged to challenge their assumptions and perceptions regarding procedures, products and processes. Creativity is fostered when individuals and teams have relatively high autonomy in their day-to-day conduct of the work and a sense of ownership and control over their own work and their own ideas (Amabile, 1996). Amabile and Gitomer (1984), on the same line of argument, suggest that individuals generate more creative work when they perceive themselves to have choice in how to go about achieving the tasks to which they have been assigned.

Another important element of organisational culture identified by the literature review as enhancing organisational creativity is that of stimulating and ensuring participative safety (Anderson et al, 1992). It is suggested that employees can only be encouraged to think creatively if they are not afraid of criticism and punishment. Therefore, as indicated by Brand (1998), creative employees need to be in an environment where top management takes a long view in order to tolerate a few mistakes. On the contrary, short termism may increase intolerance.

Resources & skills

Cook's (1998) inductive research suggests that creative organisations must explicitly strive towards the attraction, development and retention of creative talent, if they want to remain competitive by coming up with new ideas.

Brand (1998) proposes that organisations should hire people who are knowledgeable, intelligent, creative in their thinking processes and willing to work tenaciously to attain goal. In general, creative organisations should focus on employing people with broader interests, eager to learn and prepared to take some risks, characteristics analysed in the first section of the comparative literature review.

But how can creative organisations develop and retain their employees? Several authors propose that senior management must provide sufficient resources and training, encouragement for developing new ideas, time to work on pet projects and/or financial support (Anderson et al., 1992; Jones and McFadzean, 1997).

Resources include everything that the organisation has available to assist employees' work in the domain-targeted innovation. Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1989) note that these resources include an array of elements: adequate time for developing novel work in the domain, people with necessary expertise, sufficient funds, material resources, systems and processes for work in the domain, relevant information, and the availability of training. However, Amabile (1998) identifies that the two main resources that affect creativity are both time and money. She explicitly stresses the importance of the quantity of time and money that should be given to employees since it can either support or constrain creativity. For instance, when managers do not allow time for proper experimentation, they are unwittingly standing in the way of the creative process. The lack of project resources can also constrain employees' creativity. Amabile (1998) points out that managers must decide on the funding, people, and other resources that a team legitimately needs to complete a project. She therefore suggests that there is a "threshold of sufficiency", and when resources are added above this threshold, creativity is not enhanced. Below that threshold a restriction of resources can limit creativity since employees will more likely find additional resources, not in actually developing new products or services. Amabile et al (1996) add that employees' perceptions of the adequacy of resources may affect people psychologically by leading to beliefs about the intrinsic value of the projects that they have undertaken.

Moreover, a collaborative idea flows across an organisation, participative management and decision-making are important aspects of organisational encouragement (Kimberley & Evanisko, 1981). Osborn (1963) as well as Parnes and Noller (1972) suggest that the probability of creative idea generation increases as exposure to other potentially relevant ideas increases.

Furthermore, in order for the creative mind to flourish, creative organisations should attempt to accommodate personal idiosyncrasies. Allowing employees some personal discretion, such as choice of clothing, suggests that they are valued for their contributions, not for their ability to meet a dress code. Amabile (1998) shares the same opinion but proposes that employees should be given autonomy concerning the means – that is, concerning process- but not necessarily the ends. Autonomy around process fosters creativity because it strengthens their sense of ownership over a project or a situation. Discretion about process also allows employees to resolve problems in ways that make the most of their expertise and their creative thinking skills.

Creative organisations must establish an effective system of communication, which should aim to ensure that a systematic channel catches and assesses as many ideas as possible and that the wasted element is reduced (Majaro, 1992). Openness and knowledge transfer are considered as crucial factors in ensuring that ideas are implemented into valuable organisational innovations, by increasing the quantity and quality of information and helping people to gain different perspectives.

Moreover, Amabile (1988) and Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1987) argue that some degree of pressure within the work environment could have a positive influence if it was perceived as arising from the urgent, intellectually challenging nature of the problem itself. They believe that such a challenge can have a positive influence on creative employees. In particular, time pressure that is perceived as a necessary concomitant of an important, urgent project may add to the perception of challenge in the work that positively correlates with intrinsic motivation and creativity (Amabile, 1988).

Several authors (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989; Paolillo and Brown, 1978; Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978; Amabile 1998) suggest that the importance of appropriately matching individuals to work assignments, on the basis of both skills and interests, to maximise a sense of positive challenge in the work and therefore, enhance employees' creative abilities. Amabile (1997) suggests that employees are more likely to be creative only in

pursuits they enjoy. If employees do not enjoy an activity, they will not invest the often incredible amounts of time and energy necessary to succeed in it. Therefore, managers can match people with jobs that play to their expertise and their skills in creative thinking, and ignite intrinsic motivation. Moreover, Cummings and Oldham (1997) in their deductive empirical research have identified the following consequences associated with employees who are involved in highly complex jobs:

- They become able to perceive the significance of and exercise responsibility for the whole of their work
- They have the discretion to assess options about how and when the work gets done using variety of skills
- They are more open to receive enough feedback from the work itself to monitor their progress.

Amabile (1998) also stresses the importance of the amount of stretch. Specifically, employees should not be stretched either little since they will feel bored or too much, which will make them feel overwhelmed and threatened by a loss of control. Making a good match requires that managers possess rich and detailed information about their employees and available assignments. However, such information is often difficult and time consuming to gather.

Structure & systems

Amabile (1998) proposes that creativity is truly enhanced when the entire organisation supports it. Organisation's leaders must put in place appropriate systems or procedures and emphasise values that clarify the fact that creative efforts are a top priority. Cook's (1998) inductive research proposes that the organisational structure and systems are about both formal organisational and informal structures (networking, information structures, and the shadow side of the organisation). Systems include rewards, recognition and career systems.

Moreover, Brand (1998) through his inductive research with 3M suggests that senior management must have a long-term commitment with regards to their employees' career. Therefore, he suggests that lifetime employment and promotion from within are important traditional 3M policies.

Structures in creative organisations tend to be flexible, with few rules and regulations, loose job descriptions, and high autonomy. Brand (1998) notes that creative organisations should adopt a flat structure since it will allow for important decisions to be made at all levels. Hierarchies also amplify these tendencies. Porter and Roberts' (1976) research shows that people in hierarchies talk upward and listen upward. In other words, employees tend to send more messages upward than downward, they pay more attention to messages from their supervisors than to ones from their subordinates, and they try harder to establish rapport with supervisors than with subordinates.

Fair, supportive evaluation of employees; individual contribution is also an important aspect of organisational encouragement (Cummings, 1965). Furthermore, field experiments have demonstrated that supportive, informative evaluation can enhance an intrinsically motivated state that is most conducive to creativity (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Sternberg et al (1997) in their writings highlight the fact that to some extent, employees' thinking-style preferences follow the reward structure of their environment. In other words, employees prefer styles that get rewarded.

A series of research by Amabile (1979, 1983, 1990) suggest that ill-considered evaluation and the use of extrinsic rewards can suppress creativity. Amabile (1998) proposes that creativity supporting organisations should consistently reward creativity, but they should avoid using money to "bribe" people to come up with innovative ideas. Organisation's leaders can support creativity by encouraging information exchange and collaboration and by ensuring that political problems do not fester. Moreover, political problems should never occur in an organisational setting. Amabile (1998) suggests that infighting, politicking, and gossip are particularly damaging to creativity because they

can distract peoples' focus away from work. That sense of mutual purpose and excitement which is so central to intrinsic motivation invariably lessens when people are cliquish or at war with one another. Her research suggests that intrinsic motivation increases when people are aware that those around them are excited by their jobs. When political problems abound, people feel that their work is threatened by others' agendas.

Amabile (1998) in her writings attempts to answer how this sort of negativity bias can have severe consequences for the creativity of those being evaluated. First, a culture of evaluation leads people to focus on the external rewards and punishments associated with their outputs, thus increasing the presence of extrinsic motivation and its potentially negative effects on intrinsic motivation. Second, such a culture creates a climate of fear, which again undermines intrinsic motivation. Finally, negativity also shows up in how managers treat people whose ideas do not pan out. Managers can support creativity by serving as role models, persevering through tough problems as well as encouraging collaboration and communication within the team. Such behaviour enhances all three components of the creative process, and it has the added virtue of being a high-impact practice that a single manager can take on his or her own.

Several authors suggest that creativity can be enhanced by expecting a reward that is perceived as a "bonus", a confirmation of one's competence, or a means of enabling one to do better, more interesting work in the future (Abbey & Dickson, 1983; Cummings, 1965; Amabile et al, 1986) whether it is financial rewards or praise. Quinn's (1985) empirical study, which doesn't specify the research instrument used for data collection, also identifies the importance of achievement for the innovator and observed that innovation can provide for these individuals clear satisfiers of economic, psychological and career goals, all together, and in ways that are available along few other paths.

Intrinsic motivation principle

Amabile's ongoing research in the area of creativity (1979, 1987, 1990, 1997, 1998) shows that there are two types of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic, the latter being far

more essential for creativity. Amabile points out (1998) that extrinsic motivation comes from outside a person – whether the motivation is a carrot or a stick. For instance, the most ordinary extrinsic motivator supervisor’s use is money, which do not necessarily stop people from being creative. However, Amabile (1998) discovered that in many occasions, it does not help either, specifically when it makes employees perceive the financial incentive as a means of being bribed or controlled. She concludes her reasoning with regards to extrinsic rewards by suggesting that money by itself does not make employees passionate about their jobs.

Moreover, Amabile (1990, 1997) notes that motivation can also be intrinsic, which is a person’s internal desire to do something. In other words, deep interest and involvement in the work, curiosity, enjoyment, or a personal sense of challenge can drive motivation.

Amabile (1997, p. 46) proposes the following intrinsic motivation principle:

“Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity. Controlling extrinsic motivation is detrimental to creativity, but informational or enabling extrinsic motivation can be conducive, particularly if initial levels of intrinsic motivation are high”.

This principle suggests that employees will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself – and not by external pressures. However, Amabile et al (1996), Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1987, 1989) identify that extrinsic motivators, such as reward and recognition for creative ideas as well as perpetual constructive feedback on the work are operating as supports to creativity.

In addition, Amabile (1997), in her journal article with the title “Motivating creativity in organisations: On doing what you love and loving what you do”, attempts to give an explanation of the determinants which influence whether the extrinsic motivation will combine positively with intrinsic motivation, or detract from it, in influencing creativity. In her work, Amabile (1997) proposes three important determinants: the person’s initial

motivational state, the type of extrinsic motivator used, and the timing of the extrinsic motivation. First, the initial level of intrinsic motivation may play a crucial role. It may be that, if a person is deeply involved in the work because it is interesting or personally challenging, that degree of intrinsic motivation may be relatively unaffected to the undermining effects of extrinsic motivators. Second, the type of extrinsic motivation may make a difference. Deci and Ryan (1985) note that that positive outcome can be the result of what is labeled as informational extrinsic motivators. This type of motivator includes reward, recognition, and feedback that either reassures competence or provides information on how to strengthen performance. The second type of motivators, known as enabling extrinsic motivators can also achieve positive outcomes on creativity. These include reward, recognition, and feedback that directly increase the person's involvement in the work itself. On the other hand, the "non-synergistic extrinsic motivators", which are controlling extrinsic motivators, may never combine positively with intrinsic motivation since they threaten a person's perception of autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Third, the timing of extrinsic motivation may be important. Meaning those synergistic extrinsic motivators may be most effective at those stages of the creative process where high degrees of innovation do not occur. For instance the collection of information related to the issues in question or the validation of a chosen solution, comprise areas where extrinsic motivators are most useful.

External environment

King (1990) suggests that antecedents of creativity and innovation can be found outside the organisation as well as within it. These factors are generally called "environmental" though the term is used in various ways. It may refer to the market or sector within which the organisation operates, or it may be used in a political, cultural or simply geographical way, or some combination of these. Extra-organisational variables which have a direct effect on creativity are community size, competition, and environmental complexity and turbulence.

Kimberley and Evanisko (1981) in their deductive empirical research within hospitals found that the size of city was the best contextual predictor of technological innovation, though the relationship was not significant independent of the effects of individual and organisational variables. Therefore, city or community size may not be of influence in itself, but rather may imply the presence of other antecedent factors.

Kimberley (1981) suggests that competition between organisations often occurs not simply for enhancing their economic position but also for status and prestige in comparison with other organisations. This is true since employees working within creative organisations want to make their mark in the world, that is, the art of gratifying as well as generating an extra source of income.

6.2.1 Summary

In an attempt to review and synthesise studies within the organisational creativity area relevant to the mind stretching theory this section has presented prescriptive, descriptive, metaphoric, conjectural and empirical writings proposing attributes of organisational creativity. To begin with, the section presented conceptual frameworks or models of organisational creativity and the creative process offered by prescriptive authors. Then, within the descriptive category studies related to the effects of task, climate, social construction, interpersonal interactions and training on organisational creativity were reviewed. Several metaphors related to the creative process were also highlighted. In addition, writings based on conjecture were categorised in terms of productive forgetting, organisational rules and rewards and their relationship with organisational creativity. Finally, the section presented inductive and deductive studies highlighting the individual, group and organisational issues affecting creativity.

The next section focuses on comparing mind stretching with existing organisational creativity theories.

6.3 Comparing mind stretching with organisational creativity theories

The previous section aimed to synthesise the most closely related body of knowledge. This was termed as “organisational creativity theory” since it accounts for a more specific set of literature, which deals with the different explanations of the creative process. It is clear by now that this study does not fit in the traditional conceptual approach with the organisational creativity literature nor does it adopt the same focus. The mind stretching theory evolved from an inductive organisational perspective of corporate creativity and therefore it was impossible to directly compare the findings to previous studies. As opposed to the inductive mind stretching theory the literature review indicates that prescriptive studies do not have empirical research to back up their arguments, descriptive writings are sometimes too vague to be useful, metaphoric authors are too theoretical in their explanations of the phenomenon of organisational creativity, while conjectural studies propose interesting theoretical frameworks which however have not been tested in real life organisational settings.

Existing theories in the organisational creativity area, as reviewed in the previous section, appear to mainly approach the subject conceptually and their outcomes are limited to the identification of attributes which are associated with creative achievement. On the other hand, the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching provides an in-depth insight on the actual ways through which creativity can be fostered within organisations. The theory is not only empirically based but it is also inductive and draws directly from the main concerns as expressed by people who are in the process of being creative.

However, it is still worthwhile evaluating common themes and analytic constraints so that mind stretching can be compared and eventually be situated within the existing bodies of literature. The main similarities and differences are summarised in Table 6.1 below:

Established Theories

Focus

- Develop linear models of the creative process
- Approach the area from a unit analysis perspective (individual, work-group and organisational)

Research Methodology

- Conceptual or deductive large-scale studies

Mind Stretching

Focus

- Emergent substantive grounded theory research illustrating the inter-related ways through which creative organisations mobilise creativity within their workplace.

Research Methodology

- Large-scale inductive study

Table 6.1 Similarities and differences between mind stretching and established organisational creativity theories

The first part of this section aims to identify linkages between mind stretching and the established organisational theory.

Linkages of mind stretching with corporate creativity theory

To begin with, the two conceptual models that best relate to the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching are those of Woodman et al (1993) and Amabile's (1997) componential theory of organisational creativity and innovation. These two models take an organisational perspective of the different attributes, which mobilise creativity within a project-based environment. Their conceptual holistic models are characterised by an interrelationship of individual, work-group and organisational creativity. Nevertheless, their approach aims to highlight the important attributes to creativity rather than to explain how creativity can be mobilised as offered by mind stretching, the core variable of this theory.

The examination of similarities between this study and established organisational creativity theories reveals immediately the importance of mind stretching, the core

variable of this theory. Several authors (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989; Andrews and Farris, 1967; King and West, 1985; Pelz and Andrews, 1966; Paolillo and Brown, 1978; Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978; West, 1986) stress the importance of enhancing employees' creative potentials. Moreover, Sternberg et al (1997) propose that creative organisations should take a longer perspective letting employees develop their skills and abilities. Several established conceptual theories on corporate creativity (Sternberg et al, 1997; MacKinnon, 1960; Majaro, 1992) highlight the importance of attributes associated with creative thinking, such as intellectual abilities and thinking style preferences. Those attributes must be developed as explained by the core variable of mind stretching in the previous chapter. Mind stretching theory acknowledges its importance, however, it goes one step further by explaining the ways through which employees' creative abilities can be developed within a project based environment.

Established theory also recognises the need for developing opportunities where employees can exploit uncertainty. Sternberg et al (1997) argue that managers should let messiness exist. In other words, they suggest that uncertainty associated with creative projects must not be controlled in order to establish some order. The comparison of mind stretching with established corporate creativity theory reveals that the emergent category of adventuring comes closer to the five stages of Amabile's (1988) componential framework of creativity. Specifically, the properties of adventuring, such as introspecting, scenario making and experimenting can be associated with Amabile's preparation, response generation and validation stages respectively. Moreover, her conceptual model moves beyond the other aforementioned authors' work and emphasises the fact that the process can have a negative consequence, which can be found also in the emergent category of "adventuring" under the title "mistake making". Similar views are expressed by other authors, such as Parmeter and Gaber (1971) as well as Robinson and Stern (1997) who, however, propose that employees' capabilities can be enhanced by stimulating co-workers, who are more likely to challenge each other's ideas in constructive ways. Furthermore, Hackman et al (1975) stress the importance of complex work to creative achievement. Furthermore, Persing (1999)

points out that employees are more likely to be involved in a variety of activities or roles leading to “multiplexing” in the workplace. Again, mind stretching acknowledges the outcomes of empirical research associated with the different ways through which creative organisations can develop uncertainty within a project based environment. In fact the sub-core variable of perpetual challenging goes one step further than the established theories and shows how this is actually done.

In terms of the sub-core variable of confidence building, empirical research from Buel (1965), MacKinnon (1960, 1962) and Whitfield (1975) points out that creative employees show a broad confidence in their skills and abilities. More specifically authors like Smolensky and Kleiner (1985) as well as Amabile (1998) propose that personal discretion over work methods and behaviour is associated to creative achievement. On the other hand, Anderson et al (1992), Amabile (1983, 1998), King and West (1985) and West (1986) propose different ways through which creativity can be fostered within a project based-environment. However, their empirical findings aim to highlight the importance of organisational, structural and psychological attributes related to creative achievement rather than to explain how creative organisations assist their employees to develop a belief in their skills and abilities.

The aim of this section was to situate the substantive theory of mind stretching to existing bodies of literature by offering a brief explanation of its linkages with established theories. However, I have decided for clarifying purposes to show in more detail the overlap of the core variable, the two sub-core variables and their categories with established theories in the following table (Table 6.2).

The Emergent Substantive theory of “Mind Stretching”	Literature Review
Mind stretching	<p>Sternberg et al (1997) <i>Long-term perspective to give time to individual to develop</i></p> <p>Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1989); Andrews and Farris (1967) ; King and West (1985); Pelz and Andrews (1966); Paolillo and Brown (1978); Siegel and Kaemmerer (1978) ; West (1986) <i>An individual's creative abilities can be enhanced by a sense of positive challenge</i></p> <p>Amabile (1998) <i>The amount of stretch</i></p>
Perpetual challenging	<p>Sternberg et al (1997); Kanter (1984); Van de Ven (1986) <i>Let uncertainty to exist within the workplace</i></p> <p>Stacey (1992); McFadzean (1996); Jones and McFadzean (1997) <i>Employees must challenge their own perception</i></p>
Adventuring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introspecting • Scenario Making • Experimenting • Incremental risk taking • Mistake making 	<p>Wallas (1926) <i>Creative thinking model</i></p> <p>Basadur et al (1982) <i>Creative problem solving</i></p> <p>Rogers (1983) <i>Innovation-decision process</i></p> <p>Amabile (1983) <i>A componential framework for creativity</i></p> <p>Welsh (1975) <i>Adventurous as a personality trait</i></p> <p>Sternberg et al (1997); Michael (1979); Glassman (1986) <i>Risk-taking as a personality trait</i></p> <p>Basadur et al (1982); Tushman and O'Reilly (1997); Amabile (1988); Burnside (1990) <i>Risk-taking culture</i></p> <p>Nemeth (1997); McGowan (1996) <i>Freedom to break the rules</i></p>
Overt Confronting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual • Contextual 	<p>Parmerter and Gaber (1971); Robinson and Stern (1997); Cummings and Oldham (1997); King (1995); Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1989) <i>Stimulating colleagues</i></p> <p>Hackman et al (1975); Cummings and Oldham (1997) <i>Complexity of tasks or activities to be performed</i></p> <p>Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1987); Amabile (1988) <i>Pressure has a positive influence on creativity</i></p>

<p>Portfolioing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneous • Sequential • Conceptual • Contextual • Intrinsic portfolioing skills 	<p>Persing (1999) <i>Multiplexing</i></p> <p>Bluedorn et al (1992); Hall (1990) <i>Polychronicity (perform tasks simultaneously) and monochronicity (perform tasks serially)</i></p> <p>Roberts (1988) <i>Creative employees maintain a variety of skills and roles</i></p>
<p>Opportunising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active opportunising • Selective opportunising 	<p>Sternberg et al (1997) <i>Employees are more likely to be creative in pursuits they enjoy</i></p>
<p>Confidence Building</p>	<p>Buel (1965); MacKinnon (1960, 1962); Keller and Holland (1978); Whitfield (1975) <i>Creative employees have faith in their skills and abilities</i></p>
<p>Authenticating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining autonomy • Cherish diversity • Encouraging individuality 	<p>Buel (1965); McDermid (1965); Whitfield (1975); Maddi (1976); Stein (1968); MacKinnon (1960, 1962) <i>Autonomy as a personality trait</i></p> <p>Kaplan (1963); Coopey (1987); Keller and Holland (1978); MacKinnon (1960, 1962); Majaro (1988) <i>Non-conformity as a personality trait</i></p> <p>Smolensky and Kleiner (1995); Amabile (1998) <i>Allow personal discretion over work methods</i></p> <p>Amabile (1998); Thornburg (1991); Geschka (1983); Manz and Neck (1995); Falk & Johnson (1977) <i>Diversity promotes creative thinking</i></p> <p>Mikdashi (1999) <i>Self-actualisation</i></p>
<p>Credentialising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-modal evaluating • Recognising 	<p>Bouwen and Fry (1988); Adair (1990); Cummings (1965); Deci and Ryan (1985); Sternberg et al (1997) <i>Fair supportive evaluation</i></p> <p>Amabile (1979, 1983, 1990, 1998) <i>Ill-considered evaluation can suppress creativity</i></p> <p>Amabile and Glazebrook (1982); Amabile (1983) <i>Employees' negativity bias in evaluating others' intellectual work</i></p> <p>Adams (1986); Kanter (1984); Quinn (1985) <i>Effective recognition systems (celebrating success, creating a culture of pride and provide higher career goals)</i></p>
<p>Switching off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra peer group switching off • Peer group switching off 	<p>Simon (1966) <i>Productive forgetting</i></p> <p>Harding (1967) <i>Rest by turning way from the problem</i></p>

<p>Updating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilising • Scope broadening • Direct experiencing 	<p>Amabile (1983) <i>Domain-relevant skills</i></p> <p>Whitfield (1975); Sternberg et al (1997) <i>Knowledge as a building data for novel combination</i></p> <p>Stein (1989) <i>Negative effects of knowledge and experience to creativity</i></p> <p>Kasperson (1978a, 1978b) <i>Mobilising and direct experiencing have a positive effect on creativity</i></p> <p>Whitfield (1975); Dellas and Gaier (1970) <i>Intuitiveness as a personality trait influences positively the accumulation of new knowledge</i></p> <p>Smolensky and Kleiner (1995); Woodman et al (1993) <i>Education enhances creativity</i></p> <p>Damanpour (1991); Payne (1990); Cummings and O'Connell (1978); Cohen and Levinthal (1990) <i>The ability to recognise and use external information</i></p>
<p>Bonding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active bonding • Passive bonding 	<p>Fukuyama (1995); Sethia (1995); Flores (1979) <i>Bonding</i></p> <p>Wallace and West (1988); West (1990); Amabile (1998) <i>Group cohesiveness</i></p> <p>Nonaka and Tekeuchi (1995); Robinson and Stern (1997); Roffe (1999) <i>Effective communication networks</i></p> <p>Lofy (1998) <i>Develop an atmosphere where employees know emotionally and cognitively that they can share ideas</i></p> <p>Flores (1979) <i>Dialoguing</i></p> <p>Sethia (1995) <i>Different forms of collaborative interaction</i></p> <p>Riley (1992); Schmuck and Runkel (1988) <i>Trust and respect among members influences positively creativity</i></p> <p>Anderson et al (1992); Jones and McFadzean (1997) <i>Show concern to employees' feelings and needs</i></p>
<p>Inspirationalising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making creativity organisational priority • Role modelling • Safety netting 	<p>Brand (1998) <i>Innovative culture</i></p> <p>Locke and Kirkpatrick (1995); Nanus (1992); Kouzes and Posner (1987) <i>Leaders should "sell" vision to employees</i></p> <p>Eisner (1996); Smolensky and Kiciner (1995); Peters (1997) <i>Tolerate failure</i></p> <p>Anderson et al (1992); Basadur et al (1982); Brand (1998) <i>Ensure participative safety</i></p>

<p>Making a difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt reassurance • Adequate resourcing • Creating a sense of ownership 	<p>Anderson et al (1992); Locke and Kirkpatrick (1995); Jones and McFadzean (1997); Amabile (1998) <i>Adequate resourcing</i></p> <p>Bailyn (1985); King and West (1985), West (1986), Amabile (1996) <i>A sense of ownership fosters creativity</i></p>
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Table 6.2 Linkages between mind stretching and established organisational creativity theories

A review of gaps in the literature

Having compared mind stretching to corporate creativity theory, it is now possible to highlight the gaps in the literature. Firstly, it is apparent that organisational creativity theories are approached from a unit analysis perspective. In other words, all of the theories mentioned in the previous section are influenced by predetermined knowledge and therefore focus on certain aspects of the creative process, such as the individual, work-group or organisation.

As far as the methodological approach is concerned, corporate creativity literature heavily relies on conceptual papers and surveys. Although creativity techniques for the individual are plentiful, there are relatively few reports on embedding creativity in an organisational setting. There is a clear evidence of lack of organisational studies providing holistic and functional perspectives. Research on organisational creativity by definition focuses on multiple levels of analysis. However, academics and practitioners in the area of organisational creativity tended to avoid multilevel research due to both their theoretical orientations and because of methodological and conceptual problems inherent in collecting data across different levels of analysis. Theoretically, the various disciplines that have contributed to organisational behaviour have held their own dominant theoretical approach. Roberts, Hulin and Rousseau (1978) point out that the basic disciplines contributing to the macro and micro approaches to organisational behaviour have in their origins either a concern for the societal or organisational level of analysis (sociology), or the individual, or small group level of analysis (psychology). Taking into consideration the fact that these roots drive much of organisational

behaviour theory, the further establishment of organisational behaviour as a scientific discipline necessitates the development of theories and analytical methods that cross these basic disciplines. This study makes explicit the need for greater research by applying inductive methodological approaches in identifying the ways that creative organisations use in order to enhance their employees' creative potential. It would be very useful to gain more insights with regards to the processes that creative organisations apply in order to retain and develop their employees' creative potentials by emphasising on organisational or inter-organisational issues.

In terms of the outcomes, the organisational creativity literature illustrates linear processes of the creative process or conceptual structures of the attributes, which can enhance creativity in the workplace. Nevertheless, this study questions the linear aspect of these models since it has identified that most of the processes of mind stretching can happen at the same time or in a not linear way. As mentioned above, these models aim to identify structural, psychological and social features that may enhance or suppress creativity within a project-based environment. However, the substantive theory of mind stretching moves one step further and suggests how some of the aforementioned features can be integrated by providing a theory of mobilising creativity.

6.4 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter is to situate mind stretching to existing literature. Therefore, the literature comparison undertaken focused on identifying linkages and differences between mind stretching and existing bodies of literature.

The main focus for the comparison was organisational creativity literature. I have decided to adopt such a strategy since mind stretching is a substantive theory, therefore, its explanation relates to the context from which it has emerged. The literature review initially compared the substantive theory of mind stretching with corporate creativity.

This chapter has demonstrated that organisational creativity theories have been mainly approached conceptually and their outcomes were limited to the identification of attributes, which are associated with creative achievement. However, it should be recognised that academics (Amabile, Sternberg, King, West, etc.) aim through their studies to test whether those attributes were conducive to creativity. The literature review illustrates that the emergent substantive theory of mind stretching provides a new perspective on organisational creativity. In particular mind stretching provides an in-depth insight of how organisational creativity can be fostered. By illustrating a wider range of individual, work group and organisational behaviours, mind stretching aims to explain how creativity can be mobilised in a workplace environment.

The outcomes of the comparison literature review will comprise the basis upon which recommendations can be made. The following and final chapter of this thesis, chapter seven “Findings and Implications”, aims to highlight the major implications for academics, practitioners and policy makers within the area of corporate creativity.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Abstract

This chapter discusses the main findings and implications which emerged around the core variable of mind stretching. It brings together the content of the previous chapters and draws out their theoretical and managerial implications.

This chapter is in three sections. The first section (7.1) assesses the emergent substantive grounded theory of mind stretching and its fit to other bodies of literature. The second section (7.2) discusses the implications of this study to practitioners, academics and policy makers. The final section (7.3) provides a conclusion to this thesis summarising the main elements of chapter seven.

7.1 Mind stretching

This study has revealed the grounded theory of mind stretching. The process of mind stretching is about developing the conditions where creative individuals can extend their creative potential within project based environments. This basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to exercise their creative thinking so that it can be developed while at the same time a belief in themselves is built.

The theory has two sub-core variables. The first focuses on explaining how creative organisations perpetually develop chaotic situations in their workplace environment. On the other hand, the second one is concerned with how creative organisations are: The theory involves eleven strategies for developing employees' creative thinking. Four are concerned with "perpetual challenging" and seven with "confidence building". The latter sub-core variable includes a distinction between those confidence building strategies which are individual and those which are explicit.

Organisational tolerance reflects the degree up to which creative organisations allow employees to develop within the working environment. Creative organisations use mind stretching up to the point where employees do not feel threatened by a new challenge in terms of the perpetual challenging process. In terms of confidence building process, creative organisations allow employees to develop up to the point where they do not become egocentric personalities as shown in the following figure (Figure 7.1).

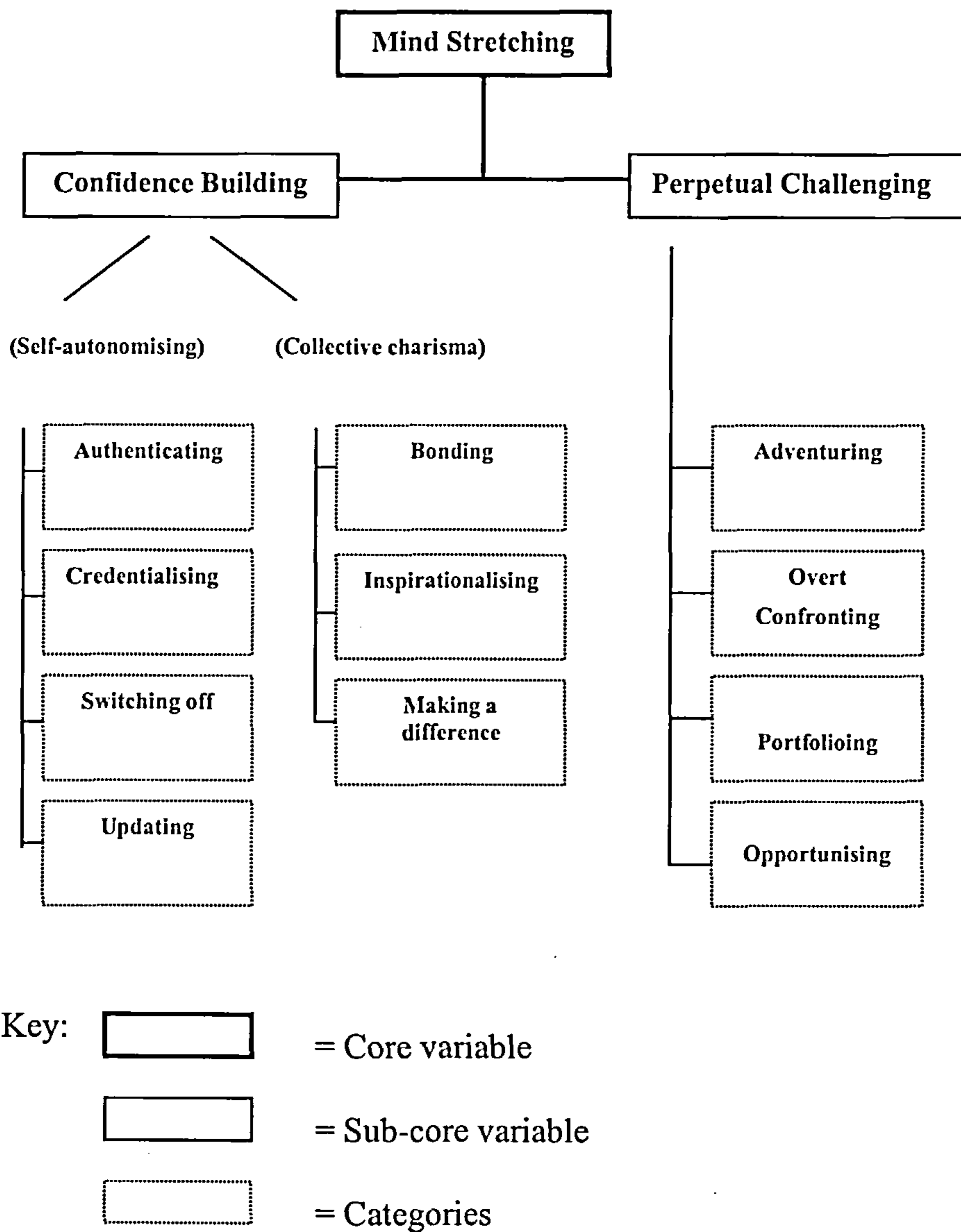


Figure 7.1: The substantive grounded theory of “Mind Stretching”

7.1.1 Evaluating mind stretching

There are four factors against which a grounded theory research can be evaluated. The third chapter provides a detailed explanation of them, however, in this section a discussion of mind stretching vigorousness in relation to the four factors comes next.

Fit

It questions whether the theory fits the data. The theory of mind stretching, from the creative organisation's perspective, supports their challenge of developing their employees' creative skills and abilities. By adopting an organisational perspective in approaching the area of organisational creativity, the theory of mind stretching gains a greater explanatory power.

Workability

It is concerned with the degree of conceptualisation rather than the description offered. Mind stretching must be considered as a conceptual explanation of creative behaviour. However, since it is a substantive theory, it cannot be applied beyond its context.

Relevance

Relevance questions the importance that the emergent grounded theory has to the people in question. The previous chapter, the comparative literature review, revealed that there is a gap, which can be filled by mind stretching. Mind stretching is relevant to three communities, namely academics, practitioners, and policy makers. In terms of the academic community mind stretching provides a new insight in the area of organisational creativity. It comprises the basis upon which further investigation into its categories can be conducted. Moreover, mind stretching presents the practitioners an integrated insight into the more effective mobilisation of creativity within an organisation. In terms of policy makers, the theory of mind stretching identifies issues, such as employees' development and retention, which governmental bodies should take into consideration. However, the next section thoroughly discusses the implications of mind stretching on practitioners, academics and policy makers.

Modifiability

The easiness with which additional insight can be considered within a theory is assessed by modifiability. It must be noted that all grounded theory studies may be expected to be modified as new insight is revealed. For instance, my initial insights in mind stretching

offered an adequate explanation. However, the theory was not robust at that time and offered fewer categories, which meant that additional insights must be accommodated.

The current form of mind stretching has a more robust structure. Its structure composes the core variable of mind stretching, the two sub-core variables of perpetual challenging and confidence building. Therefore, the additional categories made clear that additional categories can be accommodated.

7.1.2 Mind stretching in the literature

The previous chapter was devoted in comparing mind stretching with existing bodies of literature in the area of corporate creativity. The aim of that chapter was to compare the grounded theory of mind stretching with related theories.

The comparative literature review illustrated that mind stretching as an integrated framework offers a new insight to the organisational creativity area. It is clear by now that this study does not fit the traditional conceptual approach within organisational creativity literature nor does it adopt the same focus. The mind stretching theory evolved from an inductive organisational perspective of corporate creativity and therefore it was impossible to directly compare the findings to previous studies. However, the examination of similarities between this study and established organisational creativity theories immediately reveals the importance of mind stretching, the core variable of this theory. Several authors (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989; Andrews and Farris, 1967; King and West, 1985; Pelz and Andrews, 1966; Paolillo and Brown, 1978; Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978; West, 1986) stress the importance of enhancing employees' creative potentials. Moreover, Sternberg et al (1997) propose that creative organisations should take a longer perspective letting employees develop their skills and abilities. Several established conceptual theories on organisational creativity (Sternberg et al, 1997; MacKinnon, 1960; Majaro, 1992) highlight the importance of attributes associated with creative thinking, such as intellectual abilities and thinking style preferences. Those attributes must be developed as explained by the core variable of mind stretching in the

previous chapter. Mind stretching theory acknowledges its importance, however, it goes one step further by explaining the ways through which employees' creative abilities can be developed within a project based environment.

The absence of integrative explanations by other academics is mostly influenced by the fact that they have approached the area of organisational creativity either conceptually or by testing hypotheses based on others' findings or writings. More specifically, their research outcomes tend to be descriptive by focusing on "what" is happening in the issue in question. As opposed to the inductive mind stretching theory, the literature review indicates that prescriptive studies do not have empirical research to back up their arguments, descriptive writings are sometimes too vague to be useful, metaphoric authors are too theoretical in their explanations of the phenomenon of organisational creativity, while conjectural studies propose interesting theoretical frameworks which, however, have not been tested in real life organisational settings. However, mind stretching elements were identified in the literature review and were, therefore, linked to them.

7.1.3 Summary

This section presented the relationship of mind stretching with existing theories of organisational creativity area. Although its importance is highlighted by other authors, there is not any relevant process or framework explaining the way employees' creative potentials can be enhanced.

Mind stretching theory offers a new insight since it approaches the context of creative organisations from an inductive organisational perspective. The next section identifies the implications of mind stretching with regards to practitioners, academics and policy makers.

7.2 Implications

This section presents the implications that mind stretching has on practitioners, academics and policy makers.

7.2.1 Implications for Practitioners

This sub-section highlights the implications of more immediate interest to those involved in the creative industries. Practitioners mostly relevant to this study include those who run or work in creative organisations and creative individuals. Consideration is given to the areas of human resources, marketing management, strategy and creativity.

Human Resources

Mind stretching is concerned with the different ways used by creative organisations to develop their employees' creative potentials. The human resource management implications of this theory fall within five main themes, namely motivation, organisational learning, organisational culture, evaluation and recognition and the development of team-based environments.

To begin with, this theory has highlighted that managers within creative environments need to make a great effort to understand creative people, their motivations, frustrations and enthusiasm. They also need to acquire a thorough knowledge of internal and external incentives that enhance creative effort so that they can better motivate their people. The mind stretching theory presented in this thesis has illustrated that a positive sense of challenge is of high importance to the development of employees' creative potentials. Therefore, it is essential to match employees to projects that utilise and, at the same time, stretch their skills and capabilities. However, to achieve an optimal result, managers need to be aware of their employees' skills and interest. This information can only be derived by the "bonding" process and especially by socialisation, which will ensure the proper fit between employees' creative potential and their work context.

Moreover, pressures have increased for both profit and non-profit organisations to become “learning organisations”. Mind stretching explains the different ways used by creative organisations to develop the intellectual capital within the organisation, which will yield the competencies and capabilities for improved performance. The notion that knowledge is the only reliable and lasting source of competitive advantage in economic conditions in which the only certainty is uncertainty, is also proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). They argue that successful companies are those which consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organisation and rapidly translate it in new products or services. The aforementioned characteristics define the “knowledge-creating” company, whose sole business is continuous innovation. The key to success in the knowledge company is to develop the intellectual company that will create core competencies and distinctive products and services that will generate superior results. Creative organisations therefore need to be skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights.

In order for creative organisations to become learning oriented, the mind stretching theory has illustrated that their corporate culture needs to emphasise the importance of learning within the working environment. In particular, the corporate culture must encourage a participative form of organisational learning by involving everyone in the organisation to explore alternatives and eventually reach consensus. Therefore, knowledge creating company cannot exist in workplace environments where there is an assumption that one party or group has the answers, which must be communicated to a less informed constituency. On the contrary, creative organisations need to develop informal networks for promoting participation in organisational learning. Moreover, everyone within the organisation needs to be empowered to enhance employee participation and creativity within the working environment As Senge (1990, p. 287) notes, *“people learn most rapidly when they have a genuine sense of responsibility of their actions. Helplessness, the belief that we cannot influence the circumstances under which we live, undermines the incentive to learn, as does the belief that someone*

somewhere else dictates our actions. Conversely, if we know our fate is in our hands, our learning matters". Since creativity within organisations greatly relies on employees' confidence to produce novel and useful ideas, this culture of empowerment and perpetual learning also needs to concentrate on enhancing employees' morale. The mind stretching theory highlights several processes that allow creative employees to gain new skills and knowledge and be exposed to different stimuli, which make their working lives more interesting and boost their confidence in their work.

This study has also indicated that, in order for creativity to flourish within the working environment, creative organisations need to apply fair, constructive judgement of ideas and a reward system that perpetually recognises creative work in all its forms. To encourage fair constructive judgement, the mind stretching theory has highlighted the importance of evaluating creative employees both on a conceptual and a contextual basis. Employees should therefore not only be assessed against their intellectual and problem solving abilities, but also against several workplace-related skills such as time management, personal selling and social skills. Moreover, creative employees must be given adequate and concrete rewards for their contributions and status according to their abilities and training. This study recognises the need to reward creative employees both formally and informally, through financial, verbal and non-verbal appraisal of creative effort.

Finally, the mind stretching theory highlighted the importance of maintaining a team-based environment as a means of enhancing creativity within the creative industry. Teams must be comprised of diversely skilled employees with a shared willingness to both share and constructively criticise each other's work. Moreover, managers within creative environments need to consider the proposed mind stretching process as a means of minimising the propensity to create egocentric personalities. This study emphasised that creative organisations need to build their employees' confidence up to the point where they do not encourage egocentricism. The propensity of employees to become egocentric can be minimised through their perpetual involvement in new and more

challenging projects. This in return will help creative employees to appreciate other people's skills and capabilities, and by sharing the same goals will lead to development of innovative solutions.

Marketing management

From a marketing perspective, the mind stretching theory proposes employee management processes that can help creative organisations to build and maintain a favourable corporate reputation with their stakeholders. Creative organisations rarely engage in formal marketing communication activities in the form of media advertising, nor do they employ experienced salespeople for generating new business by marketing the company's work to potential clients. They therefore have to rely mostly on referrals by previous and current clients, on relevant publicity from the media and on any awards obtained for their creative work in the industry within which they operate. Depending on the quality of previous work past clients comprise a significant source of business for creative organisations, since they often have the tendency to remain loyal to the company for new business and are the major source of referrals for the company. Furthermore, industry awards and media publicity create positive exposures for creative organisations, which in turn enhance their reputation. Nevertheless, the loyalty of previous clients, referrals to new clients and any form of publicity or award largely depend upon the creativity of the work produced by the creative organisation. Creativity in such organisations is therefore mainly determined by the quality of work that individuals and teams produce within their company.

The theory of mind stretching has highlighted several confidence building and perpetual challenging processes that aim to enhance individual and team creativity within the working environment. Marketing managers within creative organisations need to adopt these employee management processes to enhance the way employees apply their enriched creative potentials, which in return will have a direct impact on the quality of the work presented to existing and potential clients and in the long run on the organisation's corporate reputation. The mind stretching theory therefore provides

marketing managers with an employee management framework to enhance corporate reputation by encouraging creativity in the workplace. Marketing managers within creative organisations therefore need to recognise their employees as their key asset towards achieving a favourable corporate reputation with existing and potential clients and hence need to concentrate all their efforts in providing the appropriate environment for enhancing creativity in their work.

Strategy

The grounded theory of mind stretching explains the different ways through which creative employees can actively seek for new areas of knowledge, which will help them to approach issues in question in a novel way. These processes assist the development of an enacting organisation in which people experiment and test new behaviours and challenge the status quo of traditional expectations.

Managers within the strategy field need to realise that creativity cannot simply emerge by passively responding to environmental pressures and following traditional expectations but by creatively integrating environmental inputs into their work and encouraging behaviours that help creativity to flourish. Taking into consideration the chaotic nature of creativity as highlighted by the theory of mind stretching, strategists need to concentrate their efforts on developing an organic type of organisation, which is able to adapt to unstable conditions when new and uncommon problems continually emerge, and which cannot be split up and assigned among the different specialisms (Burns and Stalker, 1994). The mind stretching theory has illustrated that creative organisations need to realise the importance of continual adaptation and refinement of individual knowledge and encourage a supportive rather than restrictive form of developing specialist knowledge. This organic form of organisation will allow communication and interaction to occur at any level, as determined by the needs of the process, and encourage a much higher degree of commitment to the aims of the organisation. Organic forms are also likely to minimise control mechanisms within creative organisations, while permitting risk-taking and emphasising personal responsibility.

Creativity

The mind stretching process has several implications in terms of enhancing organisational creativity within a working environment. More specifically, the mind stretching process can be applied as a diagnostic tool for assessing workplace creativity, while at the same time it provides the basis upon which creative conditioning can be minimised, and innovation be enhanced.

Majaro (1992) points out that no organisation can hope to achieve a high level of success without having developed the dual forces of “creativity” and “innovation”. Without creativity one cannot have innovation, and without innovation an organisation cannot be or remain successful. Creativity is the thinking process, which drives employees to generate ideas. On the other hand, innovation is the practical implementation of such ideas towards meeting the organisation’s objectives in a more effective way. Innovation is the essence of corporate success.

In order to attain innovation a firm needs creative ideas. Innovations only occur when the implemented ideas meet some clear objectives such as performing a task in a more productive way. Innovations must be useful, practical and achieve results. Creativity does not necessarily make a firm an innovative one insofar as an idea is only the raw material for innovation, and does not inevitably bring it about. Between ideas and innovation there must be a systematic screening and development mechanism aimed at converting raw ideas into tangible and valuable innovations.

Therefore, the mind stretching process can be used as a diagnostic tool to assess the creativity within a working environment. In particular, managers can apply the model by examining in more detail formal and informal elements of organisational creativity. For instance, the mind stretching theory highlights the different explicit attributes that have an impact on organisational creativity, such as company’s projects, resources and management practices. On the other hand, mind stretching also illustrates implicit elements of organisational creativity, such as informal socialisation, organisational

culture, workplace atmosphere. Majaro (1992) highlights the importance of developing a framework against which organisations can audit their own quality of creativity. Application of the framework should not, however, be limited to creative organisations' managers, who want to regularly monitor the quality of their workplace creativity but also in merger and acquisition situations where the quality of creativity of firms which are planned to acquire needs to be audited.

Secondly, mind stretching prevents creative conditioning. Creative conditioning occurs when employees respond to the client's problem without giving their maximum creative thinking. Creative employees have to constantly question their own ideas rather than take them for granted, which would limit the creative thinking process and therefore their exposure to external sources. In other words, creative employees react habitually to a challenge rather considering as an opportunity to be further exploited.

Finally, innovative ideas will be generated by individuals who are encouraged to stretch their potential in every situation rather than habitually react to it. Smolensky and Kleiner (1995) suggest that most managers find that employees still need some provoking when it comes to thinking up solutions to their own problems. As budgets are squeezed tighter and tighter, and margins of profit grow smaller, ideas are a precious commodity, and employees who produce them become sought-after resources.

7.2.2 Implications for academics

This sub-section highlights the implications of mind stretching to the academic community. A discussion of main points, highlighted by this research comes next.

The literature review illustrated that no equivalent to mind stretching was identified. Mind stretching as an integrated framework offers a new insight to the organisational creativity area. However, mind stretching elements were identified in the literature review and were, therefore, linked to them.

More specifically, the absence of integrative explanations by other academics is mostly influenced by the fact that they have approached the area of organisational creativity either conceptually or by testing hypotheses based on others' findings or writings. Furthermore, their research outcomes tend to be descriptive by focusing on "what" is happening in the issue in question.

On the contrary the grounded theory of mind stretching provides a robust process explaining what is happening in the area under investigation. Good grounded theories must "*...enable the person who uses it to have enough control in everyday situations to make its application worth trying. The control we have in mind has several aspects. The person who applies the theory must be enabled to understand and analyse ongoing situational realities, to produce and predict change in them, and to predict and control consequences both for the object of change and for other parts of the total situation that will be affected*" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 245).

For instance, in this thesis grounded theory was adopted in order to explain how creativity is enhanced within a project-based environment. Focus was not, however, limited on explaining the way creativity happens in organisations but also in its causes and its consequences. Moreover, the outcome of this research is an explanation of creative employees' behaviour as it was analysed and synthesised without being limited by any predetermined questions or hypotheses. In other words, mind stretching is empirically based and therefore moves beyond descriptive and conjectural authors.

Further research

The scarcity of empirical research in the area of managing corporate creativity as illustrated earlier on in this study suggests that there are many opportunities to conduct further research in this field.

To begin with, further research is needed so that mind stretching can become a formal theory. A formal theory offers a conceptual explanation of what is happening in the area

under investigation beyond a specific empirical context. This means that theoretical sampling in other contexts, apart from architecture firms, design and corporate identity consultancies, must be conducted. Further research should therefore broaden the reach of mind stretching by seeking insight of the same phenomenon into a broader category of knowledge employees.

Furthermore, during the data analysis and synthesis stages I had to focus on theoretical sampling around what I perceived to be the core concern of those involved. The data suggested that mind stretching, the development of employees' intellectual capital comprised the core concern, however, promising research areas had to be abandoned. Further academic research could, therefore, explore processes such as the ways through which individuals negotiate authority within their working environment and their impact on the relationships developed within creative organisations and subsequently on organisational creativity. These processes were identified in this research as related to the confidence building sub-core variable, encouraging the self-autonomising process within the context of the three organisations included in this study.

Finally, although the mind stretching theory does need further verification since the verification already exists within grounded theory strategy, this study could serve as the basis for developing hypotheses regarding variables that enhance organisational creativity. Scholars can then test these hypotheses by using deductive methodologies and quantitative analysis techniques.

7.2.3 Implications for policy makers

This sub-section discusses the implications of mind stretching for policy makers. Policy makers include those governmental bodies, which aim to support sustainable growth in the creative industries. As highlighted in the second chapter, the creative industries sector is a vibrant and highly significant part of the British economy. They account for some £60 billion of the British economy employing over 1.4 million people with a growing rate of 5% a year. The creative industries sector importance was emphasised by

the creation of a new governmental body called Creative Industries Task Force, which aims to promote growth in the creative sector in order for economic and social rewards to be reaped.

To begin with, the mind stretching process highlights the fact that there is a need for an organised effort towards education and training among small and medium sized creative businesses. More specifically, this grounded theory research has made it clear that creative employees need to acquire a diverse range of skills and knowledge in order to be able to handle the business aspects of their work. Governmental bodies, therefore, should develop more flexible techniques for delivering training both for start ups and those requiring continuing professional development. Moreover, they should also provide people with training in areas non-related to their specific creative expertise but on general business skills, such as management and marketing as well as IT skills like web design and effective use of internet technologies.

7.3 Chapter summary

Over the past two and a half years I have enjoyed using grounded theory and have been very passionate about exploring different processes through which organisations can enhance creativity in their workplace. What has kept me interested throughout this grounded theory research is that its foundation is in creative people's explicit and tacit knowledge and hence articulates what people within creative organisations actually believe regarding the processes that enhance organisational creativity.

I am confident that this document has achieved its three main aims. Firstly, it has introduced the reader to the emergent substantive grounded theory of mind stretching as a means of enhancing organisational creativity. The outcome of this study is a result of a stimulating learning process of both the grounded theory methodology and the area under investigation. Secondly, it has situated the mind stretching process to existing bodies of knowledge and identified linkages as well as gaps to be further researched by people interested in the area. Finally, the study has highlighted the diverse range of

implications the mind stretching process has for practitioners, academics and policy makers.

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APPENDIX 1: Research Letter

University of Strathclyde
Department of Marketing
Stenhouse Building
173 Cathedral St.
Glasgow G4 0RQ

2 December 1998

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Mr. Costas Andriopoulos and I am a PhD researcher in the Department of Marketing at the University of Strathclyde. The purpose of my research is to identify indicators of innovation within creative organisations.

I am currently conducting fieldwork for this project. At present I have completed case studies on two companies, namely a corporate identity consultancy based in London and a design consultancy based in Glasgow.

I was hoping that it might be also possible to use X Engineering as a case study in this regard. A qualitative research design has been adopted because of the nature of the research objectives. It is not appropriate to apply quantitative methods, since the aim of the project is to explain the delicate and subtle indicators of innovation. Therefore, it might be required to spend a brief time (approximately 2 weeks) in the company's offices, where I will have the opportunity to interview key personnel and creative employees, while at the same time patterns of interaction will be documented. For instance, the inter-relationship of process and creativity can be an area of particular interest. In return, I will make a brief presentation related to my findings and ensure confidentiality on agreed terms.

If you feel that you are able to offer me any kind of assistance in this matter, then please contact me by:

1. Tel: 0141 XXX-XXXX
2. E-mail: X.XXXX@strath.ac.uk
3. Fax: 0141 XXX-XXXX

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Constantine Andriopoulos

Appendix 2 Topic Guide

About project management - teams

- Explain the different stages involved in the management of a project.
- Identify the different types of teams: with clients, smaller design consultancies, freelancers-specialists.
- Which are the reasons for forming those teams?
- Why do they involve clients?
- How is the company operating with clients? How is it organised?
- How much do they spend per activity?
- How business is generated? (word-of mouth, repeated work, etc., each person is responsible for bringing new work)

Company's culture, philosophy, structure

- What is your opinion of the company's culture?
- Philosophy?
- Structure (managerial and workspace)
- How do you feel working for X? What do you get by working for X than working in another company?
- How is employees' work evaluated?
- Is there any kind of formal or informal recognition by the company?
- How do you deal with your problems (stress, challenge, creative or general)?

Enhancing creativity

- Do you think that the company inspires you to be more creative? In what ways? (Causes, Consequences)
- Do you believe that the company enhances the internal drive of employees to work more effectively? If so, in what ways?
- How do you think the company stretches employees' capabilities?
- How would you define creative satisfaction?
- How do you enhance your employees' creative satisfaction?

- How do you think that creative collaboration is enhanced? How is it enhanced since you have diversity?
- How do you make working life more interesting?
- Do you think that you have adequate resources for the work that you are doing?

Induction period

- What would you advise a new employee in terms of visible or invisible rules to be aware of?
- What did you think about your induction period in the company?
- Did you find anything peculiar?
- What was your view of the company before joining it? Is it different or is it really as it is?

Autonomy, set of rules, relationship of employees

- Do you really have autonomy in your work, project, people to work with? (Causes, Consequences, Cutting points)
- Is there a set of rules established by the company, either formally or informally? (Causes, Consequences, Cutting points)
- What do you think is the relationship between designers (graphic with interior designers) ?

Rigidity Vs Creativity

- Do you have a time recording system?
- How do you balance business rigidity with creativity?
- Are you involved in projects simultaneously or sequentially?
- Can you give me an example a pleasurable project?
- How would you describe an ideal client?

Specialised questions

- What are you doing with experimenting? When was the last time that you experiment? How do you know what will work? (Causes, Consequences, cutting point)
- How do you switch off? (individually About challenging: How do you know when to start and finish it?
 - vs. collectively)
- Are you obsessive about something? (To raise the voice about something)
- How is it permitted in this company to celebrate your individuality? (Causes, Consequences, Cutting point)
- What do you do before you make a pitch?
- How does the company perceives failure? Does the company allows risk-taking?
- How do you know how many projects the employees can manage?
- About challenging: How do you know when to start and finish it?
- How do you build confidence in your employees?
- How would you describe the process of being autonomous and a team player at the same time?
- How do you make people believe in what they are doing?
- How do you deal with feedbacking? (formally, informally, etc.)

Appendix 3: Example of an interview

Director of the multidisciplinary design consultancy (Friday 5 June 1998, 1Hr, notes taken)

About project work

Stages are the same but they might have different names in both graphics and interior discipline

The first stage involves the brief, site analysis, a feasibility study, outline proposals

In graphics: Brief (or terms of reference) would involve what the client wants as well as what the company would do; how much will it cost; general clients' responsibility

Brief → Initial concept → Initial Design → Various design stages → Product, Information specification

Due to technological innovation in graphics brief and production are approximately the same. Meaning that information-specifications are already ready from the brief, which is not true for the interior designs which you need more time to the production stage to set the correct specifications

Evaluation

Work most of the times is evaluated by the client (whether he/she is happy or not with the company's work). Sometimes clients' feedback is formal by sending letter to the company.

Other times feedback can comprise the basis for improving things in the next project, as in the case with the British Council, where both owners had a meeting with the clients and discussed what the client thought was successful or not so that it can be changed in the future.

Success criteria:

- Whether the project had a profit
- Client feedback
- Whether it was a pleasurable creative experience, which depends both on people (client, outsiders) whom you have to co-operate with as well as the project itself

- Whether there was any form of positive feedback by the client (it is nice to hear such things)

Recognition is expressed informally

How do employees deal with their problems?

There is a network of information. When there is a problem employees can ask the heads of the two disciplines respectively or each other, or anybody who can help or knows the answer. If it is a stupid question, then the employee is told the way to deal or refer to a past project. BUT most of the times they discuss the approach, the content, not the answer

About different teams

When projects are bigger, they require the help of external companies or individuals, such as research firms, freelance designers, photographers, copywriters, video people, or professional bodies like quantity surveyors and engineers. In graphics projects, bureau and printing companies are used. In exhibition, contractors and people who make things are hire by the company.

Most of times, these teams are formed in order to handle clients' particular problems and when the project is finished these teams are dissolving.

About clients

Clients are seen as friends, people whom they like, get along with them

They consider them mostly as equals and expected to be considered as equals by the client

Sometimes, you need to dominate or to leave them to be in control

But the best thing is to have an equal partnership

Furthermore, the company tries to have informed the clients in every step of the project in terms of what is expected from them and what they should expect from the company.

This is very important because everybody is ready for the next meeting so that they do not loose time.

Often the company is involved in managing the whole project and clients are part of the design team since they have information and because the client is busy with its own work.

About new business development

Word-of-mouth

Sometimes they also recognise opportunities and acting upon them to target some specific people (they phone some previous or existing clients)

Most of the times the initial contact is made by the owners of the company. Then is decided who is going to be part of the team. But this team might change as the project progresses to suit the different needs of a project. After the initial contact the owners might take a step backwards and leave other employees to take control of the situation.

Company's culture

Work is taken very seriously (formal aspects of work are taken very seriously)

The owner tries to create an environment, where people can do the best work. Money is the by-product, work should come first. (Although good quality does not take longer time.

Openness of communication towards work, make people to be critical of each other's work (for example, if a design is good, he/she is told that it is great, etc.)

That relationship should be built across hierarchy in order to get a feedback

About autonomy

There is and there is not autonomy in the company

For example, somebody has to do what he/she been asked. There is an autonomy with outsiders. In reality, they have autonomy in their work, may be there are a lot of arguments, but there is always a rationale. If it is an aesthetic judgement, there is not a hierarchy.

They have a time recording system

About rigidity

Deadlines are good for creativity, because they have a panicking induce effect

Fear is a good creative aphrodisiac

Design problems will take as time as the project lasts, so an artificial aspect as a deadline can give an end to that

There are three different types of thinking:

Background thinking: The company's employees had a brief by the client, and they think about the problem in the bus, bath, etc.

Very intensive thinking: How are you going to deal with the specific problem either on your own or with the team

Linear thinking: Solving big problems by solving a series of smaller problems, which will lead to the solution of the bigger problem

About rules

There is social rules set by the company, such as how to behave, but due to the nature of the industry they are more forgiving. The company recognises that all people have their personal life and as long as this does not affect their work, then there is not problem. But in the case that employees are doing drugs or working for other companies and this affects their work, then there is a serious problem.

About principles

There is an expectation that people will be honest, not steal, not do things behind their backs, not to do bad work, the company does not tolerate bad, employees have to make an effort. The owner acknowledges the fact the everybody has good or bad job because sometimes even projects are really difficult. So employees must be aspired to do good work. Due to the open communication within the two disciplines problems can be minimised and therefore bad work, but this cannot influence the effort given by the employees.

Appendix 4: Conference Papers

THE BASIC SOCIAL PROCESS OF MIND FRAMING WITHIN CREATIVE ORGANISATIONS

(Academy of Marketing, 1998, University of Sheffield)

Constantine Andriopoulos
Doctoral Researcher, Department of Marketing

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Andy Lowe
Lecturer, Department of Marketing

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the basic social process of mind framing within creative organisations. Mind framing is about creating the conditions where creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their personal potential within project teams. Mind framing has two sub core variables, namely self autonomising and aspirationalising. Within the first one are the categories of adventuring, authenticating and credentialising. The second includes the categories of exempling, norming, principling, bonding, envisioning and justifying. Unlike most companies, creative organisations have to allow people for personal freedom. This is helpful not only in the context of design organisations, but also within all companies who seek new ways to be more creative. This paper is divided into four main parts: introduction, research design strategy, the preliminary research indications and the next stage of the research.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is set within the context of corporate identity consultancies, which comprise part of the design industry. In the UK, it is evident that marketing expenditure and client confidence increase by spending more on design, with £339m spent in 1996 as

opposed to £258m spent in the year before (Al Whitehead, 1997). Data for this study were generated from consultancies, which started their operation with a strong design focus and are now evolving into multidisciplinary management consultancies. They are therefore in an industry under transition. Nevertheless, this paper is not designed to give an explanation of the changing nature of the corporate identity industry or the role of the corporate identity consultancies nowadays. This is a working paper, which gives an initial explanation of the empirical findings so far. In the whole process of managing clients' problems, employees are still involved in creative and innovative activities in order to come up with new solutions. Mind framing is about setting the parameters upon which creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their full potential within project teams. Nevertheless, these findings concerning the mind framing process should be considered as an initial explanation of the area under investigation, rather than a fully developed theory.

2. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research design has been adopted, since the aim of this study is to explain the delicate and subtle indicators of innovation rather than to measure their frequency. In particular, the orthodox grounded theory research method was used (Glaser, 1978). The grounded theory process is presented in the following figure (Lowe, 1996):

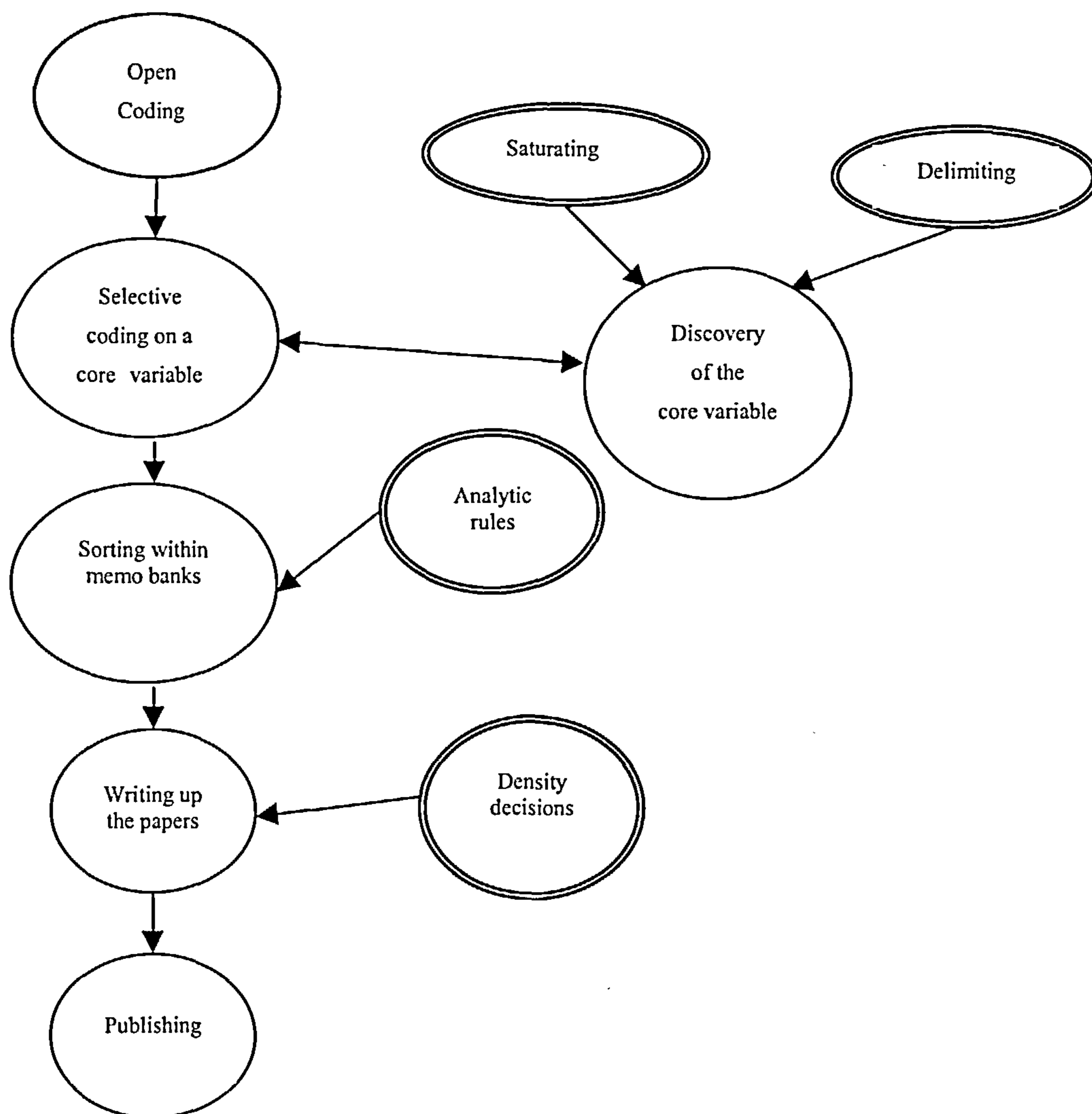


Figure 1. The Grounded Theory Process

This research approach enabled the researcher to reveal the basic social processes involved in the development and management of teams within a corporate identity consultancy. Taking into account the theoretical framework of grounded theory, which was applied for the purposes of this research, there was no need at this early stage to review any of the literature in the substantive area under study (Glaser, 1992). Glaser (1978) also remarks that doing a literature review prior to a grounded theory research will seriously devalue the quality of the outcome and hence should be avoided.

However, the literature review will be produced in a comparative format when the fieldwork is finished. The methods used so far for the collection of data were personal in-depth interviews, as well as participant observation.

Since the researcher's current knowledge concerning the substantive area under investigation was limited, a topic guide with open unstructured questions was used for conducting the personal in-depth interviews of this research. This topic guide gave the flexibility to explore several areas of interest. Eight interviews with the following people were conducted: three consultants, one marketing manager, one P.R manager, two senior executives and finally the managing director. This initial visit was followed by two more visits over the next two months and the gathering of more data by interviewing thirteen employees: five consultants, four designers, two project managers as well as one senior executive, and most importantly the founder of the company. The twenty-one interviews generated fifty-seven memos. Nevertheless, this paper cannot fully present the memos identified due to space constraints. A summary of the findings generated from these memos is however illustrated. In this paper, the categories' properties are in bold and their indicators are underlined.

3. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH INDICATIONS

This section starts with an explanation of mind framing as it has emerged from this grounded theory study. Furthermore, the sub core variables of mind framing, as suggested by the data through the coding and constant comparison process, are presented.

Mind framing

Mind framing is about creating the conditions where creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their personal potential within project teams, (See Figure 2). Unlike most companies, creative organisations have to allow people for personal freedom. Therefore, people need to be in a certain mindframe by balancing the two sub core variables, namely self-autonomising and aspirationalising. This is helpful not only in the context of design organisations, but also within all companies who seek new ways

to be more creative. Nowadays, there is a need for creative companies to organise themselves in order to maintain efficiency and creativity, while at the same time the need for generating profit has to be met.

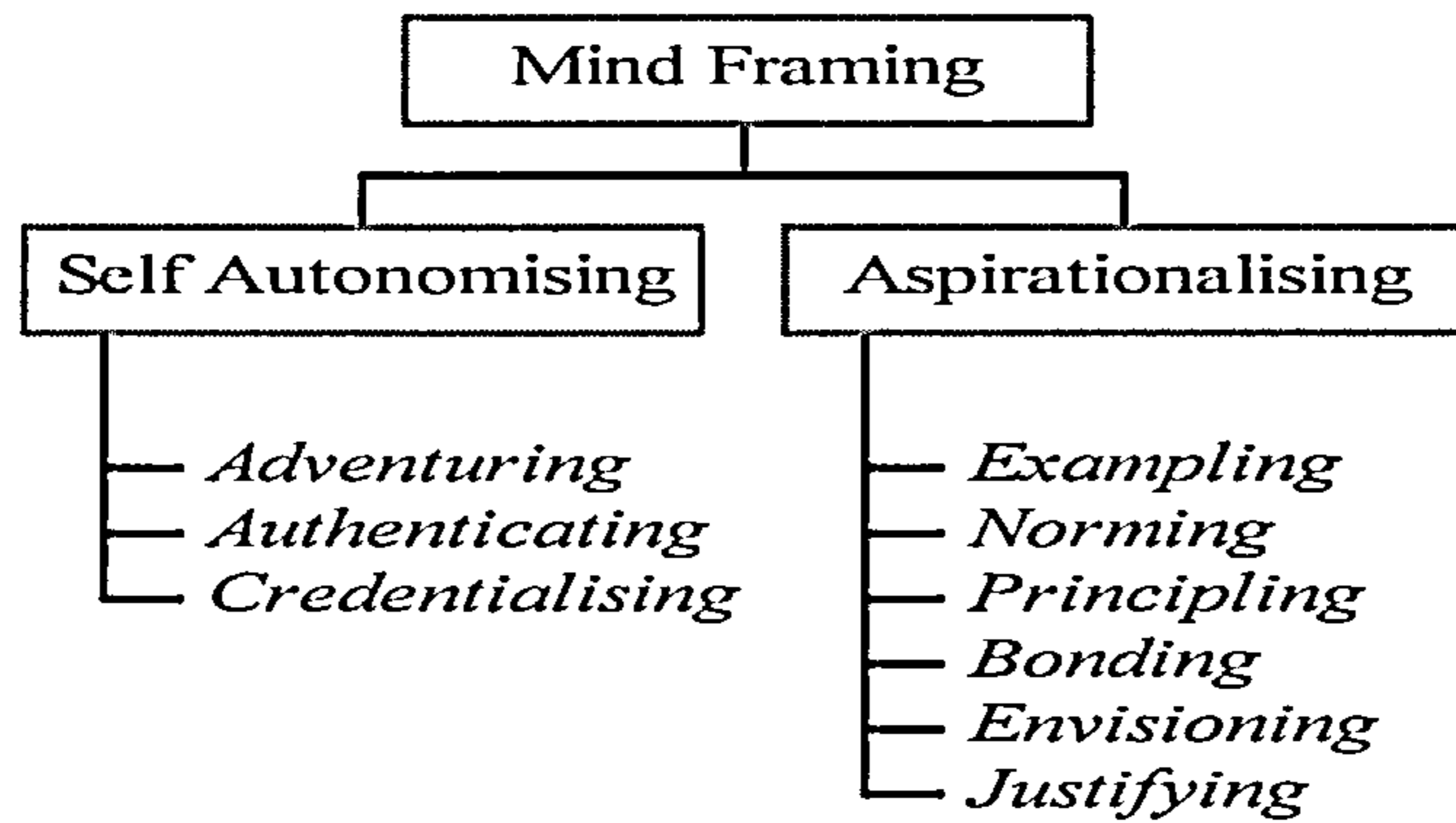


Figure 2. The Basic Social Process of Mind Framing

Self autonomising

Self-autonomising refers to the way the mind framing process affects individuals. This emerging basic social process explains the different ways in which people are encouraged to celebrate their individuality so that they can achieve their full potential. There are three categories of self-autonomising, namely adventuring, authenticating and credentialising. These categories are based on the data generated from the research so far.

Adventuring

Adventuring is where individuals are encouraged to utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process, so that they can generate innovative solutions. In this study seven properties of adventuring have been identified. In particular, the properties of working with ambiguity, commitment to the end-product, having a sense of achievement, risk-taking, mistake making and being intuitive were discovered, based on the data generated from the study. Additionally, the property of experimenting has been based on conjecture derived through the constant comparison

process. It must be noted that all creative work requires an element of dissonance and psychological regression. Therefore, employees must come up with an idea or a design, which, although it is based on information derived through market research or by the client, is not known from the beginning whether it will be successful or not. The following example highlights a possible property of adventuring, namely the property of **working with ambiguity**. The managing director of the company said that: “*the company is looking for employees who can work with ambiguity*”. A consultant expressed the view that the ambiguous environment within the company is often imposed by the company, by saying that: “*employees must do as much as possible, exhaust their experience, being given tasks beyond the breaking point*”. Therefore, employees need to have **commitment to the end product**, which constitutes another property of adventuring. A consultant expressed the view that: “*people are motivated to work with other employees whom they do not really like in a project since the work is more important*”. A similar example involved a project manager saying that: “*A project is a project, the goal is important; you should not leave your personal preferences to be the obstacle on that*”.

Moreover, **having a sense of achievement** is another property of adventuring. At this stage, employees are not aware of the final outcome, hence they need to have an internal drive or a sense of achievement, which will help them to go through the whole process and generate an innovative solution. A consultant said that: “*Designers are motivated by an interesting project. There is also a sense of achievement; there is an internal high pressure to perform better*”. This is a consultant who feels that the sense of achievement is an essential part of the adventuring process: “*company’s employees are making a mark, they leave something behind*”.

Furthermore, both designers and consultants need to be **intuitive** of what they can visually and strategically do in order to handle clients’ problems. This view was justified by a designer saying that: “*the designers have to visualise the idea or highlight the problem*”. This property is very important as far as the outcome is concerned, since it will influence the way company’s employees use words and images to create new solutions. Nevertheless, in order for employees involved in the creative process to come

up with innovative ideas, they need to be in an environment, which cherishes risk-taking. The founder of the company mentioned that: *“You need to have the courage to give to your clients whatever you think is right not whatever they would like to hear”*. Two designers also expressed the same view: *“Sometimes, the company acts in a brave way; becomes more creative, teaches the client to accept the best”*. The examples highlight a possible property of adventuring, specifically the category of **risk-taking**. Nevertheless, the adventuring process may not have the expected result as an outcome, and an idea or a design can come up which distinguishes the client’s company but not for the right reasons. Therefore, adventuring includes the property of **mistake making**. A consultant expressed the fact that: *“The company will offer a second try to an employee who made a mistake.”*

Although no relevant information was identified, it is the researcher’s belief that there is one more property of adventuring, namely **experimenting**. Towards the development of an innovative solution, employees have to generate several concepts in terms of images and words, which can fit to the parameters set by the client and the industry within which it operates. However, the risk associated with the experimenting process can be minimised since employees from different backgrounds and disciplines are involved.

Authenticating

Authenticating is where individuals are able to demonstrate their abilities, skills and personality within their working environment. There are four properties of authenticating, specifically being yourself, gaining autonomy, cherishing diversity and encouraging individuality. Creative organisations demand a lot of thinking and expression, since employees must come up with a new idea or a different expression of an existing one. Therefore, it is essential to employ people with strong personalities who will be able to formulate and implement new ideas. Such companies must hence encourage diversity and non-conformism by cherishing each employee’s skills, abilities, expertise and personality. But in order for the teams to work effectively, there should be a general awareness of the skills, personalities and specialisation available within the

company. The open and unstructured culture within the company allows people to be themselves. A consultant expressed the fact that: *“There is not a restriction in behaviour rather than let it be. The company helps people to show what they are, to be genuine and authentic”*. A similar example involved a consultant saying that: *“...minimum structure and hierarchy allow people within the company to be themselves and therefore be more creative”*. These examples highlight a possible property of authenticating namely the category of **being yourself**. Therefore, employees need to demonstrate several distinctive qualities as expressed by the consultant, who said that: *“It is very important to demonstrate ability to do and a point of view, which will allow you to develop your credibility (it must be shown)”*. Furthermore, a consultant added that: *“People hired are expected to being different, not agreeing, diversity feeds creativity, the company as well as the teams are intellectually strong”*. A similar example was pinpointed by another consultant, who had the view that: *“It is also important to show that you do not depend on anyone and that you can do it on your own”*. Looking at these examples the researcher feels that authenticating includes the category of **gaining autonomy**. Some of the consultants asked, expressed the view that: *“there is an autonomy in choosing projects, people to work with..”*. A designer expressed a similar view. He said that: *“there is certain autonomy in the workplace, for example you can say that you would like to work with someone or in a project and they will allow you to do that”*.

However, an internal cultural environment, which allowed the individual personalities of the company’s personnel to flourish, was initiated. Employees from both disciplines express the view that: *“Individualism is very important. There are a lot of strong personalities that is why sometimes personality clash is the result. Diversity feeds creativity, and it is therefore very important to establish a non-conformist culture”*. In the course of discussion with a senior executive the subject of the company’s culture came up. He mentioned that: *“It is very individualistic company, with different people coming from different backgrounds”*. These examples suggest two properties of authenticating, namely **cherishing diversity** and **encouraging individuality**. These two properties aim to enhance the creative collaboration by encouraging individual contribution. An innovative environment should encourage

diversity rather than suppress it. This is true since the flow of different stimuli in terms of images, words or ideas expressed by company's employees can comprise the basis upon which constructive judgement and discussions can take place before reaching a final decision.

Credentialising

Finally, credentialising is the process through which individuals within creative organisations are developing their reputation from scratch. There are two properties of credentialising, namely being evaluated and being recognised. This means that employees are tested by the internal employee market as they establish themselves in the company, while at the same time their reputation is gradually developed. This is done so that they can be involved in high profile projects or in order to work with other employees whom they admire. The company tries to be as fair as possible when evaluating the work of its employees. That is why various evaluation practices are applied. More specifically, employees are evaluated both by **their peer group** and **extra peer group** based on objective and subjective measures. On the one hand, objective measures against which employees' performance is evaluated include the amount of profit generated in a project and whether the employee in question adds to the expertise of the company. A senior consultant expressed the view that: *“Good work is evaluated through the relevant profit generated. Losses often happen, because the company tries to intellectualise as much as it can; therefore, it employs more people, which means that there is a time loss which equal money. Good work is also evaluated by the impact that a new idea will have to the client's market, i.e. whether the new idea will help the client to grow, differentiate, win customers, and eventually make a profit”*. The founder of the company said that: *“Good work is evaluated internally (by peers and senior executives), and whether the employee adds to the expertise of the company”*. On the other hand, subjective measures against which employees' performance is evaluated, include the comments made by his/her peer group. A junior consultant added that: *“Evaluation is done through annual reviews, as well as by colleagues”*.

After employees have been evaluated recognition follows. Indicators of **recognition** can be divided into peer recognition and extra peer recognition. The peer recognition involves financial and verbal expression of recognition, as well as exposing good work so that everybody can be aware of it. The external indicators of recognition can be awards, publicity and impact of the work to the clients' business. The company's founder argued that: *"the company recognises good work and rewards it through bonuses, share schemes, or by just telling employees how good they are and treating them fairly"*. A project manager added that: *"The company lately decided to put work on the wall, so that everybody could see"*. The recognition expressed by the extra peer group, such as the community and the client, was also revealed. A senior consultant noted that: *"Recognition is created through respect by the principal and the community, press is also important as well as to the impact that the new idea has to its client's business"*.

Aspirationalising

Aspirationalising is concerned with the way the mind framing process affects project teams. This is a basic social process whereby an organisation manages to inspire project teams to deliver excellent creative robust work. Six categories of aspirationalising have been identified. In particular, the categories of exemplifying, norming, principling and bonding were based on the data generated from the research so far. Moreover, the categories of envisioning and justifying have been based on conjecture derived from the constant comparison method process.

Exemplifying

Creative organisations are involved in the development of innovative solutions. Therefore, employees should be shown or explained how similar problems to the issues in question were dealt in the past. Exemplifying provides employees with a guide, which assists them to develop a creative solution. The founder of the company commented that: *" A leader should set examples, show or explain how things are done, be*

meticulous, be an example for other employees. There is not a complex hierarchy. Nevertheless, patterns, level of quality and relationships with the clients must be set”.

Norming

Norming is where employees adopt a clear view of the way they have to behave, so that their creative collaboration is improved. A clear understanding of the company's norms therefore aims to enhance creative collaboration within project teams. A consultant said that: *“There are certain norms to be aware such as being co-operative, kind, polite and helpful”.*

Principling

Employees have to follow some general guidelines. These set the boundaries in an attempt to minimise potential problems that might arise within project teams, taking into consideration their diversity and the different disciplines involved in creative environments. A consultant added that: *“There is an unwritten code of behaviour and practice. There is a set of principles established by the senior executives and the founder, for example: integrity, good work, honesty, being different, individuality, quality expected”.* A similar example involved a senior executive justifying the importance of having principles within the company by saying that: *“It is expected from the new employees first of all to have the prerequisite skills and then to have a point of view, to fit into the culture (which is very open, not a hierarchical one), be energetic, committed to what they are doing, be nice people”.*

Bonding

Bonding involves individuals associating with others, whom they think they have similarities with. Seven properties of bonding have been identified in this research so far. Specifically, the properties of natural selection, personality fit, interreliance, sensitising, familial relationships and networking were discovered, based on the data generated from the study. Additionally, the property of creating synergy has been based on conjecture through the constant comparison process. Bonding is encouraged in an

attempt to enhance excellence within project team members of creative organisations. The process of bonding is influenced by several factors, such as experience, cultural fit, cultural background, upbringing, education, and even sexuality. Employees have accumulated knowledge concerning other people skills, expertise and personality, through networking. Therefore, they are in a position to choose the employees whom they think they would like to co-operate with. One property of bonding, namely **natural selection**, is exhibited. A consultant expressed the view that: *“there is a natural selection in choosing team members, and this is influenced by sexuality, experience, whether you fancy the other person or not”*. Employees’ **personality fit** constitutes another property of bonding. This was highlighted by a consultant saying that: *“Selection criteria can include relevant experience, cultural fit (cultural background, sex, upbringing, education, likes or dislikes), as well as personality”*. These bonds will help them, while they are working on a project, to overcome any individual differences. The founder of the company expressed the fact that: *“Each employee is relying on the other during the project”*. The aforementioned example suggests the property of **interreliance**. The company is in favour of this situation, since employees are then in a better position to handle clients’ problems. Specifically, they are aware of other employees’ personality, expertise, skills and capabilities. Moreover, **sensitising** is another property of bonding. A designer expressed the view that: *“the job comes in and then it is decided whether this project is appropriate for a particular person, meaning that there is an awareness of individuals’ skills and capabilities”*. Another property of bonding is that of **familial relationships**. In the course of discussion with a project manager, the subject of the company’s culture arose. The project manager said: *“there is a family thing in the company; people know if they work together, they will perform better for the good of the whole company”*. A similar argument was highlighted by a consultant who added that: *“it is very difficult to understand what to expect and what is expected from others; it is like a club or a university rather than a company”*.

The family and club characteristics encourage the development of bonds within the company, but in order to achieve that, employees need to be involved in **networking**, which is a property of bonding. Networking occurs when employees within

the company interact with others in order to develop contacts, so that they are fully aware of other employees' capabilities, potential, specialisation and personalities. Networking can take the form of cliquing and informaling as illustrated by the following quote. A consultant explained that: *"There are employees who are sticking together in different projects, forming informal networks of people"*. A senior executive added that: *"It is expected from the new employees..., as well as to form their associations, develop their own relationships like the internet"*. A similar example involved a consultant arguing that: *"Cliques are formed, fights also happen but a balance is reached in the end"*. It should be noted that certain cliques are created, which are not of a hostile nature, but indicate greater support among their members. Although hostility is not intended, it often happens that this is misunderstood and communication problems are caused.

Although no relevant indicators were identified, the researcher believes that there is one more property, specifically **creating synergy** based only on employees' expertise. The internal cultural environment supports a competitive environment among employees, which will help them to perform better than the last time. Therefore, some teams are developed in order to strengthen their position within the company, so that they can be given more autonomy in their work. Nevertheless, the bonding process should be adopted by company's employees in a constructive way, rather than as a means of causing hostility among teams and its members within the company.

Envisioning

Envisioning is where an individual adopts the same vision with other employees within creative project teams. Unless everyone within the company shares the same vision, collective inspiration is jeopardised. This is true since otherwise there would not be a coherency when setting objectives or goals to be achieved.

Justifying

Giving reasons regarding the adoption of a certain mind frame instead of another can enhance the development of aspirations of excellence within creative organisations.

Individuals involved in creative organisations are intelligent and have strong personalities, and hence the justification of any mind frame imposed by the company is essential to ensure effective teamwork.

4. THE NEXT STAGE OF THE RESEARCH

The research so far has revealed the basic social process of mind framing within creative organisations. Nevertheless, further research is required to generate more data from other similar organisations around the processes of mind framing, aspirationalising and self-autonomising until they come to a full saturation. Finally, this will be followed by a detailed comparative literature review to situate those concepts in existing bodies of literature.

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**THE BASIC SOCIAL PROCESS OF PERPETUAL CHALLENGING
WITHIN CREATIVE ORGANISATIONS**

(Academy of Marketing , 1999, University of Stirling)

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THE BASIC SOCIAL PROCESS OF PERPETUAL CHALLENGING WITHIN CREATIVE ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

This is an emerging grounded theory study of perpetual challenging within creative organisations. This research so far has generated contra-intuitive findings. One might expect that harmonious relationships among employees are important. On the contrary what this research revealed is that perpetual challenging uses disharmony in a positive way, which is explained in this paper. Perpetual challenging refers to the ways in which creative organisations enhance their employees' internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge so that their individual contribution is maximised and an innovative solution can arise. Perpetual challenging has four sub-core variables, namely adventuring, overt confronting, portfolioing and opportunising. A grounded theory approach was used in order to conceptualise the behaviour of employees under investigation. This paper is divided into four sections. In the first section a brief introduction is provided, while the second explains how the grounded theory research method was applied in this study. The third section introduces the theory of perpetual challenging and its components. Finally, the paper situates this theory into existing bodies of literature.

Introduction

This research is set within the context of creative organisations with particular emphasis on corporate identity and design consultancies. In the UK, it is evident that marketing expenditure and client confidence increase by spending more on design, with £339m spent in 1996 as opposed to £258m spent in the year before (Whitehead, 1997). Data for this study were generated from consultancies, which started their operation with a strong design focus and are now evolving into multidisciplinary management consultancies. This research is part of a more extensive investigation with regards to the ways in which creative organisations organise themselves in order to maintain efficiency and creativity, while at the same time the need for generating profit has to be met. This paper gives an initial explanation of the empirical findings so far. In the whole process of managing clients' problems, employees are highly involved in creative and innovative activities in order to come up with new solutions. Perpetual challenging is about setting the parameters upon which creative and intelligent individuals can achieve their full potential within project teams. Nevertheless, these findings concerning the perpetual challenging process should be considered as an initial explanation of the area under investigation, rather than a fully developed theory.

The Research Design

A qualitative research design has been adopted, since the aim of this study is to explain the delicate and subtle indicators of innovation rather than to measure their frequency. In particular, the orthodox grounded theory research method was used (Glaser, 1978). The aim of the grounded theory research method is to explain behaviour beyond a simple

description of what people are doing in the substantive area under study. The grounded theory process is presented in the following figure (Lowe, 1996):

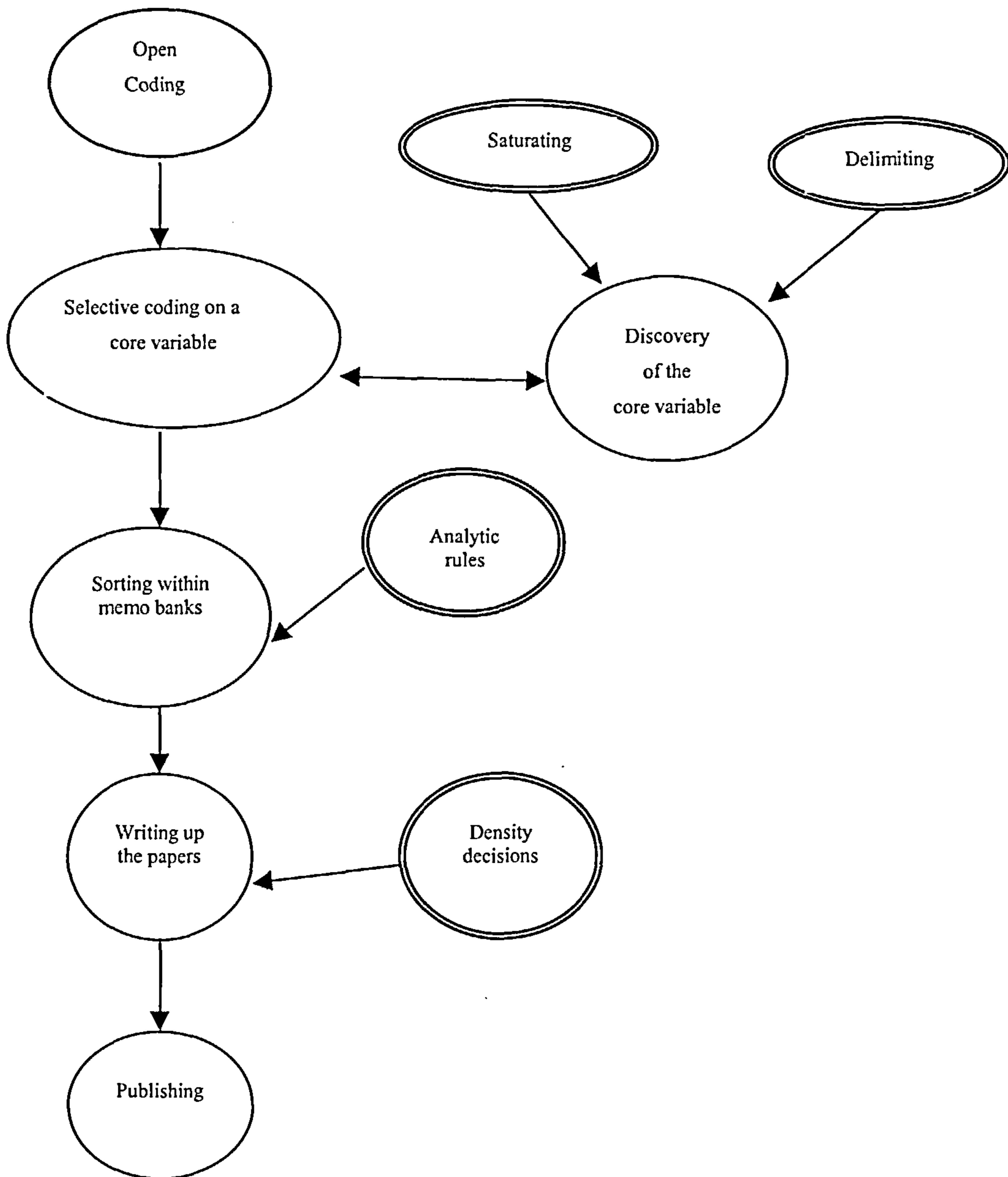


Figure 1. The Grounded Theory Process (Lowe, 1996)

Data Generation

This research is based on data generated from a corporate identity and a design consultancy. The methods used so far for the collection of data were personal in-depth interviews, as well as participant observation. Since the researcher's initial knowledge concerning the substantive area under investigation was limited, a topic guide with open unstructured questions was used for conducting the personal in-depth interviews of this research. This topic guide gave the flexibility to explore several areas of interest. From the first company, twenty one employees, specifically eight consultants, one marketing manager, one P.R manager, two senior executives, the managing director, four designers, two project managers as well as one senior executive and most importantly the founder of the company, were interviewed over a period of three months. During that period I coded the data and wrote memos, while at the same time I decided what was needed to be collected next. This process is called theoretical sampling and refers to the collection of data over a particular concept until it comes to full saturation. A similar design strategy was followed in the second company, where I had the opportunity to interview eight people, specifically three architects, three graphic designers and the two owners. Nevertheless, this paper cannot fully present the memos identified due to space constraints. A summary of the findings generated from these memos is however illustrated. In this paper, the categories' properties are underlined.

Coding

Lowe (1996) suggests that coding starts with "open" coding which involves the fracturing of data by isolating significant incidents such as events, processes or issues.

Each open code should be given a label. In order for the researcher to be sensitised to the processes and patterns, which may be revealed at a later stage of the research, the label assigned should be a gerund, for instance a verb ending in “ing”. As the research progresses and more data generated are coded, it is apparent that several open codes are related to each other. This interplay between theoretical memos and the constant comparison process leads to development of “selective codes”. In order for that process to be successful, it is required by the researcher to engage both intuition and intellect.

Theoretical memos

Glaser (1978, p.83) describes theoretical memos as “*the theorising up of ideas about the codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding*”. Lowe (1996) suggests that they are means of abstraction and ideation and can be used throughout the grounded theory process. In the initial stages of the research they can be as brief as a sentence but as the analysis progresses, they can be expanded to several pages in length.

The constant comparison method

Theoretical categories emerge through sorting and comparing of theoretical memos with data. This results in the redefinition of the categories as relationships clarify. Lowe (1996) notes that by constantly comparing the data and by looking for negative incidents of relationships it is likely to elaborate and integrate data to the point where no new evidence arises within a category. As categories become saturated, they comprise the basis upon which further questions should be asked about the underlying process.

The core variable

The objective of the grounded theory methodology is to discover basic social processes that explain the resolution of the problem or issue, which confronts people in the substantive area under study. Lowe (1996) points out that theory generation occurs around the core variable. For instance, the current knowledge of this research indicates that “perpetual challenging” is considered as the core variable. Saturation of this concept was evident since when further data was generated, the same patterns reoccurred. Nevertheless, it is expected that as the research progresses the generation of more data as well as its analytic interpretations will refine this.

Writing up Grounded Theory research

Since the grounded theory researcher is continuously writing new memos or expanding existing ones, while at the same time he/she constantly compares them, the research is being written up from the day it starts. Therefore, further research to other similar organisations around the processes of perpetual challenging as well as going back to the original data will enhance the conceptual understanding of the researcher, which will lead to the emergence of a grounded theory.

The Basic Social Process of Perpetual Challenging

This section starts with an explanation of perpetual challenging as it has emerged from this grounded theory study. Perpetual challenging refers to the ways in which creative organisations enhance their employees’ internal drive to perceive every project as a new creative challenge, so that their individual contribution is maximised and an innovative

solution can arise. A graphic designer expressed the view that: *“If you challenge every project completely different regardless whether they come from the same industry, everything is a new job right from the beginning. I got another brochure coming up, it is a property brochure and I did a property brochure 8 months ago, but certainly I won’t approach it in the same way as that one”*. By doing so every project is considered unique and therefore it is given the appropriate maximum creative input. This view was justified by a graphic designer who said that: *“If you don’t challenge it, if you don’t go through that process, if you just think, “It is just another brochure”*. This is true since the client is different every time and hence the message that he/she aims to communicate to his/her target audience is different as well. A graphic designer argued: *“that comes back down to understanding and researching the clients and pinpointing what they specifically want to say and in that respect not two companies will be the same regardless they are both property companies, because one company would like to pinpoint an area and the other company another area”*. However, in order for employees to break out from their preconceived ideas, they need to challenge the project, by adding new aspects, as stated by the head of the graphics who expressed the view that: *“Also, for example, a brochure is not a challenging work unless we can bring new aspects or create something different, but you need the client who can accept those things”*.

Reasons for “perpetual challenging”

There are various reasons, which influence creative organisations to adopt perpetual challenging as a means of maintaining efficiency and creativity, while at the same time the need for generating profit is met. Specifically:

1. **Technology.** The rapid technological advancements, such as new design software and the extensive use of the World Wide Web have changed the way work is done, the forms of communication as well as the contents of messages.
2. **More unpredictable clients.** It is commonly accepted that clients are becoming more knowledgeable of their own businesses, their competition as well as the services offered. Their struggle to continuously differentiate their products or services has increased their expectations from consultancy work.
3. **Change.** The rapid technological advancements and the fierce competition for market share have contributed to the unprecedented increasingly pace of change. Therefore, organisations should be ready to re-arrange their resources to meet the new demands.
4. **Higher employees’ expectations.** Employees within creative environments increasingly look for autonomy so that they can use their personal initiatives. Therefore, creative organisations are required to identify ways for motivating, and developing their high calibre employees.

All the aforementioned reasons have a direct impact on the increasing uncertainty that creative organisations have to face nowadays.

The sub-core variables of perpetual challenging

The research so far has identified four sub-core variables of perpetual challenging, namely, adventuring, overt confronting, portfolioing and opportunising, as shown in the following figure:

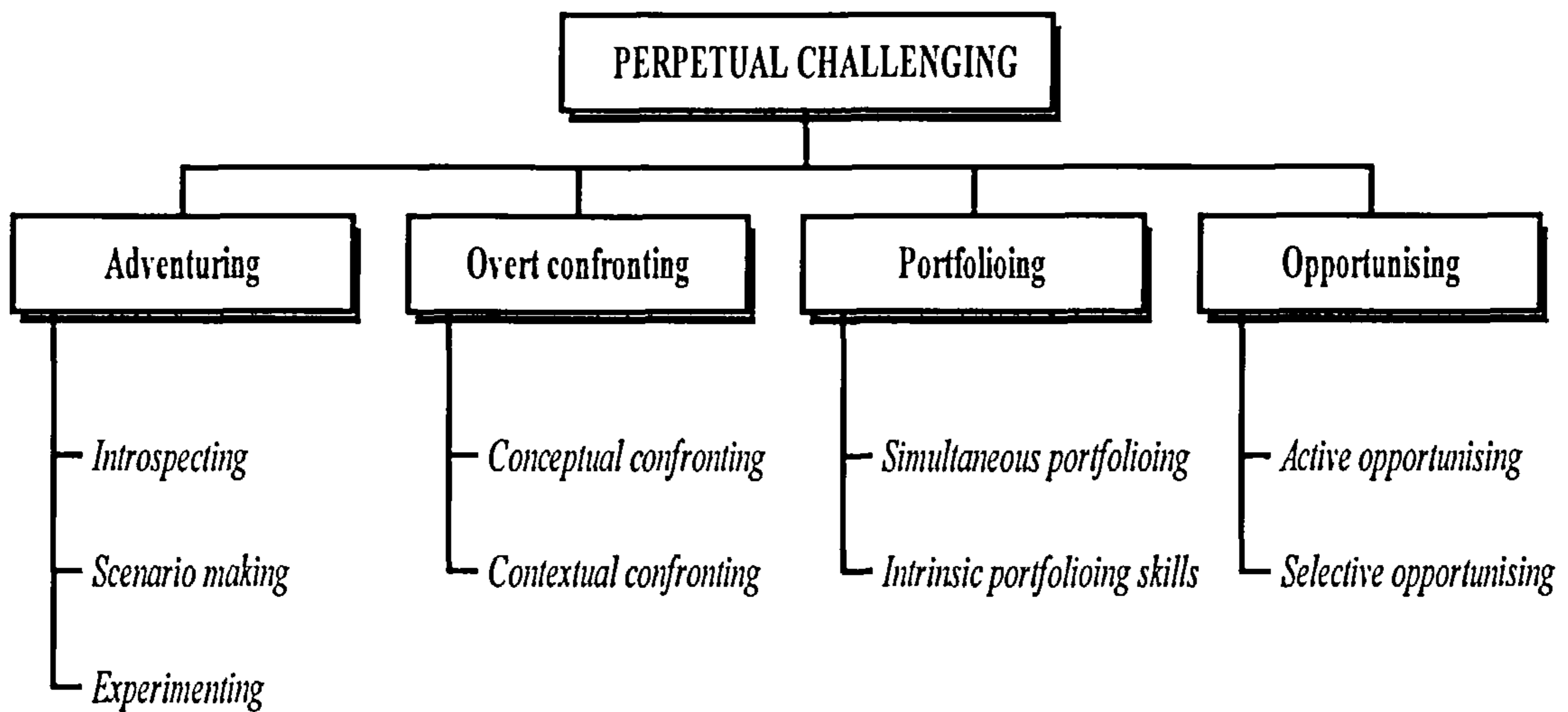


Figure 2. Perpetual challenging and its components

Adventuring

Adventuring is the process through which individuals are encouraged to explore uncertainty, so that they can generate innovative solutions. There are three categories of adventuring, namely “*introspecting*”, “*scenario making*” and “*experimenting*”.

Introspecting

Creative employees explore uncertainty by working from what is already known. The cofounder of the company justified this view by saying that: “...*about thinking that we*

know these things will work. We know that people are doing it like that and it works like that. So we say why don't we do it like this? So we are quite good in exploring unexplored territories and we are quite good in identifying or formulating things by looking at them in another way".

Scenario making

Scenario making refers to the development of possible routes to tackle a particular situation. This situation can range from a creative problem to the general strategic direction that the company has to take by identifying the threats and opportunities of the industry within which it operates. This technique is used in order to make employees think rather than feeding them with the solution. By doing so, employees are in the position to evaluate the possible scenarios and make the final decision. In order for employees to find out what is already known, they are required to identify what they don't know. This can be achieved either by norm questioning or by gap filling, which are two properties of scenario making, as shown in the following indicators. The managing director expressed the fact that: *"Scenario is about questioning the norm"*. A similar view was highlighted by the cofounder of the company, who said that: *"It is like filling gaps. It is like looking in processes and break them down and saying that there is an opportunity here and there is a gap there"*. The outcome of these processes will give a variety of possible alternative scenarios for the specific project or the future of the industry within which the company operates.

Experimenting

After the development of different scenarios, experimenting follows. Experimenting occurs when employees utilise their full potential by being involved in a personal trial and error process. It refers to the employees' ability to test the different scenarios generated by different concepts in terms of images or ideas, which can fit to the parameter set by the client or the industry within which their company operates, and eventually decide the most appropriate one. The head of the interior design expressed the view that: *"we are not afraid to experiment, to say we will have a look; we would like to try something different, something that is new, not done before, something exciting and fresh, people will see and stimulate response"*. Creative organisations are risk-takers. The importance of incremental risk-taking, which is a property of experimenting, is highlighted by the cofounder of the company who noted that: *"There is always a risk attached when you are trying to do anything new, but I think that we try and use our own experiences to minimise the dangerous bits. We try to calculate risk every time when you incrementally push a job that much further, so we are constantly in a control, there is not a clear and absolute free fall"*. Incremental risk-taking is the ability to stretch creative employees' adventuring process up to a certain point so that the client is not exposed to massive risk. Creative organisations are stretching their capabilities and consequently the quality of services offered to the clients every time an opportunity arises. The cofounder of the company explains the process used: *"I think that the trick is also in pushing each project that little bit forward so that you are not exposing the client in massive degree of risk taking"*. Creative organisations also cherish risk taking up to the point that they are in a position to justify it, as illustrated by the

following indicator derived from a cofounder's statement: *"We have to be able to explain the work, to underpin it with intuition, with method but there is also a risk"*. Furthermore, the adventuring process may not have the expected result as an outcome, and an idea or a design can come up which doesn't clearly distinguish the client's company from its competitors. The managing director expressed the view: *".. failure is seen as a route to the outcome"*. Therefore, mistake making comprises another property of experimenting. The managing director added that: *"There are creative and management mistakes at the beginning and technical mistakes and creative mistakes at the end of the project. It is much easier to solve problems at the beginning, because at the end we have less control since we subcontract the work. Problems can also arise from bad management judgements and bad decisions related to the client or the contract"*. From the previous indicator, it is apparent that mistakes can be project, client or management related. However, there is also a certain degree attached to mistake making, which is related to creative employees' control over the project. Hence, mistakes at the beginning can be more easily and directly corrected whereas mistakes at the end of the project are more difficult to be resolved due to limited control over the outcome. Nevertheless, creative employees need to know that they operate in an environment where failure is not penalised, as long as the process and analytical methods are effectively used. This constitutes another property of adventuring, namely safety netting. This view was justified by the cofounder of the company, who said that: *"We encourage people to take risks, they should have an opportunity to fail. Designers should not be too secure, they should be at risk because everything changes. But you have to give them the confidence by supporting them. As long as the process is sound*

and the analytical methods are used, which is the way you define the essence of the problem, how you identify what the client related problem is". From the previous indicator, it is apparent that employees should be in an environment, which is tolerating failure.

Overt confronting

Overt confronting refers to the deliberately set of work-related debates among employees used so that their creative thinking is fully utilised. The managing director of the company expressed a view: *"We try to externalise: Today we had a fast direct design session, and we changed something that was a good idea to something, which is very exciting. I deliberately set a fight; I encouraged them, because it removes a degree of complacency to be passion about a subject"*. Two categories of overt confronting emerged from the analysis: *"conceptual"* and *"contextual"* confronting.

Conceptual confronting

Conceptual confronting refers to the employees' ability to question each other's ideas so that their full potentials are utilised. The cofounder of the company expressed the view that: *"I want to be constantly challenged. If there is any complaint I have got in my life is that people do not challenge me enough, because that keeps you fresh, because that you all need to continue to learn yourself"*. From that, it can be assumed that as the questioning of each other's ideas becomes more frequent, employees' creative thinking is better utilised. Conceptually confronting can take the form of dialoguing as highlighted by the cofounder of the company, who pointed out that: *"I think that it is*

great to engage in a dialogue; dialogue is about everything and experiences, everyone has different experiences. But the more information you have to choose from the better the possibility that you will come up with a better solution". Conceptual confronting can be internal, which refers to the questioning of each other's ideas within the company and external, which occurs when informal and casual debates with people from other disciplines take place. The cofounder of the company highlighted the importance of external conceptual confronting by saying that: *"It is great to be challenged across disciplines. I would like to meet scientists. It widens your appreciation in what you do and let you understand other ways of looking on the problems. I think that students' questions are better"*.

Contextual confronting

Contextual confronting refers to the way creative organisations put pressure on their employees and offer them work with higher difficulty. The head of the graphics defined a challenge as *"a stimulating work, with higher level of difficulty"*. The managing director of the company pointed out the fact that: *"We put pressure to be good and more creative. We have big expectations, we push them to quality work and become good managers as well. Everybody has to do some management and creativity. But we are trying to give a variety"*. An architect agreed by highlighting the importance of the challenge in enhancing employees' creative input by saying that: *"They expect you to be as creative as you can; The managing director of the company challenges you, pushes your creativity; ensures to make the most of you in a project"*. Furthermore, creative employees should not only be given projects with higher level of difficulty but they

should also be involved in new tasks so that their skills are enhanced. Moreover, deadlining is another way of putting pressure to employees' work, which is a property of contextual confronting. Deadlining is where employees' creativity is enhanced by setting specific time boundaries for their projects. The aim of deadlining is to encourage creative employees to focus on and solve the issue in question, since otherwise the creative process will take as time as the project lasts. A pre-set obstacle like a deadline can stimulate creativity, as employees' focus can be narrowed to the issue in question, which needs to be solved immediately. There are two forms of deadlining, namely extra peer group and peer group deadlining. This view was justified by the cofounder of the company: *"Deadlines are client and management related. It is like a game- "I dare you to finish that project by that time. Pressure is good in order to be decisive"*.

Portfolioing

Portfolioing is where creative employees are involved in a diverse range of projects or teams related to these projects. There are two categories of portfolioing, namely *"simultaneous"* and *"intrinsic portfolioing skills"*. The portfolioing process does not only occur within creative organisations but among all project-based environments, where employees are involved in different tasks or communicate with different audiences either internally or externally. However, the form that it might take may differ according to the employees' position in an organisation. Moreover, the portfolioing process is associated with the structure as well as the size of the organisation. Organisations that have a flat structure force their employees' working life to overlap between communicating with various audiences and being involved with different tasks.

On the contrary, in companies characterised by a tall structure, employees are more used to deal with specific audiences or handle certain tasks.

Simultaneous portfolioing

It is part of the human nature to deal with different things at the same time. The category of simultaneous portfolioing is highlighted by the cofounder of the company who said that: *“We work in projects simultaneously, because that is the way life is. It is better because it means you can spend a couple of hours in a project and then think of something else, so we don’t get tired of thinking of the one problem all the time, which can become very boring and unproductive”*. The following indicator highlights a possible property of portfolioing, namely interpersonal portfolioing. It refers to the different relationships, which are developed while creative employees are working in different teams. The head of the interior design: *“But because there is a richness in variation of work, employees have the opportunity to work with different people, different materials or different areas, for example, we worked with bars, hotels, clubs, offices and we are working with a whole range of design and a whole range of materials like copper, rubber, concrete, ceramics, fibre optics”*. From the previous indicator it is apparent that there is also another property of portfolioing, specifically work-related portfolioing, which refers to the variation of work related to the materials that can be used in a project and the industry of the client. A similar view was expressed by the head of the graphics who pointed out that: *“Variety is also important; such as having new problems to cope with and the work is also exciting, varied, we have fun and that is also important”*.

Intrinsic portfolioing skills

The second category of portfolioing, namely intrinsic portfolioing skills, has derived from the previous indicators. This category refers to employees' different skills and abilities required for completing their work. It is the nature of creative environments to require from their employees to be able to balance their creative with their managerial skills and abilities, so that the work is finished on time and the highest possible creative contribution is achieved. Meaning that creative employees' life is a rotation from one project to another, from one client to the next and from using certain skills and talents in one project to trying a different set of skills and talents in other projects.

Opportunising

It is the creative employees' ability to be involved in projects, which are identified as commercially or creatively interesting and therefore need to be cultivated. The managing director highlighted the importance of the process by saying that: *"There are problems with difficult solutions, or there is something new, so you need to learn. There is also financial opportunity except from the creative opportunity. The ideal project is the one that has a creative as well as financial opportunity"*. There are two categories of opportunising, namely *"active"* and *"selective opportunising"*.

Active opportunising

Active opportunising refers to the way creative employees are involved in generating more commercial and creative projects. This view was justified by the cofounder of the company who said that: *"At the moment, we try to rely more on ourselves and generate*

more projects, become our own customer rather than depending on client to be brave enough to give us the briefs we know we can do well. I can see what the trends are within the industry, which is to move from being a standard design consultancy to being something completely different, which is grown by us creating our own opportunities to do best work and relying less on the client". The managing director added that: *"We are trying to create the opportunity to design better work. To have projects with a variety of potential outcomes, which are relatively open. There are difficult problems with fantastic solutions, like being original, direct, different, or even to have an opportunity to change how things are done"*.

Selective opportunising

Selective opportunising refers to the decisions taken as to what projects should be considered as suitable for the company's portfolio and which were derived from existing clients or are the result of referencing. Project filtering refers to creative organisations' assessment of potential projects against the opportunity to creative experiment or innovate and comprises a property of selective opportunising. This view was highlighted by the managing director who said that: *"Sometimes we have to turn down a client in order not to compromise the mix of the projects. For instance, we are working now on two bars, coffee shop and night-club so we will have to turn him down because we don't want more clubs at that point"*.

Consequences of “perpetual challenging”

1. **Learning to cope with uncertainty**, since employees are taking advantage of the adventuring process to achieve that.
2. **Preventing creative conditioning**. Creative employees have to constantly question their own ideas rather than take them for granted, which would limit the creative thinking process and therefore their exposure to external sources.
3. **Employees’ morale is enhanced**. Through the aforementioned processes creative employees gain new skills and knowledge and are exposed to different stimuli, which make their working lives more interesting. The gained knowledge will comprise the basis upon which associations from one project to another can be made and the way certain parts of a project can be avoided or handled are also learned.
4. **Better attunement to change**. Creative employees who are exposed to a diverse range of projects and have developed different skills and knowledge are better equipped to handle the increasingly changing future demands.
5. **Innovating**. Individuals who are used to stretch their potential in every situation rather than habitually react to it will discover opportunities in the future.

Discussion of the findings

This section aims to situate the theory of perpetual challenging into existing bodies of literature as well as to explain its value to both creative organisations and their clients.

Comparative literature review

Taking into consideration that this is an emerging grounded theory research it is not its purpose to give a detailed comprehensive literature review. However, an indicative

literature review is conducted in order to situate the theory into existing bodies of literature.

It is a common belief, nowadays, by both academics (Amabile, 1997, 1998; McFadzean, 1998; Thacker, 1997; and Smolensky and Kleiner, 1995) and practitioners (Lloyd, 1996) that creative employees' ideas and knowledge are considered as prime business assets. The literature review showed that creativity has previously been studied from an individual and organisational perspective. For instance, Sternberg et al (1997) and Amabile (1997) stress the importance of individuals' components to creativity, such as employees' knowledge, intellectual abilities, thinking style preferences, personality and task motivation. The aforementioned authors as well as Cummings and Oldham (1997) also stress the importance of managing work contexts, such as job complexity, supervision, colleagues, resources and environment to enhancing creativity. The importance of challenging work was emphasised by Amabile (1997), who stated that matching creative employees to assignments, based on their skills and interests, enhances their motivation toward work.

Some of the theory's categories are also seen in other authors' work. Hackman et al (1975) discuss the importance of contextual confronting by saying that employees who are involved in a complex job, are more motivated, more satisfied and eventually more creative. In addition, conceptual confronting is discussed by Dumaine (1994), Amabile (1997) and Cummings and Oldham (1997), who noted that interaction with other colleagues may lead to increased motivation among these employees through stimulating broader interests, challenging each other's work or by adding complexity. Cummings and Oldham (1997) as well as Amabile (1997) highlight the significance of

portfolioing by stating that challenging assignments give creative employees the freedom to focus simultaneously on diverse dimensions of their work, which in return enhances their interest in order to complete their creative activities. Moreover, Amabile (1997) highlights creative organisations' orientation towards risk as an important element of the innovation orientation.

However, these authors tend to overlook the basic social processes involved in creativity itself by describing the way concepts, such as challenging, confronting or risk taking rather than explaining how they happen or how they relate to each other.

Implications of the research

The contribution of this study is twofold. Firstly, the theory in its form helps creative organisations to identify new ways for stretching their employees' creative thinking by adopting the aforementioned processes. In return, the successfulness of those processes has a direct impact on the service delivered to the client. Secondly, clients who demand more creative products or services, can use this theory as an assessment of creative consultancies' ability to produce creative and innovative work and hence as guidance for selecting appropriate creative consultancies to work with.

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