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Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Future Creation

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Agius Andrea
Competitive reactions following the introduction of a hard discounter:
A case study focusing on Maltese supermarkets

Purpose
This dissertation aims to identify the effect on supermarkets following the entry of a hard discounter in Malta. It also tries to identify competitive reactions that these supermarkets have adopted, highlighting those which are considered more successful than others.

Design/methodology/approach
Following the quantitative analysis of the Retail Price Index to try and establish the effect of the discounter on the market prices of the commodities it operates in, interviews were held with supermarket managers in order to identify their views on the subject and consequently to be able to build a case study.

Findings
From a research perspective, this work provides empirical evidence that local operators can adapt through competitive reactions in order to remain competitive even against much stronger competition. From a practical perspective, this work provides a contribution by listing the various activities local supermarkets have tried since the introduction of the discounter. It thus provides fertile ground for the further development of such ideas to pursue future growth.

Research Limitations/implications
This study takes into consideration just one retail format: supermarkets. Future research could address more formats to understand better the effect of a discounter on a regional or national retail sector.

Originality/value
This work can be considered as a form of an open-innovation exercise where supermarkets shared their perceptions, experiences and results in order to be able to emerge stronger against the discounter. Bringing together the ideas of some of the most successful operators locally is something which cannot be underestimated.

Keywords: Malta, supermarkets, hard discount, competitive reactions, retailing.
Buhagiar James
The futures of the Maltese language

There are more than 6,909 known living languages. Writers predict that as many as 60 to 90% of the world’s languages may be at risk of extinction within the next 100 years. This thesis originated in light of such predictions and preoccupations. With less than 500,000 speakers, is Maltese at risk as well? Is Maltese in decline or is it actually growing, albeit in ways to which the Maltese are unaccustomed to and of which many disapprove?

The circumstances which determine the fate of a language can be numerous and diverse and cannot be divorced from that language’s history and context. This study takes a look at the development of Maltese over time as well as the bilingual reality of the Maltese islands in which Maltese exists alongside English – a global lingua franca.

Through the identifications of three key factors that feature in both language growth as well as in language decline, this thesis attempts to shed light on the possible futures facing the Maltese language.

These three factors are analysed for their potential to contribute to mapping out such possible futures through a Causal Layered Analysis, utilising data retrieved through a thorough environmental scanning of local data dealing with the use of the Maltese language in the Maltese Islands.

The dissertation comes to a number of conclusions on possible futures for Maltese. In setting out a set of possible futures for the Maltese language it not only takes into account the inevitable and ‘organic’ tendency of languages to change over time, but it also builds on the assumption that the factors identified as leading to possible decline can and should be addressed in such a way as to result in a potential reversal of the process leading to decline. In this way this dissertation makes a contribution to a better understanding of the process of language growth and decline more generally.

Keywords: Maltese language, language growth, language decline, futures.
Sciberras Chantal  
Design as an enabler of social innovation

This dissertation focuses on two themes – Design and Social Innovation, often deemed to be unrelated and located within different spheres of thought. Yet again, particularly in light of the current economic crisis and the austerity measures often being implemented, European governments are increasingly being urged to approach social issues from a different, possibly more creative perspective. In this regard, this study presents three case studies whereby Design, as a tactile, visual and creative process, has been drawn into the social field, to achieve the aims of social innovation. The latter field is deemed to address social challenges that have not been adequately tackled by either the state or the market and aims for social, systemic change. Bringing Design into the picture presents strong potential, with this potential based on the underlying principles of Design, namely creativity, multi-disciplinary collaboration and a means to envision the future through the designer’s capability of tapping into user needs and proposing solutions that may satisfy such needs. These themes are here dealt with and considered in light of the case studies selected, as well as the related literature. They reveal that, whilst the same principles on which design operates align themselves with those within the social innovation framework, they also present certain challenges that may have broader implications for policy-making. In this regard, this dissertation attempts to address these and concludes with some reflections and recommendations on the potential that may be reaped through the convergence of design and social innovation, particularly in the policy-making process.

Keywords: social innovation, design thinking, multi-disciplinarity, creative collaboration.
Master in Creativity and Innovation.

Anyanwu Peters
Innovation in the Nigerian electoral system: A tool for democracy

The aim of this study is to investigate and identify the various innovations which have taken place in the Nigerian electoral system since its present democratic dispensation, aimed at the conduct of credible elections in the country, and the role of ICTs in enhancing participatory democracy in the country.

The need for more participation and involvement of the citizenry in the nation’s political activity has been identified as one of the major prerequisites of a true democracy. For this reason, the literature review of this study explores various viewpoints relating to innovation in the Nigerian political system, the relevance of elections to the sustenance of democracy, the need for innovation in the Nigerian electoral commission, and the role of ICTs, (social media and other online tools) in facilitating participatory democracy and the conduct of credible elections in the country.

The research uses a qualitative methodological approach to explore matters related to innovation in a political system and the role of ICTs in political activities within the Nigerian context. In pursuance of this, face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with various politically active stakeholders, including local government chairmen/women past and present, political analysts and academics, staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent National Electoral Commission (SIEC) past and present. After establishing and describing the methodology of the study conducted, the analyses and results are presented. A discussion on the need to establish a democratic system of government founded on popular participation through the conduct of credible elections and the need to positively harness the innovations taking place in ICTs to achieve a more participatory democracy is explored. This is then followed by an attempt to identify and itemize the various innovations which have taken place in the Nigerian political journey, with a major focus on INEC from its inception in 1998.

The final chapter proposes recommendations and conclusions regarding the need to establish a more participatory democracy, through the conduct of credible elections in Nigeria, and the need to embrace the innovations taking place in ICTs in order to achieve this. Further findings from the study show that there have been various innovations initiated by INEC since its inception which are aimed towards the conduct of credible elections in the country, but these innovations have not brought about much improvement as a result of factors which include lack of independence of the agency from the executive arm of government, corruption, and the attitude of Nigerian politicians, who perceive elections as a do-or-die affair. Prolonged military rule, the young age of Nigerian democracy and inconsistency in government policy are also partly to blame for the lack of participatory democracy in the country.

Keywords: Nigeria elections, participatory democracy, ICT innovations, politics.
Gender profiling: Critical thinking about gender portrayals in media

It is wearying to live up to the slogan ‘be critical and unconventional’ advocated by the new multimedia era, when the mass of information dumped upon us in this information age still seems to be highly dogmatic, conventional and stereotypical. We believe that we possess the ability to critically reflect on media messages, but alas it is the crafty mass media which makes us believe that we do so while continuously and conspicuously feeding us the same material. And because we do not challenge what we are being fed through the media enough, supreme patriarchal capitalists who hold the power of the media exert social control through manipulative messages and images which merely support the system and facilitate its growth (van Zoonen 1994, p.29).

This work addresses two fundamental issues commonly encountered in the consumption of mass media — critical thinking and gender discourse. Using the combined knowledge gleaned from critical thinking theory, memetic theory and other media studies, this study hinges on an exploration of the core concepts of critical thinking and audiences’ thinking against the backdrop of media texts, specifically on one popular culture sitcom entitled “Two and a Half Men”. The second part of the work deals mostly with audiences’ own interpretations of the specific gender portrayals in the sitcom and draws upon the queer theory, feminist theory and cultivation theory to analyse the effects of such portrayals and discourses on audiences.

The findings of this study are based on the outcome of a series of focus groups held with European and Chinese viewers of the sitcom. Through these focus groups it was possible to compare the two groups’ unique understanding of media and culture. It was found that most participants have a rather obscure understanding of critical thinking and often limit its use to academia. Another key result which emerged from the study concerned audiences’ thinking ability when viewing the sitcom. It emerged that participants expect the presence of stereotypes in TV shows and tend not to engage in critical thinking about them because they view the sitcom as being ‘only entertainment’.

Probing into a deeper level of the effects of mass media led to the conclusion that viewers, particularly women, do consider the gender images and portrayals troubling and problematic because these portrayals do not genuinely represent true females and males. The participants of the study, however, were unable to agree on a description of gender roles in real life due to the cultural differences among them. In comparison to female viewers, male viewers seem to be temporarily lured into the ‘television view’ of the world, experiencing “escapism” when viewing the sitcom. While questioning the stability of gender, this study suggests that gender is a performance which changes according to context, gender and culture.

Keywords: critical thinking, gender discourse, popular culture, gender performance, stereotype.
Borg Joanna
Fortune telling and creativity: An analysis of the methods used by current practitioners in Malta

This research investigates whether any creativity is involved in fortune telling sessions or not and what thinking processes fortune tellers use to provide their clients with readings or future predictions. The term ‘fortune tellers’ is employed, for the purposes of this research, to include all individuals with supernatural talents including psychics, psychic detectives, healers, mind-readers and mediums. This dissertation analyses fortune telling and the situation in Malta. The research was conducted as not much information is available about fortune tellers in Malta.

Firstly, the researcher located ten fortune tellers, obtained their contact details and contacted them personally. The researcher explained the purpose of this research by phone and made arrangements to interview the fortune tellers face-to-face. The interviews conducted with the fortune tellers were one-to-one, in depth, semi-structured interviews. Two focus groups were conducted which lasted thirty minutes each. Each group consisted of four participants. All eight participants had the experience of visiting a fortune teller at least once in their lifetime.

The first focus group consisted of non-university students and the general public. The second focus group consisted of university students. The interviews and both focus groups were analysed by employing thematic data analysis: finding the main themes in the transcripts and comparing the results to the information that emerged from the literature review. The results and discussion chapter present the data that emerged from the interviews with the ten fortune tellers and the proceedings of the two focus groups.

Focusing mainly on the thinking processes, most of the fortune tellers claimed that they employ their intuition and gut feelings about their clients when providing a reading face-to-face. Nine out of ten fortune tellers claimed that they go by gut feeling when it comes to predicting their clients’ future and employ no creativity whatsoever during the sessions that they provide to clients. The majority claimed that, outside of their work, they consider themselves as creative persons.

The focus group participants did not go into much detail about the thinking processes which fortune tellers employ, however, they mentioned intuition and one participant mentioned creativity in the sense that some fortune tellers may exaggerate the details of a story during a reading to their client. The focus group participants focused on other topics, mainly motivation and whether they think fortune tellers are genuine or not.

Keywords: creativity, fortune telling, thinking processes, intuition, positive creativity, negative creativity, manipulation, deception.
Borg Luke
The link between creativity and innovation and the human resource development: A study on a local major bank

The link between Creativity and Innovation and the Maltese Banks’ Human Resource Development is arguably suffering from a lack of exposure.

The research objectives of this thesis are to:

a) Establish whether the bank is generating awareness on creativity and innovation with its employees through human resource development.
b) Understand whether the bank employees are able to use creativity and innovation tools to improve their roles within the bank.
c) Help the bank recognise those employees who are supplying ideas that improve the company.

There were two main methods used in this research:

a) Semi-structured interviews aimed and directed towards the two training managers who planned a personal development course. This included training on creativity and innovation within its structure;
b) Open-ended questionnaires directed towards employees within the bank who participated in the courses where the creativity tools were explored.

The main research findings revealed that the bank delivers some courses to employees in which creativity and innovation are involved. However, a course on creativity and innovation alone is lacking. All the interviewees felt that although the bank is fostering creativity and innovation, it could improve this by increasing the number of hours dedicated for the creativity and innovation course.

Another issue was that there was not much variety regarding the creativity tools used during the sessions. Only one set of tools was used and the employees that participated were not given exposure to other techniques. Finally, the rewards given by the bank to those employees who came up with ideas were too focused on monetary incentives. As motivational studies suggest, this approach would not be a perpetual reward, thus leading the person who generated the ideas to focus on the monetary advantage that could be gained by giving ideas rather than on idea generation itself.

Keywords: creativity, innovation, training, development, understanding.
Cassar Rachel

Media organisations: An evaluation of innovation within the media’s news content

Media organisations benefit from a sound level of importance with regards to delivering the news to their audiences. For this reason innovation should be considered an important factor so to ensure that the most recent and up-to-date ways of communication are used to put forward the latest news to the public.

The research questions that this study sets out to answer revolve around innovation in the newsroom and within news content. The initial research question asked how important innovation is deemed to be in newsrooms. This brought about the question of what would make a journalist want to seek innovative practice and what would be deemed to be innovation from an organisation’s point of view.

This study was carried out by means of an innovation audit within two Maltese media organisations. The findings identify the different attitudes towards several issues related to innovation in the newsroom. Through the extensive literature review conducted, it is possible to see the results obtained from studies carried out in foreign newsrooms. These case studies provide a snapshot of the phenomenon of innovation and how this is implanted within Maltese newsrooms. The outcomes could not only be of assistance to other news organisations, but could also be used as a pilot study for further research on innovation within Maltese media organisations.

Keywords: innovation, media organisations, newsrooms, convergence
Dalli Stephanie
The impact of creativity on dance and the effect of dance on creative ability

Creative thinking is rapidly growing in importance. In his book, *Serious Creativity*, Edward de Bono indicated that the creative potential of individuals is lost if not put to use (de Bono, 1992). De Bono explained that creativity is a skill that can be learnt, trained and used as a vital part of everyday functioning of individuals in various aspects. It was indicated that creative thinking styles need to replace old patterns of thinking for individuals to develop more efficient ways of dealing with common problems (de Bono, 1992). A creative pattern is apparent in creative behaviour, which comprises activities such as inventing, designing and planning. People who exhibit these types of behaviour to a high level are identified as being creative (Guilford, 1950). Motivation is essential for creativity as creative production is indicated to require a high level of motivation (Collins & Amabile, 1999). De Bono further explained that there is an essential need for creative thinking in order to find more effective ways of achieving quality and continuous improvement (de Bono, 1992). Nowadays, we tend to face a growing number of problems and creativity helps us to face these problems more effectively.

An individual who experiences stress and anxiety evidences reduced levels of creativity (Hughson & Hughson, 2004). Therefore, it is vital that stress and anxiety are relieved for one to feel better. Dance is a means of preventing and reducing stress as well as achieving bliss through its physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Hanna, 2006). Dance, an accepted form of therapy, is seen as a way of communicating and expressing emotions. Dance is described as an essential form of art since the body is used as a medium of expression and communication. When using an art form, it has been indicated that one would be accessing his or her creative potential (Chyle, 1999).

Creativity in dance can be seen in the final product, which is the actual dance itself, and somewhat throughout the choreographic process as the dance takes it shape (Best, 1992). It is suggested that dance improvisation has altered dance practice through invention and by enriching set choreographies through its performance elaborations (Carter, 2000). Improvisation has liberated dance from inherited dance traditions, by freeing the dance from particular musical structures, narrative tales, or limitations of the stage. It is believed that improvisation opened up new possibilities for creative dance movement. The major findings of this research indicate that a relationship between dance and creativity exists. After conducting the interviews and analysing the results, key themes emerged: Meaning of movement, Motivation, Knowledge, Personality, Imagination, Inspiration of creativity, Uniqueness and originality, Expressing feelings and emotions, Communication, Dance as a performing art, Passion for dance, Stress-Relief, Enriching one’s physical and psychological well-being.

**Keywords:** meaning, inspiration, imagination, personality, originality, expressing feelings, communication, dance as art, stress-relief, enhanced well-being.
Harrison Audrey  
**Innovation in film: It’s perfectly possible**

Film is one of the most influential and active of the institutions in mass culture, and it has held and still holds a very important position in society. Since its inception more than a century ago, it evolved dramatically, both in form and content, consequently becoming an effective and potent means of communication and business generation.

A broad review of the literature demonstrates how innovation is a prerequisite in a world where ‘all stories have been told’ in order for the medium to stay alive. However this is easier said than done; succeeding in the world of filmmaking nowadays is somehow tougher than it was half a century ago as numerous barriers and challenges are faced by filmmakers in the process of innovating in film. Indeed, the ever increasing technological advancements, the changing society, and globalization are some of the factors that facilitate the evolution of the medium and its content.

I have developed this research with the objective of understanding what is considered an innovative film, whether innovation and success are linked and how filmmakers can succeed in producing an innovative product. Aiming to explore these issues, I carried out six intensive interviews with professionals working in diverse areas of the film industry.

This research concludes by identifying variables that are considered to be ‘key’ in producing innovative films, and although commercial success in film is not necessarily dependent on innovation, adopting innovation strategically can increase the chances of commercial success and assure critical success. Therefore, innovation in film is a fundamental ingredient required in order to keep the medium alive.

**Keywords:** innovation, film, filmmaking, script, CGI.
Jozwik Sophie  
Creative marketing techniques employed to appeal to consumers:  
The merging of a sensory mix?

In 1948, James Culliton used the idiom “mixer of ingredients” to qualify a manager and since the term “marketing-mix” first coined by Neil H. Borden in 1953 has been popularised, the concept has proven its efficiency for more than half a century. Nevertheless, nowadays the traditional marketing approach on its own seems insufficient despite efforts being made to increase budgets. The reasons leading to the decline of the more traditional techniques can be various but the major one seems to stem from the clutter of advertising messages everywhere in the media.

With this in mind, we may reconsider James Culliton’s “mixer of ingredients” and apply it to our five senses to think about creative techniques which may trigger a purchase. Sensory marketing could become the solution to regain the market by turning to a “sensory-mix”. Lindström (2005) suggests a “Holistic Selling Proposition (HSP)” referring to sensory branding by putting the consumer in an agreeable atmosphere to trigger a purchase. In fact, the love of abundance in our world of consumerism has led to market saturation. Since society is shifting from a globalised era to a more experience-focused attitude, marketing techniques must adapt. Shops can increase sales in an efficient manner by creating an agreeable shopping experience that emphasises the sensorial experience of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The results of this exploratory study provide further insight on the effectiveness of a new sensory model including the five senses as well as other ambient and social cues.

**Keywords:** retailing, consumer behaviour, creativity, multisensory marketing, atmospherics
Karvinkop Kanika
A study of the personality factors affecting the process of decision making by flight crew

Aviation experts believe that the biggest future safety improvements could come from reduction in human error. This is an intricate area of research. The study of human error involves psychology, flight crew member interaction, decision-making, training methods, impact of automation and cockpit design. These aspects, however, do not always receive the required attention due to more obvious and tangible safety threats in the environment. This study has focused on identifying the relationship between personality and decision making in the operational environment of the flight crew of an airline. Having traced these relationships, this study provides a guiding template to individual flight crew drawing their attention to specific areas in the operational environment which they would need to be aware of for their specific personality type.

The research provides a comprehensive study of relevant literature and the application of a practical research. The latter was conducted through a case study with the flight crew of the airline using questionnaires to identify personality and decision making approaches. Furthermore, airline documents were studied to gain insight into the airline operational environment. The information obtained was then processed using one of de Bono’s lateral thinking tools to design a guidance template for practical use by the flight crew.

This research produced a number of key findings: The flight crew responses within the airline showed a varied distribution of personality styles and decision making approaches and certain personality types showed a tendency to adopt a decision-making approach which was not aligned to their inherent personality. The decision-making requirements for each situation normal and non-normal in the context were identified and correlated with the approaches of each personality. The main conclusions drawn from this research were that personality had an identifiable relationship with the decision-making approach, certain personality type flight crew would need to pay additional attention to specific areas of the operational environment and this can become a catalyst for the training requirement to improve performance.

Keywords: personality, decision-making, airline safety, awareness, guidance template, human error.
Romano Jeffrey  
Creativity and innovation in the financial services industry in Malta:  
A qualitative approach

The European recession in 2009 and the fast growth of the financial services industry in Malta since 2007 have together created an opportunity to investigate the perception of creativity and innovation in a rare economic context. The main aim of this research is to explore the perceived role and perceived significance of creativity and innovation in the financial services industry in Malta according to professionals who form part of the sector. The empirical data for this study was gathered by carrying out in depth semi-structured interviews with twenty managers from twenty different financial institutions in Malta. A thematic analysis of the data was conducted to note the respondents’ differing perspectives relating to various aspects of creativity and innovation in the financial services industry.

From this research it has become apparent that although the importance of creativity and innovation are recognized by professionals in Malta’s financial services industry, there is a lack of in depth understanding on what these concepts represent and how they may be managed within a financial services context. This study has brought to light that although the financial services industry has experienced a lot of innovation over the last 60 years, there is still a lot to be learned by financial services professionals in Malta, in the emerging field of innovation.

Keywords: financial services, creativity, innovation.
Sarath C.V.
Innovation and strategic growth for development of an organisation: 
Case study of Virgin Trains

This study examines how innovation and strategic growth management are essential for an organisation to lead in a competitive market. The growing global demand in the consumer market has challenged companies to perform better than their competitors and satisfy or exceed the expectation of their consumers. This research highlights the role of innovation in exceeding consumer expectation and delivering products that are far superior to those delivered by competitors. This research explores how innovation techniques can be applied at all levels in an organisation on a day-to-day basis without jeopardising the organisation’s brand image.

Organisations must strive to build strategies that deliver innovation patterns through channels which target consumers while building their organisations’ cultural frameworks. This study demonstrates the impact that an organisation’s existing culture has in developing and implementing different strategic patterns. Virgin Trains, a train operating franchise run by Virgin Group in the UK, is chosen as a case study for this research as the organisation provides an ideal opportunity to showcase the different patterns that can be implemented for growth and success in an ailing sector. The information collected is analysed with Randor’s Six-Step method and then further validated through the use of mind-maps. Given the scarcity of information published by Virgin Trains, the data which forms the basis of this study were collected from the UK Transport Information Office and financial institutions which took part in conducting financial research internally.

This research reveals that it is crucial for an organisation to implement innovative practices within the existing cultural framework and employees cannot be expected to deliver innovative services without adequate training and motivation. To enable strategic development employees have to be given the necessary tools and authority to enable them to take action which can save time and money. The findings revealed that competitive advantage can be developed when innovation is combined with competitive strategy and nurtured. These findings create a foundation for future research in the study of how innovation can be applied at every level of an organisation and how delegated authority to enable employees at every level to take quick decisions will help an organisation grow faster and increase productivity. The findings have important implications with regards to empowering employees to take decisions while maintaining the brand image. However, it is difficult to apply innovation techniques in multi-national organisations at lower levels as wrong decisions could hamper the organisations’ brand image.

Keywords: innovation, innovation diffusion, sustainable growth, competitive strategy, competitive advantage
Xuereb Christine
Dynamic of Maltese/immigrants interaction in Birzebbuga, Malta: Exploring innovative solutions to the perceptions on migration and sub Saharan immigrants

Immigration has been a topic under debate ever since the increasing numbers of African immigrant arrivals in 2012. The situation then was hard for many of those who had to learn how to adapt to the situation of having people from different cultures living amongst them. The situation settled but many of the immigrants’ rights still have not been met and whilst the government authorities are pushing towards resettlement and repatriation, the local attitudes have not been welcoming.

Whilst many sub Saharan immigrants are integrating, despite not being granted their rights since government authorities have not been pushing for integration through their policies, many immigrants have been leaving Malta in search for more stability. Birzebbuga residents have had to learn to deal with the situation much quicker than most villages, as their village, which has been neglected since the opening of the Freeport, also had to accommodate the larger numbers of sub Saharan immigrants, with the placing of the detention and open centres in their neighbourhood. They no longer live comfortably, fearing those with different cultures, religion, phenotypes and everything that the Maltese do not want to be.

This dissertation aims to use the Six Thinking Hats as a tool allowing for parallel thinking and seeking different perspectives in order to get the group of respondents from Birzebbuga looking for alternatives, instead of seeing the situations they face as being a problem. I also look into their perspectives to see the situation from a different point of view.

Keywords: Birzebbuga, immigration, perception, six thinking hats, Malta.