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Master in Creativity and Innovation

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This study investigated entrepreneurial intent and entrepreneurial identity among undergraduate students and graduates from the University of Malta. Entrepreneurial intent is a very important metric in entrepreneurship research as it links enterprising individuals with the discovery of new business opportunities and with the exploitation of these ideas through new business ventures (Vesalainen & Pihkala, 1999). Entrepreneurial identity is also an important factor in entrepreneurship as it is linked to the stage where potential entrepreneurs move from being “‘dreamers’ to action” (Farmer, Yao and Kung-Mcintyre, 2011).

A mixed method approach was adopted for this research, whereby both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used, in two phases of data collection and analysis. The first phase of the study aimed at obtaining a snapshot view of the entrepreneurial intent and entrepreneurial identity of students at University of Malta. To this end, quantitative analysis was carried out on an online questionnaire-based dataset that had been gathered in October 2010, as part of an international research project on the impact of education on entrepreneurship, coordinated by researchers from Illinois State University and University of Wisconsin in collaboration with various partners around the world including the University of Malta. In this study, entrepreneurial intent and entrepreneurial identity were measured using Likert scales based on the work of Thompson (2009) and Farmer, Yao and Kung-Mcintyre (2009) respectively. The local dataset comprising of 88 respondents was made available to the author of this dissertation, and permission was granted for the data to be used for this purpose.

The quantitative analysis was followed by an in-depth qualitative study with a sample of 10 respondents (five undergraduate students and five recent graduates) who had participated in the research project outlined above. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a more detailed understanding of how entrepreneurial intent and entrepreneurial identity are developed and how they are related to students’ career choices and future plans after leaving University. Results indicate that although some respondents were not comfortable with the idea of being entrepreneurs due to risk aversion and financial stability amongst other issues, other respondents were quite open to the idea of opening a business, with an undergraduate student having opened a business while still at University. Nonetheless, the common denominator amongst the students was that the current university structure was not promoting the idea of entrepreneurship, but rather, it was hindering it.

This study concluded that despite the stereotypes of students not wanting to be entrepreneurial, in reality there was a healthy mix between those undergraduate and graduate students who preferred employment to those who would rather be entrepreneurs. It suggested that education is a highly influential factor when it comes to the influence it has on students. For this reason, higher educational programmes need to be revamped in such a way so as to both motivate students about their capabilities, but also to serve as eye-openers when it comes to career-choices after university.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Education, Entrepreneurial Intent, Entrepreneurial Identity, Aspiration.
Buttigieg Andrew Paul  
How is creativity perceived by comic book readers? A Maltese study

Over the years, comic books started to be considered as a leisure activity by children and adults alike. Nowadays, there is a wide selection to choose from. A study by Botzaki (2009) inspired the researcher to conduct a study on creativity and comic books. The concept of Botzaki’s research was to obtain a perspective of comic books from comic book readers themselves. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate how comic book readers perceive creativity.

This study investigated the perception of creativity by comic book readers. Respondents took part voluntarily in the interviews at the Malta Comic-Con 2011. From the results gathered, the researcher analysed the effects of creativity on which it influenced the comic book readers and how it had affected them. This is because, according to Maitland (1976), creativity is one of the most significant, yet least area which is understood. On the other hand, comic books are defined as a “visual narrative or picture-story” according to Hoff (1982: 20). This is why the researcher was interested to investigate the link between them.

One-to-one interviews were conducted with the participants where the researcher formulated interview questions to be tackled in each of the 30 interviews. The first three questions focus on gathering a general background of the participant’s comic book reading habits. The next six questions target the participants’ perception of creativity and the last four questions tackle the concept of creativity.

The main conclusions of this study were that the participants either were inspired to create their own comic book by working with other people or alone, or they were influenced to start a hobby.

Keywords: Creativity, Perception, Comic Books, Inspiration, Comic Book Readers.
Cutajar Christine

Creativity and innovation in sustainable craft production.

This dissertation argues that artisans have an important role to play in the promotion of sustainable development. By adhering to the holistic values of sustainability in their craft production, they can make valuable contributions to its four pillars, namely, the environment, society, economy and culture. At the same time, artisans stand to gain considerably by tapping into the values of sustainable development, as these could lead to a host of personal and financial benefits.

This study suggests that creativity and innovation have a key role to play in enhancing the sustainability of traditional artisans in Malta. By means of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted over two phases of research, this study explored the current conditions and practices of traditional local artisans and their craft production, with a focus on their creativity, innovation and sustainability. Phase one consisted of informal and exploratory interviews with six participants. The interviews in the second phase were more formal and structured, and involved 12 other participants. Three artisans were chosen from each of the four selected craft sectors: filigree, pottery, textiles and cane works. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, followed by a thematic analysis of the data.

Key findings include that the artisans in this study share a predominant attitude of openness to creative thinking and innovation adoption. Respondents spoke about their creative strategies for coping with a challenging external environment and reported various innovations which they adopted with a range of positive impacts. Additionally, the study sheds light on ways in which creativity and innovation can enhance the sustainability of craft production. The study concludes with five key recommendations addressing ways in which the situation of traditional artisans can be improved regarding their sustainability and craft production with the help of creativity and innovation, according to the values of sustainable development.

Keyword: Creativity, Innovation, Sustainable Development, Craft, Artisan.
Ebejer Stephen

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the role of Human Resource Management in encouraging and permitting innovative work practices within the workforce to sustain organisational innovation. Organisations are continuously faced with both challenges and opportunities. The background of the study rests on the basic challenge faced by businesses globally: that of operating in a highly dynamic and often unpredictable economic environment. Innovation is a key strategic organisational attribute that may predict an early detection and rapid response to changing environments. In an attempt to reach and surpass commercial performance, firms that embrace change as an opportunity to grow are more likely to remain competitive and relevant and thus survive.

Organisations which harness employee innovative behaviour and attitude are more likely to meet organisational demands and improve growth. Within this scenario, Human Resource Management plays a key role in the competitiveness of organisations and their ability to innovate, doing so by aligning employees’ work with organisational goals. Findings suggest that HR managers identify the importance of employees engaging in innovative behaviour; however, employees are not involved enough throughout the whole process. By promoting and allowing innovative work practices, employees may be motivated to work harder and better and perform innovatively. This study also suggests that allowing flexibility in working patterns is a means by which employees’ needs are satisfied while the organisation meets its possible fluctuating labour demands in a calendar year. This study further illustrates a congenial working environment characterised by good working relationships among employees and between employees and HR managers, as well as an effective communication structure across the two companies that have been studied.

An interpretivist epistemological position was adopted because it fits in a theory-building exploratory approach. Mixed-methodologies were used because it was felt that this enhanced the value of the data obtained and were more likely to capture the daily experiences of the participants in the researched units. In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with two HR managers, and thirteen employees participated in two focus groups. A total of eighty hours of participant observation were carried out in the hotel establishments.

Keywords: Innovation, Organisational Innovation, Human Resource Management, Innovative Work Practices, Flexibility.
Galea Anna
The creative process in the art of painting

The objective of this research is to investigate influencing factors and processes which painters adopt that lead to the creation of an original work of art. The study is relevant in order to provide a better understanding of creative processes from the painters’ perspective and how creativity features in their art, by a researcher who is herself a painter.

This dissertation addresses the research objective first through a discussion and study of the relevant literature and then, more importantly, through qualitative, in-depth interviews with ten significant Maltese artists.

The findings from this investigation indicate a combination of several factors that affect the extent of creativity in the art of painters, most predominantly of which are self-discipline, commitment and passion. Since the research theme is a very subjective area of study, there is no attempt to conclude by arriving at theories, but rather, at revealing, grouping and comparing the interesting findings from the interviews in a manner that will enrich the readers’ perceptions and allow the use of this valid information for further investigation.

**Keywords:** Creative process, Painting, Character traits, Perception, Inspiration.
Micallef Josianne  
Analysing the relationship between innovation and destination brand in Malta and Singapore: A case study

This study is concerned with examining the level of innovation within destination branding campaigns. It studies, in detail, both the process that marketers go through when designing the destination branding and the outcome of this process, specifically analysing the level of innovation within the promotional material of the branding campaign. This study draws on the cases of Malta and Singapore to examine this relationship.

Specifically, the study focuses on Malta’s process of destination branding at Malta Tourism Authority by interviewing two employees at MTA and the promotional material produced as part of their most recent branding exercise. It also examines Singapore’s promotional material, produced by the Singapore Tourism Board, surrounding their most recent branding exercise. This study compares and contrasts these two countries’ destination branding and the level of innovation found within their branding exercises and suggests recommendations based on these comparisons.

In order to effectively measure the level of innovation and the role innovation played within destination branding, an innovation index was drawn up, based on extensive literature relating to innovation within branding. This innovation index can be used to study the role of innovation in all branding campaigns, not only destination branding. Furthermore, it can be used as a referral for companies who want to design more innovative promotional material and is also a very efficient guide, facilitating the maximisation of innovation when designing the brand.

The main conclusion of this study, drawing on the two cases being analysed, was that while both countries lacked a specific emphasis on innovation, specifically within the promotional material, Singapore was the country with the highest level of innovation within its promotional material. Finally, recommendations were given as to how Malta can benefit from certain innovative strategies. A clear observation was made that, had they been aware of the innovation index prior to the process of designing the promotional material, the content of the branding campaign would have been significantly more innovative.

Keywords: Destination branding, Innovation, Promotional material, Branding process, Tourism studies.
Mizzi Jesmond
The place counts! Organisational realities and team innovation in software development environment

The purpose of this research was to investigate organisational aspects that influence software development team innovation. This was done by looking at organisations as multileveled entities that have different characteristics and processes. Various organisational and team models that promote creativity and innovation in the work place were also investigated, with due consideration of those scholarly models that explain creativity and innovation within a context.

Another aim of this research was to combine different tools and methodologies, one of which was the general systems theory, to the holistic understanding and explanation of complex phenomena related to team and organisational innovation. A comparison study was carried out between two very different ICT organisations and two pairs of software development teams, two from each organization, for the purpose of understanding the effects of organisational structure, climate and team processes (climate) on the team’s innovativeness. Audit interviews and climate questionnaires were used to assess the organisational structure and climate respectively, whilst surveys were used to assess the team climate for innovation. Finally, an independent panel of experts rated the innovative products and services of the teams using a bespoke innovation measurement tool.

The comparison of the two organisations under study revealed that a highly structured organisation adversely impacts the climate for innovation and possibly some of the innovation attributes of a team’s products and services. This impact manifests itself in lower yields of innovations that are possibly larger, more radical and novel. This impact is substantial even if the team enjoys a superior climate of innovation. On the other hand, a low structured organisation enjoys a better climate for innovation. Teams within these types of organisations are possibly more prone to adopt highly diffusible innovations, even if their climate and team processes are far from the ideal. Interestingly, the study also exposed that certain aspects (attributes) normally associated with innovation may be in conflict with other innovation attributes of the same product. These results (including suggestions) were discussed and explained using General Systems Theory.

Keywords: Organisation, Team, Innovation, Structure, Climate, General systems theory.
Reiter Michaela Marie

The impact of active trust-building on creative performance of work groups: An exploratory study

This study explored the relationship between active trust-building and group creativity. More specifically, it investigated whether or not trust can be actively built within work groups, and whether or not such actively-built trust can enhance group creative performance.

A trust-building programme was developed for the purpose of this study and tested in an experiment using a pre-test, post-test format. Two work groups of six members each were randomly selected to participate in the study from the customer care department of an international betting company situated in Malta. One of the groups was randomly assigned to the test condition while the other was engaged as a control-group. Both groups were tested on their level of trust (using a validated questionnaire developed by Blais and Thompson, 2009) and on their creative output (using an adaptation of creativity tests developed by Klimoski and Karol, 1976) in identical conditions in the pre-test and then again in the post-test. The test-group received an intervention between the pre-test and the post-test in the form of the abovementioned tailor-made trust-building programme (four sessions of two hours each spread over three weeks). The control-group received no intervention but attended the trust-building programme after the study was completed to ensure fair and equal treatment of all participants.

A Wilcoxon test revealed that while the test-group enjoyed a significant increase (of 7.53%, \( p < .05 \)) in the level of trust from the pre-test to the post-test (following the intervention), there was a slight but insignificant decrease (of 2.49%, \( p > .05 \)) in the control-group’s level of trust over the same period of time (where no intervention took place). Furthermore, there was an improvement in the creative output of the test-group (operationalised as the number and quality of ideas generated in the creativity tests) following the intervention, while the control-group's creative performance deteriorated. These findings suggest that the trust-building programme was effective in building trust among its recipients, and that this higher level of trust may contribute to better performance on their group creativity tasks.

Although this study was exploratory in nature (due to a lack of empirical research on trust-building and its impact on group creativity, and due to the small sample size used in this study), and although further research is required before firm conclusions and generalisations can be made, these findings offer preliminary support for the hypotheses that trust can be actively built within work groups, and that higher levels of trust are beneficial for creative performance.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Trust, Active trust-building, Group creativity, Work groups.
Thomas Shruthi
Creative thinking techniques: Factors that impinge the usability among Indian professionals

Edward de Bono affirms that creativity as a skill needs to be practiced deliberately. Transfer is a key concept in adult learning theories, because most education and training aspires to transfer, in that the end goals of training and education are not achieved unless transfer occurs. Therefore an important question that needs to be addressed is how can creativity as a skill be gained through training, and transferred to the workplace. It is against this background that this study was conducted, in an attempt to explore employees’ views on the practical application of creative thinking tools designed by Edward de Bono and factors likely to impinge on the individual application of the tools.

Therefore this research is concerned with studying ‘things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’. This study adopted a qualitative methodology and was done in phases which included a situational analysis and in-depth interviews using an interview guide.

The study was conducted in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu state (India) that serves as a broad industry base. The city is the fourth largest city in India and is the second largest exporter of software, information technology (IT) and base for car manufacturers.

The data was thematically analysed and presented. The themes emerge under the broad categories of individual and organizational factors which influence creativity, creative learning on Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats method and transfer of creativity training to the work environment. The findings help reveal practical insights (individual perceptions) on the usefulness of the method (Six Thinking Hats) and the factors that influence and impinge on transfer of creative thinking within the organization under study.

The broad themes under which this study has been analysed are: Perceptions of one’s own creativity, Perceptions of Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats, usefulness and applicability of training of the use of the Six Thinking Hats at the individual level, as well as at the work place, and facilitators and barriers that influence the transfer of learning post training. The study, moreover, captures suggestions on how to strengthen the existing training and how to promote further training in organizations.

Keywords: Creativity, Training, Transfer of creative thinking, Learning.
Pieters Jeroen  
Entrepreneurial mindsets among higher education students: The case for the University of Malta

In the last decade, due to the financial crisis in western societies and the upcoming of new economic power nations, governments and policy makers emphasised the importance of entrepreneurship to revive economic growth in the European Union (Campbell, 2011). As a result, the study of entrepreneurship underwent a resurgence in interest. Moreover, as Malta forms part of the EU, this study focuses on the University of Malta.

The aim of the study was to explore the extent that undergraduate academic programmes at the University of Malta impart relevant entrepreneurial competencies amongst students and how this impacts on idea potential and business ideas as a result of several intervening variables.

Specifically this study will explore the extent to which entrepreneurial competencies are imparted in the students’ undergraduate academic programmes, how these competencies influence their knowledge of the business prescriptions and whether these competencies and prescriptions are sufficient enough to generate ideas that are feasible business opportunities. Furthermore, the study investigates the extent to which entrepreneurial attitudes and student work values influence the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies, the knowledge of business prescriptions and idea generation.

For the data collection, both qualitative and quantitative interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs, University representatives and undergraduate students in order to acquire the necessary information to create an image of the contemporary situation at the University of Malta. This data was then analysed using a model that facilitates the exploration of relationships between the different variables.

The results indicated that the undergraduate academic programmes do not develop the right and/or enough entrepreneurial competencies into students to generate feasible business ideas. Moreover, the results also highlighted the effect of entrepreneurial attitudes and student work values on the student’s desire to pursue an entrepreneurial career.

Therefore, one may conclude that it would be beneficial to implement a learning approach that provides students with valuable hands-on and real-life experience to support the development of entrepreneurial competencies and the fostering of an entrepreneurial mindset.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial mindset, Entrepreneurial education, University of Malta, Undergraduate students.
Tedesco Lara  
The role of creativity in management: A comparison of two Maltese industries

The objective of the dissertation is to challenge the perception of managers who view creativity as something that is “mysterious, vague, slippery, or ephemeral” (Amabile, 1996:4). By gaining an understanding of the managerial responsibilities, the dissertation will identify areas in which creativity can be diffused within the company. The theoretical background is based on Csikszentmihalyi’s (1999) Systems Model of Creativity. The three components of the model are mapped onto areas in which creativity could potentially be diffused, namely, the manager as an individual, managerial practices, and the company components.

After gaining insight from the relevant literature, the research questions have been drawn up to centre on understanding the role of the manager and the essence of company components, both of which influence the level of creativity at work. The last research question investigates how creativity and management intertwine to benefit both the company and its employees. During the data collection phase, a total of five ICT managers, ten ICT employees, three catering managers, and ten catering employees were interviewed. Following the face-to-face, semi-structured and audio-recorded interviews, the results of the ICT industry were compared with those of the Catering industry.

The emerging themes shed light on the following areas, namely, the perception of creativity, the view of management, barriers to creativity, the working environment and communication, and managing employee creativity. After explaining the results and the relationship to the research questions and objectives of the study, the dissertation concludes with the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Creativity, Management, Systems Model of Creativity, Employee, Culture.
Leanne Vella

The relationship between competitive sports and entrepreneurship: An exploratory study

The main aim of this study is to explore the relationship between entrepreneurship and sports. In particular, the following research questions are addressed: (1) Can sports equip athletes with a unique set of qualities and skills that will be of value for entrepreneurship? And, (2) Can the techniques used in sports be utilised as effective techniques for the better running of a venture?

A review of the literature suggests that athletes and entrepreneurs share several skills and qualities, including passion, determination, mental toughness, motivation and leadership, and that there may be certain similarities between entrepreneurship and sports that warrant scholarly attention. To date, however, this relationship has not been adequately explored in the literature.

This exploratory study attempts to begin to fill that gap by means of a qualitative method of data collection and data analysis, in which 12 entrepreneurs who had a background in competitive sports – i.e., who were athletes prior to or at the time of the study – participated in semi-structured interviews.

The interviews revealed that sports is a beneficial activity for entrepreneurship. The athlete-entrepreneurs involved in this study were all highly dedicated towards their work and their sports. The key qualities elicited in the study, namely, passion, motivation, dedication, mental hardiness, risk aversion and discipline, all came across as critical characteristics, both within an entrepreneurial and sports scenario. Moreover, according to the primary and secondary data provided in this thesis, certain techniques and procedures used within a sports scenario were similarly performed within an entrepreneurial setting.

This study concludes that there is indeed a relationship between sports and entrepreneurship, but there is scope for further research in this nascent field in order to better understand how sports and entrepreneurship could benefit from each other.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Athlete, Sports.
Zammit Xavier
Analysing Facebook advertising variables through clicks

Facebook is one of the leading advertising tools in social media and everyday businesses spend millions advertising their products and services on this platform. A comprehensive review of the literature reveals that advertisers are demanding more accurate advert targeting in order to get the most value for their money and social media is the answer to this, due to its depth of data and information. Through ‘likes’ and profile information, users are submitting valuable data on their interests and preferences and through Facebook, advertisers are accurately finding their target audience and promoting their causes in a more efficient manner (Holmes et al, 2011).

The study investigates the effect that adverts for different coloured tablets have on both genders and the resultant click rate for those adverts. The literature review reveals that when a user clicks on a link or advert, there is a higher chance of selling the product through the landing page and an improved brand image, which means that clicking through an advert, is vital for advertisers.

The research looked into the five colours (red, blue, white, black and pink) and their relationship with both genders within two categories – Malta-based users and UK-based users. An advert sample was produced advertising a fan page discussing the Microsoft Surface and featured it in five colours option, the five colours referred to above.

The findings show that Maltese users are almost twice as likely to click on the Facebook advert than UK users and that Maltese women have the highest click through rate. Among the five colours (red, blue, white, black and pink), the highest click rate across both genders and countries was the Maltese women clicking on the pink-based product advert. This raises interesting questions around contemporary stereotypical association of women and pink. Among the UK users, women and pink also shows as the highest CTR rate.

Keywords: Creativity, Colour, Pink, Social media, Facebook, Advertising.