CREATIVITY AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE: A JOURNEY THROUGH BUSINESS INNOVATION THEORY AND PRACTICE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPANY GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

This contribution explores the evolution of creativity in the business context, integrating philosophical and psychological perspectives while considering business and managerial implications. Starting from classical conceptions of mimesis and poesies, the article traces a path through Kantian thought on genius and the Druckerian approach to innovation, up to contemporary theories on organizational creativity. It analyzes how creativity has evolved from being considered an innate gift to a manageable and measurable competence in companies. The contribution also examines the challenges of promoting creativity in organizations, including ethical aspects and measurement. The implications of artificial intelligence (AI) for business creativity and the possibility of teaching creative skills are discussed. The importance of creativity as a driver of economic and social value is emphasized, highlighting the need for companies to create ecosystems that promote ethical and sustainable innovation.

Keywords: Firms' Innovation, Business Creativity, Innovative Companies, Artificial Intelligence

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic and rapid evolution of the economy, where innovation is the source of progress and competition is the invisible hand that spurs markets to exceed their limits, creativity emerges as a key element that characterizes how companies' evolutionary dynamics are conceived and developed.

Innovation represents the main driver of economic development and business competitiveness. In a context characterized by rapid technological changes, market globalization, and increasing complexity of environmental and social challenges, the ability to innovate becomes not just a competitive advantage but a necessity for organizations' survival (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024). The innovative process in companies manifests through multiple dimensions: from product and service innovation to process innovation, from organizational innovation to business model innovation. But what does it truly mean to be creative in the business context? And how can we reconcile the chaos of creative inspiration with regulated and structured procedures in companies?

Innovation is not a random or spontaneous process but requires a structured and systemic approach that integrates creativity and method, vision and pragmatism, openness to change and risk management. Modern companies face the challenge of creating environments that foster innovation while maintaining the operational efficiency and stability necessary for daily operations. This delicate balance requires a deep understanding of the mechanisms that govern creative and innovative processes in organizations (Hughes et al., 2018).

The current context is characterized by a series of trends that profoundly influence how companies approach innovation. Digitalization and the advent of Industry 4.0 are redefining traditional boundaries between sectors and creating new opportunities for innovation (Jan et al., 2023). Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning offer increasingly sophisticated tools for analyzing data and generating insights, while emerging technologies like blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) open new frontiers for process and product innovation.

Simultaneously, growing awareness of environmental and social challenges is pushing companies towards sustainable innovation models. The concept of "responsible innovation" is emerging as a new paradigm that integrates ethical and sustainability considerations into the innovation process. Companies are called upon to develop solutions that not only create economic value but also contribute to social well-being and environmental protection (Torres de Oliveira et al., 2023; Anitha, 2024).

In this scenario, the role of business creativity takes on a new centrality. It is no longer just a question of generating original ideas but of developing the systemic capacity to translate these ideas into concrete innovations that create sustainable value over time. Modern business creativity is a complex process involving multiple dimensions: technological, organizational, social and cultural.

Our research is guided by three key research questions:

RQ1: Can creativity be measured?

RQ2: What impact does artificial intelligence have on creativity?

RQ3: Can creativity be taught?

This contribution addresses these questions, which are far from being mere academic curiosities but are at the center of an apparently silent revolution that influences the way companies operate, compete and grow in the local or global market.

The main purpose of this research is to investigate how creativity, besides being an intrinsic talent, can be seen as a skill that can be managed and improved within organisations, in order to understand its influence on company growth, both dimensional and cultural.

Open innovation is emerging as the dominant model, where companies collaborate with external partners, startups, universities, and research centers to accelerate innovation processes. This approach requires new networking and relationship management skills, as well as greater cultural openness toward collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Human capital remains at the center of these processes. The most innovative companies are investing significantly in developing their employees' creative competencies, creating specific training programs and implementing incentive systems that reward innovative thinking. Creative talent management becomes a key competency for organizations that want to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage (Mujtaba & Mubarik, 2022).

The measurement and evaluation of innovation represent a crucial challenge. Companies need metrics and indicators that allow them to evaluate not only innovation outputs (such as patents or new products) but also the quality of creative and innovative processes and their long-term impact on organizational performance.

This work aims to answer the research questions above, through an in-depth analysis of these topics that integrates theoretical perspectives and practical implications. This study intends to contribute to academic and professional debate on business creativity, offering useful insights for both researchers and practitioners. In an era of rapid change, understanding how to manage creativity in organizations becomes increasingly crucial for business success and for the sustainable development of the economy as a whole.

The work is structured in seven sections. Section 2 traces the historical evolution of the concept of creativity, starting from classical conceptions to contemporary theories, with particular attention to implications for the business context. Then, it explores the evolution of the concept of creativity through Kantian thought and the Druckerian approach to innovation, highlighting how these theoretical perspectives have influenced the modern understanding of business creativity, analyzes the role of creativity in the contemporary business context, examining organizational practices, managerial challenges, and emerging opportunities, and presents the methodological approach adopted. Section 4 addresses the intercultural dimension of business creativity, exploring how different cultures interpret and promote innovation in distinct ways. Section 5 focuses on aspects of measuring creativity. Section 6 examines the impact of AI and new emerging technologies on business creativity, exploring the opportunities and challenges these technologies present. Section 7 addresses the question of creativity education, analyzing whether and how creative skills can be developed and taught in the business context, and presents brief conclusions of the work.

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1. The roots of creativity: From Platonic mimesis to Schumpeterian creative destruction

Before starting a discussion on creativity, it is necessary to revisit its philosophical origins. In ancient Greece, philosophers were already interrogating the essence of the creative process. Montanari and De Molli (2020) assert that for the Latins and ancient Greeks, was attributable to a divine figure ("*δαίμων*") that, positioning itself halfway between what was divine and what was human, performed the function of intermediary between the two.

According to Plato's philosophy of ideas, creativity may be regarded as a mere reflection of a more perfect and unchangeable reality. According to Plato, the artist only replicates, through "mimesis", what already exists in an ideal realm.

Aristotle proposed the concept of "poiesis", warranting a thorough examination to comprehend its connection with contemporary notions of

creativity. In *Poetics*, Aristotle employs the term "poiesis" to denote the act of "making" or "producing", specifically with artistic and poetic creation. Nonetheless, it would be erroneous to directly link Aristotelian poiesis with contemporary notions of creation. Aristotle associates poiesis with the concept of mimesis (imitation), however, in a more profound manner than Plato's interpretation.

According to the Aristotelian perspective, the artist or poet reinterprets reality through imagination — "*φαντασια*" — enabling the perception of reality in novel ways and its representation in forms that can unveil universal truths. Halliwell (2002) clarifies that creativity involves the exploration of potential and imagination, establishing a balance between the actual and the possible.

The Aristotelian concept of mimesis offers valuable perspectives for contemporary creative thinking, especially in the context of business. A similarity exists between the artist who reinterprets reality through imagination and the entrepreneur or manager who "reimagines" the market or business operations. In both instances, there exists an aspect of re-evaluation and re-structuring that, although not inherently producing entirely novel outcomes, can result in substantial innovations. The interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy prompts us to view creativity in business not merely as the invention of entirely novel concepts but also as the capacity to perceive existing elements from a fresh perspective, reinterpreting and recombining them innovatively.

In the business context, creativity does not inherently include the invention of something entirely novel from nothing. It frequently suggests a "creative reinterpretation" of existing reality, a unique amalgamation of familiar components, or the discovery of concealed potentials within established frameworks. This process necessitates cognitive engagement that is grounded in reality yet unconstrained by it. For instance, when a corporation formulates a new business strategy, it does not invariably produce something entirely novel. Instead, it involves reinterpreting current market dynamics, innovatively recombining resources, or uncovering new opportunities within established frameworks. This process necessitates the same dynamic interaction between the actual and the potential that Halliwell (2002) recognizes in Aristotelian mimesis.

The Aristotelian approach, although different, is not entirely incompatible with Schumpeterian "creative destruction", a fundamental concept in innovation economics: "The opening up of new markets, foreign or domestic, and the organizational development from the craft shop to such concerns […] illustrate the same process of industrial mutation […] that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one. This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism" (Schumpeter, 1976, p. 83).

Schumpeter's creative destruction emphasizes how innovation often involves replacing old structures, products, or business models with new ones. This process can be seen as a radical, extreme form of reinterpreting economic reality, where the innovator does not merely recombine existing elements but creates new structures that make previous ones obsolete.

While the Aristotelian vision invites us to see creativity as a reinterpretation and recombination of the familiar, Schumpeter's theory emphasizes how this reinterpretation can be so radical as to lead to a complete restructuring of the economic landscape. Both perspectives, however, highlight the crucial role of imagination and creative vision in the innovation process.

In the modern business scenario, we can observe cases of both methodologies. Certain innovations signify imaginative reinterpretations of established frameworks, while others exemplify Schumpeter's concept of creative destruction, transforming entire industries. An illustration of innovative reimagining of established frameworks is the instance of Toyota and its Toyota Production System (TPS). Toyota did not originate automobile production but innovatively redefined established production methodologies. The TPS, established in the 1950s and 1960s, introduced principles such as "just-in-time" and "*kaizen*" (continuous improvement), redefining mass production methodologies. This approach markedly enhanced the efficiency and quality of car manufacture, without entirely dismantling the sector. Amazon, established by Jeff Bezos in 1994, has fundamentally altered the retail environment. Initially established as an online bookstore, Amazon exemplifies creative destruction, having swiftly diversified its offerings to become an "everything store" and transforming the purchasing behaviors of consumers (Stone, 2013).

2.2. The evolution of the creativity concept: Kantian genius and Druckerian entrepreneurship

Let us advance over two millennia from Plato and Aristotle to meet Immanuel Kant, who made substantial contributions to epistemology. In the *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790, Kant conveys a significant notion of genius pertinent to comprehending his perspective on creation, particularly about art.

For Kant, genius is an innate characteristic that allows the artist to produce original works.

Kant defines genius as the: "talent (natural endowment) that gives the rule to art" (Kant, 1790/2007, p. 174).

This definition is crucial because it emphasizes that genius does not simply follow existing rules but creates new rules through its work.

It is important to note, however, that Kant distinguishes between art and science. For Kant, science proceeds through learning and the methodical application of rules and principles, while art requires the originality of genius.

He writes that all that Newton has set forth in his immortal work on the Principles of Natural Philosophy may well be learned, however great a mind it took to find it all out but we cannot learn to write in a true poetic vein. The reason is that all the steps that Newton had to take from the first elements of geometry to his greatest and most profound discoveries were such that he could make intuitively evident and plain to follow, not only for himself, but for everyone else. On the other hand, no Homer or Wieland can show how his ideas, so rich at once in fantasy and in thought, enter and assemble themselves in his brain, for the good reason that he does not himself know, and so cannot teach others. In matters of science, therefore, the greatest inventor differs only in degree from

the most laborious imitator and apprentice, whereas he differs specifically from one endowed by nature for fine art (Kant, 1790/2007).

Everything that Newton has expounded in his immortal work on the principles of natural philosophy, however great a mind was required to discover it, can be learned; but one cannot learn to write inspired poetry. The reason is this: Newton could have made visible and clear to any other person all his steps, from the first elements of geometry to his great and profound discoveries; but no Homer or Wieland could show how his ideas, rich in fantasy and dense in thought, arose and combined in his head, because he himself does not know, and, therefore, cannot teach it to others. In the field of science, the greatest discoverer differs from the most labored imitator only in degree but is specifically different from one whom nature has endowed for the fine arts (Kant, 1790/2007).

In art, according to Kant, creativity manifests through the originality of genius, which produces unique and exemplary works. Artistic genius creates new rules and produces works that cannot be entirely explained through pre-existing rules. Science, on the other hand, is not the domain of individual genius but rather of the systematic application of reason and method. Creativity in science expresses itself through the ability to formulate hypotheses, construct theories, and develop methods to investigate nature, always within the bounds of reason and possible experience.

This distinction reflects Kant's broader philosophy of knowledge, where science deals with the phenomenal world (the world as it appears to us through experience), while art, while remaining in the phenomenal realm, can evoke or allude to what goes beyond sensible experience, aspiring to reach the noumenal. For Kant, while art creates new rules through individual genius, science advances through the systematic application of existing rules within a shared rational and methodological framework.

In the context of thinking about creativity in business, this Kantian distinction invites us to reflect on how different types of creativity can manifest in different business areas. We might consider, for example, how innovation in highly technical sectors may require a more "scientific" approach, based on method and rigor, while innovation in sectors such as marketing or design may benefit from a more "artistic" approach that values originality and intuition.

Innovation in highly technical sectors can still require a highly artistic approach. Consider the discontinuities produced in the concept of the automobile by Ford, the radical innovations brought to the computer sector by figures like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, and the "vision" of the "communication tool" that led to the birth of the iPhone. These innovations, especially when associated with the "aesthetic" vision of their promoters (consider the difference between Ford's product idea and that of Steve Jobs) are the result of creativity that has "artistic" characteristics and then requires technical expertise to be implemented. Similarly, the artist needs "technical" skills in colors if a painter, musical instruments if a composer or performer, materials if a sculptor, and language or metrics if a poet or prose writer.

The Kantian vision of artistic genius as an innate quality, whose creative process is not fully comprehensible or rationally explicable, has profoundly influenced Western thought. However, as Gaut (2009) notes, this romantic conception of creative genius has been progressively challenged. Gaut (2009) argues that creativity can be understood as a form of skill that can be cultivated and developed. This perspective opens the way to a less elitist and more accessible conception of creativity, particularly relevant in the modern business context.

Sternberg and Lubart (1998) further expand this vision, defining creativity as: "[…] the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)" (p. 3), proposing a conception of creativity as a dynamic interaction between the individual and their environment, clarifying that creativity emerges from the intersection of intellectual abilities, knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation, and environment. This multidimensional perspective offers a conceptual bridge between the Kantian vision of individual genius and the more systematic approach to innovation proposed by management theorists like Peter Drucker.

The transition from the Kantian conception of creativity to Peter Drucker's (1985) approach to innovation and entrepreneurship marks an important evolution, and at the same time reveals interesting parallels and developments in thinking about human productivity and originality, adapting to the business context.

Drucker (1985), writing in a modern business context, seems to integrate the two previously described Kantian aspects into a more holistic vision of business innovation. On one hand, he recognizes the importance of creativity in problem-solving and addressing changes and believes that creativity is essential for formulating effective solutions, encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, and learning from failures. This vision resonates with the Kantian approach to art, where originality and intuition play a crucial role.

On the other hand, Drucker (2007) also emphasizes the need for a systematic and rational approach to innovation, which recalls the Kantian approach to science. He emphasizes that organizational change requires a process of methodical improvement and adaptation, and asserts that leaders must match innovative ideas with organizational strategy (Drucker, 2007). This process requires a rational and systematic approach, similar to the methodical application of reason that Kant associates with science. Drucker, therefore, integrates these two aspects, arguing that effective innovation requires both creativity and method.

For Drucker (1985), innovation is: "[…] the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service. It is capable of being presented as a discipline, capable of being learned, capable of being practiced. Entrepreneurs need to search purposefully for the sources of innovation, the changes and their symptoms that indicate opportunities for successful innovation. And they need to know and to apply the principles of successful innovation" (p. 19).

This definition emphasizes the role of innovation both as a means through which the entrepreneurs "exploit change as an opportunity for a different business" and as a "tool" or "discipline […] that can be learned, that can be practiced" (Drucker, 1985, p. 19), thus combining creative intuition with the methodical application.

In this way, Drucker (2007) seems to overcome the sharp Kantian distinction between art and science, proposing a model of business innovation that integrates elements of both. Creativity is essential for generating innovative ideas but these must then be subjected to a process of rational evaluation and adaptation to be effectively implemented in the organization. Drucker emphasizes that this transition is not simple or immediate, as it requires a process of "piloting" (Drucker, 2007) before full implementation, and an organizational culture that supports and values change.

The evolution of the concept of creativity has profound implications for modern management and reflects the transition from a romantic vision of creativity as an attribute of a select few to a conception of innovation as an essential, accessible, and manageable business practice. Drucker (2007) democratizes creativity, seeing it not as the exclusive domain of a few geniuses but as a capability that can be systematically cultivated and managed. This has led to a new understanding of how creativity can be nurtured and oriented toward generating economic and social value in the business context.

This vision has paved the way for a more structured approach to business creativity, where inspiration is nurtured, channeled, and even measured.

2.3. Creativity and companies in the contemporary context

Following the evolutionary process traced, Amabile and Pratt (2016) proposed a dynamic model of creativity and innovation in organizations, emphasizing the importance of interaction between individuals, teams, and the organizational environment in promoting creativity. This model invites us to consider creativity not as a static trait but as a dynamic process that can be influenced and cultivated through appropriate managerial practices.

Hughes et al. (2018) conducted a critical review of the literature on leadership, creativity, and innovation. The authors highlight how leaders can foster creativity through various mechanisms, including creating a climate that supports innovation and valuing diverse employee perspectives. Thus, business creativity is not just a matter of processes or structures but also of organizational culture and values promoted by leadership.

It is important to consider Amabile's (1998) analysis, according to which: "Creativity is undermined unintentionally every day in work environments that were established — for entirely good reasons — to maximize business imperatives such as coordination, productivity, and control […] Managers in successful, creative organizations rarely offer specific extrinsic rewards for particular outcomes. However, they freely and generously recognize creative work by individuals and teams — often before the ultimate commercial impact of those efforts is known. By contrast, managers who kill creativity do so either by failing to acknowledge innovative efforts or by greeting them with skepticism" (para. 1, 38).

The contribution is of great interest, defining the concrete value of creative intent to the extent that organizations can promote, or even hinder creativity.

Imagine a technology company that wants to develop the next revolutionary smartphone. Following Amabile's (1998) model, having brilliant engineers (domain competencies) won't be enough; it will be necessary to provide them with tools and techniques to think outside the box (creative processes) and, most importantly, create an environment where they feel intrinsically motivated to innovate. This could translate into policies like Google's famous "20% time", where employees are encouraged to dedicate a portion of their working hours to innovative personal projects.

Creativity in business is not limited to reinterpreting or designing new products/services or production processes. It penetrates every aspect of the organization, from strategy to finance, from marketing to human resources. Take business strategy, for example. The concept of "blue ocean strategy", introduced by Kim and Mauborgne (2005), is a brilliant example of how creative thinking can revolutionize entire sectors. The authors maintain that tomorrow's leading companies will succeed not by battling competitors (in a bloody "red ocean" of rivals fighting in a shrinking profit pool) but by creating "blue oceans" of uncontested market space ripe for growth (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

Instead of competing in saturated markets, namely the "red oceans" tinted with the blood of fierce competition, companies are encouraged to create new market spaces, namely the "blue oceans", where competition is irrelevant. This approach requires a deep re-imagination of what a company does and how it does it.

A classic example is *Cirque du Soleil*, which has reinvented the concept of circus, blending elements of theater, dance, and music into a show that attracts a completely different audience compared to a traditional circus. This was not the result of conventional market analysis but of a creative act that redefined the boundaries of an entire sector.

Creativity plays a fundamental role in organizational resilience, contributing to companies' ability to adapt to market changes. Creative organizations are better equipped to face unforeseen challenges thanks to their flexibility in thinking. In terms of resilience at an organizational level context, Bhamra et al. (2011) also highlight that "no organisation can retain a competitive position and survive disruptions as an independent entity" (p. 5375).

And what about creativity in seemingly arid areas like accounting and finance? At first glance, it might seem an oxymoron to talk about "creative accounting", a term often associated with ethically questionable practices. However, even in these fields, innovative thinking is playing a crucial role. With the advent of new technologies like blockchain and AI, scholars and professionals are reinventing how financial information is acquired, recorded, analyzed, and communicated.

Davila and Ditillo (2017) explore the role of management control systems in promoting innovation in creative organizations, showing how control systems, traditionally seen as inhibitors of creativity, can actually promote it if properly designed and implemented. This view is supported by the work of Cools et al. (2017), who in their study examine how different types of budgetary controls can stimulate different forms of creativity. These studies challenge the conventional notion that creativity flourishes only in the absence of structures and controls, suggesting instead a different approach to managing creativity in organizations.

An interesting topic concerns neuropsychological aspects in business creative processes. Neuroscience offers important insights into understanding creative

processes within organizations. Recent studies have shown how certain environmental stimuli can activate specific brain areas associated with creativity (Dietrich & Kanso, 2010). This leads to interesting implications for companies, in order to design and create optimal workspaces to stimulate innovation.

Stress can have significant negative effects on individuals' creative capacity. A stressful work environment can limit the capacity for divergent thinking necessary to generate innovative ideas. In this regard, Eisenberger et al. (1990) note "a positive relationship of employees' perception of being valued and cared about by the organization with (a) conscientiousness in carrying out conventional job responsibilities, (b) expressed affective and calculative involvements in the organization, and (c) innovation on behalf of the organization in the absence of anticipated direct reward or personal recognition" (p. 51). It is therefore fundamental that companies promote wellness policies to maintain high creative productivity.

The relationship between "emotional intelligence" and creative capabilities is also crucial in the business context. People with high emotional intelligence tend to be more open to new ideas and more capable of collaborating effectively with others (Goleman, 1995), essential elements for a prosperous creative environment.

However, talking about creativity in business inevitably raises ethical questions. Where do we draw the line between responsible innovation and questionable practices? How do we balance the drive for originality with the need for regulatory compliance? These questions are particularly relevant in an era where companies are increasingly scrutinized not only for their financial results but also for their social and environmental impact.

The concept of "responsible innovation" is emerging as a possible answer to these challenges. Stilgoe et al. (2013) provide "a broader definition": "Responsible innovation means taking care of the future through collective stewardship of science and innovation in the present" (p. 1570), proposing four dimensions of responsible innovation: anticipation, reflexivity, inclusion and responsiveness.

This approach seeks to align creativity and innovation with ethical values and social needs. It's not just about creating new products or services but doing so in a way that contributes positively to society. Take the example of companies that are developing technologies for removing plastic from oceans or for clean energy production. Here, creativity is not only at the service of profit but becomes a tool for addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time.

The growing need for sustainable innovation should also be considered, which is redefining creative processes within companies. Companies must integrate sustainability into their strategies to remain competitive (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Organizations are called upon to develop solutions that not only meet market needs but are also environmentally friendly. This approach requires a new mindset that integrates sustainability and creativity at every stage of the production process.

The concept of "circular creativity" fits perfectly into the circular economy. The circular economy promotes a business model that reduces waste through reuse (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). Companies must develop products and services that can be easily repaired or reused, thus stimulating a form of creativity that values sustainability.

Frugal innovation moreover represents a creative approach that focuses on optimizing available resources to create effective and economical solutions. This method is particularly useful in emerging economies with a large potential consumer base (Prahalad & Hart, 2002) where resources are limited but human ingenuity is abundant. Companies can take advantage of this approach to develop innovative products at contained costs.

Given the aforementioned considerations, implementing creativity throughout the entire organization is a formidable challenge. It necessitates a fundamental reevaluation of organizational frameworks, managerial methodologies, and performance assessment methods. Conventional hierarchical companies, characterized by inflexible channels of command, frequently inhibit innovation. Conversely, firms that prioritize creativity are adopting more flexible and organic architectures.

Spotify has adopted an organizational framework comprising "squads", "tribes", and "guilds", facilitating enhanced autonomy and cross-collaboration. This method not only cultivates creativity but also accelerates the testing and implementation of ideas. This illustrates how organizational structure can serve as a creative endeavor aimed at fostering innovation.

It should also be highlighted that significant "disruptive" innovations can lead to the manifestation of adverse events; therefore, it is crucial that companies establish clear guidelines on how to manage such risks while pursuing bold innovative strategies. In this regard, Christensen et al. (2015) point out that managers who don't understand the nuances of disruptive innovation theory or don't correctly apply its principles risk making the wrong strategic choices. Among the most common mistakes: not seeing disruptive innovation as a gradual process (which can lead dominant companies in a market to ignore significant threats) and blindly accepting the mantra "Disrupt or be disrupted" (which can lead dominant players to jeopardize their core business in an attempt to defend against revolutionary competitors).

The relationship between creativity and risk management is complex; an innovative mindset can help organizations identify potential risks before they become significant problems (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001). Companies must encourage a proactive approach to risk management through creative practices.

Even in the case of adverse events that may decline into a state of crisis, whether incipient or severe and widespread, innovation becomes even more crucial. Companies that manage to harness their creative capacity can find new opportunities even in difficult situations (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003), transforming challenges into competitive advantages.

2.4. Methodological approach

The methodological approach adopted in this contribution is exploratory in nature (Yin, 1993), aimed at investigating the dynamics of creativity in the business context through an interdisciplinary lens. It suggests combining different viewpoints, including management, psychological, and philosophical ones, in order to provide a more thorough comprehension of the creative process.

3. GLOBALIZATION AND THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION OF BUSINESS CREATIVITY

Business creativity is influenced by different cultures, which interpret and promote innovation in distinct ways. In many Western cultures, creativity is often seen as an individual act, whereas innovation is the result of original and bold thoughts. In contrast, in Eastern cultures, creativity can be considered a collective process, where the group plays a crucial role in generating ideas and solutions. Collectivist cultures tend to emphasize harmony and cooperation, essential elements for the creative process (Hofstede, 2001). In Japan, the concept of "*kaizen*" emphasizes continuous improvement through the contribution of all organization members, reflecting a more communitarian vision of creativity.

Globalization has amplified the interaction between different business creative practices. Companies now operate in multicultural contexts, where ideas can mix and enrich each other. If, as emphasized by Florida (2002), human creativity is the ultimate economic resource", cultural interactions can lead to richer and more diversified innovations, as well as challenges related to managing cultural differences and the need to adapt creative strategies to various contexts (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Adler, 2002).

The differences between Eastern and Western approaches to organizational creativity are also evident in problem-solving methodologies. While Western companies tend to privilege individualism and competition, Eastern ones may emphasize cooperation and harmony. An interesting research contribution on the roots of different thinking between Eastern and Western cultures is provided by Nisbett (2003). These differences influence not only how ideas are generated but also how they are implemented and evaluated within organizations.

4. MEASURING CREATIVITY

Another topic of interest concerns measuring the success of creative efforts. Here we enter the certainly not simple territory of measuring creativity. Developing a detailed framework for measuring business creativity is essential to understanding its impact on organizational performance. Measuring creativity requires qualitative and quantitative indicators that evaluate both final results and the creative process (Amabile, 1996). Traditionally, companies have used metrics such as the number of patents filed or the success rate of new products. However, these indicators capture only part of the bigger picture. The real challenge is measuring not only creative outputs but also the creative process itself and its long-term impact on the organization.

Some companies are experimenting with more holistic approaches. For example, 3M, known for innovative products like Post-it, uses the New Product Vitality Index, which measures the percentage of revenue derived from products introduced in the last five years. This index not only measures creative output but also incentivizes a constant flow of innovation, especially among employees who can be shown the advantages of creative participation in the company's development, through sharing the economic benefits achieved by the enterprise with innovation promoters. This creates an emulative effect among workers who recognize the value given by the company to making creativity available.

In a recent study, Hennessey and Amabile (2010) have proposed a systemic approach to creativity, suggesting: "Creativity arises through a system of interrelated forces operating at multiple levels, often requiring interdisciplinary investigation" (p. 571).

It follows that to concretely measure business creativity, we must consider not only tangible results but also the processes, culture, and ecosystem that produce them.

It is necessary to go beyond traditional key performance indicators (KPIs), both general and specific to each production sector, to evaluate creative performance. Indicators such as the number of ideas generated, the rate of innovation implementation, and employee feedback can provide a more complete view of the organization's creative health. It is also important to identify within an organization people capable of performing specific roles dedicated to promoting innovation, while offering an effective response to "detractors". In this regard, Kelley and Littman (2005) identify specific roles, including the "cross-pollinator" who mixes and matches ideas, people, and technologies to create new ideas that can drive growth; and the "hurdler", who immediately looks for ways to overcome the limits and challenges of each situation.

We must also consider the evaluation of creativity's long-term impact. This requires innovative methods that consider not only immediate results but also lasting effects on the market and corporate culture. Tools such as longitudinal surveys or trend analysis can help track these changes over time. In this regard, Fleming and Sorenson (2001) have developed a model of analysis of patent citation, to understand the flow of knowledge, whether simple or complex, in the short and long term.

5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE ROLE OF EMERGING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Looking to the future, the intersection between human creativity and AI promises to open new horizons. AI will not replace human creativity but could amplify it in ways we cannot yet fully imagine. We might see "co-creativity" systems emerge, where human intuition and machine computing power collaborate to generate innovative ideas and solutions. In this regard, Boden (2016) explores the implications of AI for human creativity, suggesting that AI can actually enhance human creativity rather than replace it.

As Daugherty and Wilson (2018) observe AI isn't replacing humans but creating a new human-machine partnership that plays to the strengths of both, affirming a future in which business creativity will increasingly be characterized by collaboration between human and AI.

With the increase in co-creation between companies and consumers or between different stakeholders, intellectual property protection becomes increasingly complex. From a regulatory perspective, the law must adapt to technological changes in new hybrid economy scenarios (Lessig, 2008). It is fundamental to develop clear regulations that protect innovators' rights without hindering the collaboration necessary for innovation.

The use of AI in creative processes raises important ethical questions regarding the authenticity of works created by algorithms versus those

generated by humans. Companies must face these ethical challenges with transparency and responsibility, taking care of a careful evaluation of "how artificial intelligence functions as a structure of power that combines infrastructure, capital and labor" (Crawford, 2021, p. 18).

Large language models (LLMs) are emerging as powerful tools in the business creative process. These models can generate ideas and suggest solutions, supporting teams in the brainstorming phase and even writing content (Bender et al., 2021). However, it is fundamental to consider the ethical impact of using such technologies, including the intellectual property question. Furthermore, Bender et al. (2021) highlight "the possible risks associated […] and what paths are available for mitigating those risks" (p. 610) providing "recommendations including weighing the environmental and financial costs first, investing resources into curating and carefully documenting datasets rather than ingesting everything on the web, carrying out pre-development exercises evaluating how the planned approach fits into research and development goals and supports stakeholder values, and encouraging research directions beyond ever larger language models" (p. 619).

The metaverse and augmented reality offer unprecedented opportunities for immersive interactions that can stimulate creativity and are revolutionizing how companies conceive creativity. These tools and technologies offer new platforms for interaction and collaboration, enabling teams to work together in immersive virtual environments. This not only stimulates individual creativity but also promotes a more collaborative approach to innovation.

Quantum computing also offers unprecedented opportunities to explore new creative horizons. According to an article by Arute et al. (2019), and is capable of revolutionizing sectors such as scientific research and product development, enabling complex simulations that exceed the capabilities of traditional computers. Companies that adopt these emerging technologies could gain a significant competitive advantage in the global landscape.

Finally, the integration of human creativity with autonomous systems represents an interesting frontier for companies. The synergy between humans and machines can lead to unprecedented innovative results (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014), while automated systems can handle repetitive tasks or analyze large volumes of data, humans remain essential for creative intuition and strategic vision.

6. EDUCATION IN CREATIVITY: AN OXYMORON?

Finally, can creativity be taught? The question is debated among researchers and professionals. While some argue that creativity is an innate trait, a growing body of research suggests that creative abilities can be developed and improved through education and practice.

Scott et al. (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of 70 studies, concluding that creativity training programs can actually improve creative performance. These programs are particularly effective when they focus on developing cognitive abilities and identifying heuristic principles for creative problem-solving, using practical exercises based on realistic rather than abstract tasks.

As Amabile and Pratt (2016) emphasize, teaching creativity is not limited to acquiring specific techniques. It is crucial to create an environment that favors divergent thinking and experimentation. This implies cultivating a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006), where errors are seen as learning opportunities rather than failures.

In the business context, innovative methodologies for teaching creativity are fundamental for developing future competencies in employees. Programs like IDEO's "Design Thinking" or experiential learning can stimulate critical and creative thinking in teams (Brown, 2008, 2009). These methods provide a framework for innovation that can be systematically learned and applied. Indeed, the myth of innovation must be overcome, according to which brilliant ideas emerge fully packaged from the minds of geniuses. The reality is that most innovations come from a rigorous process of analysis and deepening through which great insights are identified and developed before being realized as new offerings and capabilities.

Mentoring plays a key role in developing employees' creative capabilities. Mentors can provide practical and emotional support, encouraging mentees to explore new ideas and face challenges creatively, particularly from a network perspective (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

Moreover, integrating creativity into management development programs is essential for training leaders capable of guiding innovative processes within their organizations, with particular emphasis on the role of "confidence" (Kanter, 2006). Programs should emphasize not only technical skills but also the relational competencies necessary to promote a creative environment.

However, it's important to recognize that teaching creativity doesn't guarantee uniform results. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) argues that creativity emerges from the interaction between individual, domain, and field. Therefore, while creative techniques can be taught, their effectiveness will also depend on the context in which they are applied and the individual characteristics of the learner.

7. CONCLUSION

Research on creativity in companies shows us a rich and continuously evolving field.

The main purpose of this research was to investigate how creativity, besides being an intrinsic talent, can be seen as a skill that can be managed and improved within organizations in order to understand its influence on company growth, both dimensional and cultural.

In order to understand creativity as an act of reinterpreting reality, the first analysis carried out in this work was of the historical roots of the concept, with an in-depth study of the theories of Plato and Aristotle. It then examines how ideas have changed since Kant introduced the idea of "genius", highlighting the value of originality in art and drawing a distinction between artistic and scientific inventiveness.

Additionally, this study made use of modern theories of organizational creativity, like those put out by Sternberg and Lubart (1998), who characterize creativity as a dynamic interplay between personal aptitudes and contextual factors.

The analytical approach entailed a critical examination of business innovation processes, highlighting the significance of fostering creativity inside organizations. This specifically examines the ramifications of Schumpeter's (1976) "creative destruction", emphasizing how innovation can precipitate profound transformations in established economic frameworks.

It also addressed ethical considerations and practices related to the assessment of creativity within the business setting, acknowledging the necessity of establishing ecosystems that promote sustainable and responsible innovation.

From the fundamental contributions of Schumpeter (1976) and Drucker (1985), through the strategic insights of Kim and Mauborgne (2005), to the more recent explorations of the intersection between creativity, ethics, and technology, a very articulated picture emerges. Creativity is no longer seen as a mysterious talent possessed by few but as a capability that can be cultivated, measured, and managed strategically. At the same time, research reminds us that creativity flourishes in environments that balance structure and flexibility, autonomy and control, innovation and adaptations.

For modern organizations, the challenge is not only to recognize the importance of creativity but to create ecosystems where it can flourish in an ethical and sustainable way. The real test of business creativity will be its ability to address the great challenges of our time: climate change, inequality, and digital transformation. At the company level, a rethinking of organizational structures, managerial practices, and success metrics is required. Above all, a vision of creativity is required not as an end in itself but as a means to create significant economic, social, and environmental value. True innovation today is indeed not measured only in terms of profits but also in terms of positive social impact. In this sense, creativity in business has the potential to be not only an engine of economic growth but also a catalyst for progress.

As we venture into an uncertain future, one thing is clear: the ability to think creatively, to see connections where others see only chaos, and to imagine possibilities where others see limits, will be the true "currency" of companies' evolutionary process. Organizations that succeed in cultivating this capability, balancing it with analytical rigor and responsible ethics, will not only survive but thrive, driving innovation and shaping the future of the global economy.

The evolution of the concept of creativity has profound implications for modern management and reflects the transition from a romantic vision of creativity as an attribute of a select few to a conception of innovation as an essential, accessible, and manageable business practice. Drucker (2007) democratizes creativity, seeing it not as the exclusive domain of a few geniuses but as a capability that can be systematically cultivated and managed. This has led to a new understanding of how creativity can be nurtured and oriented toward generating economic and social value in the business context.

Given the aforementioned considerations, implementing creativity throughout the entire organization is a formidable challenge. It necessitates a fundamental reevaluation of organizational frameworks, managerial methodologies, and performance assessment methods. Conventional hierarchical companies, characterized by inflexible channels of command, frequently inhibit innovation. Conversely, firms that prioritize creativity are adopting more flexible and organic architectures.

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