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The role of creativity and culture for transformational management in a changing world

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ABSTRACT

The last two decades have witnessed multiple kinds of global disruption: technological, environmental and health-related, to name a few. This special issue is dedicated to addressing the growing utility of creativity and cultural concepts in businesses, exploring how the multidimensional role of creativity and culture in transformational management might help overcome significant disruptions. The issue presents multiple methodologies, including comprehensive, structured literature review studies, conceptual frameworks, and quantitative studies across various business sectors, including retailing, entertainment, and advertising. The selected articles in this issue focus on consumer behavior, organizational psychology, engagement, and marketing theories. Whereas many previous studies and compilations on the subject focus on developed countries, this special issue includes the perspective of emerging countries, making it diverse, intersectional, and comprehensive. The theoretical and practical significance of this special issue is oriented towards identifying, achieving, and managing critical concerns so that firms survive and succeed.

Development of the Special Issue

Historically, societies have risen against global disruptions by being proactive, innovative, ingenious, insightful, and courageous to rebuild, capitalizing on existing social and human capital (Izumi, Shaw, Djalante, Ishiwatari, & Komino, 2019; Shaw, 2020). Though industries are employing a new set of strategies to redefine the contours of their business, especially with the introduction of digitally enabled and design-driven approaches (Bellini, Era, & Verganti, 2012; Colovic & Williams, 2020), engaging with the consumer context summons the need for both a sharp understanding and appreciation for creativity, as well as the ability to decode culture itself, in order to adapt to new-age infused disruption (Henry, 1976; Watts, Steele, & Den Hartog, 2020).

The 21st century is equivalent to the period in the 20th century that was characterized by profound transformations in cultural self-definition and the proliferation of creativity not only in art and music but also in philosophy, politics and business. This Special Issue is inspired by the 7th International Communication Management Online Conference (ICMC 2021) on the broad theme "Creativity & Culture for Management in a Changing World," presented by MICA – The School of Ideas and the Moody College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin. Through ICMC 2021, the *Journal of Business Research* invited voices, papers, practices, and projects of significance that address the symbiotic relationship between creative thinking and cultural business and enterprise strategy in these volatile, uncertain and even calamitous times. This Special Issue highlights the cultural and creative industries – those at the crossroads of arts, culture, design, business and technology – to better understand how these can help shape and inform newer narratives in a changing world (Casakin & Levy, 2020)—and crucially, understand how cultural and creative ideas are needed to renew businesses, and enterprises. Most importantly, the objective of this special issue was to empower stakeholders and contribute to the larger ecosystem, to transform society (Phillipson, Lowe, Proctor, & Ruto, 2012; Yong, Mannucci, & Lander, 2020).

The following list of topics was suggested to address the theme of this special issue: Creative Learning, Cultural Contexts for Consumers, Strategy & Leadership, Content Creation, Marketing and Communication, Design Thinking & Innovation Management, New Age Technologies, Creative and Innovative Leadership in Diverse and Inclusive Contexts, Justice, sustainability and creative productivity, Multi-Disciplinary & Cross-Sectoral Studies, Managing & Marketing Creative Talent, Entrepreneurship in a Creative Environment, Economics & Finance in a Creative and Innovative Culture. The call resulted in a highly competitive process, and we are happy to feature nine studies on the conceptualization of innovation, creativity, micro and macro environments, marketing, and empirical studies on how creativity and culture transform and bring innovative practice into firms. Taken together, these articles forge a strong connection to theory and promote the transfer of research results to real-world management practices.

The first article, by Mouzas (2022) features empirical research examining what drives business transformation in manufacturer-retailer networks. The authors highlight three phases of business transformation, i.e., discontinuities, trials, and roll-outs. In every phase, one of seven interfaces innovates and transforms: research and development, new markets, private labels, consumer and shopper insights, efficient consumer responses, digital supply chain, and circular economy play an important role. Taking the cues from marketplace evidence and interviews, the study analyzes second-order concepts of business

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transformation, i.e., entitlements and interactions and, in turn, focuses on a new pragmatic approach to finding solutions for business model (BM) problems. The authors show that business transformation is pursued through interaction processes within a multiplicity of entitlements. Their contribution delivers a theoretical foundation of what drives business transformation, provides in-depth empirical insights into the context of manufacturer-retailer networks and suggests directions for future research.

Creativity is an essential part of the process of innovation. Farzaneh, Wilden, Afshari, and Mehralian (2022) develop a framework on innovation ambidexterity to investigate the joint effects of intellectual capital, dynamic capabilities, and innovation orientation on innovation ambidexterity. The article categorizes intellectual capital into three components: human, structural, and relational. The study measures two second-order factor constructs of innovation ambidexterity, i.e., exploratory and exploitative innovation. This study contributes to the literature on intellectual capital and innovation ambidexterity by empirically assessing time-lagged, multi-source data from the pharmaceutical industry. It offers managers insights on how to align their knowledge practices to develop dynamic capabilities when pursuing innovation ambidexterity.

Novel situations require novel concepts. The study by Gasparin, Quinn, Green, Saren, and Conway (2022) does precisely this, proposing the evocative term slow storytelling to construct and articulate value propositions bor Business Model Innivoation. Their study is conducted in multiple phases and underscores that the approach and process to introducing business model innovation should be novel to be sustainable. The slow storytelling process promises an enhanced value by ensuring cultural and emotional engagement. The rigorous methodology of the study takes an emerging market perspective in craft microenterprises, using scoping, ethnography, and online surveys with formative evaluation. The study provides the framework and method to facilitate the business articulating value proposition for stakeholders.

Marketing needs creativity. Likewise, creative businesses need marketing. Rubin, Mohr, and Kumar (2022) contribution to this issue discusses the audience engagement concept in the domain of film business. The authors conceptualize an audience engagement construct and present a conceptual model inclusive of critical factors related to the firm, channel, and marketing that affect audience engagement. They also propose macro factors that moderate the relationship between the aforementioned factors. The study defines audience engagement as a psychological state that relates to the quality of the connection that audiences have with films and develop a model that defines the drivers of audience engagement accounting. Their research intends to inform increasingly complex production, marketing, and distribution decisions within the film industry, provide directions for future research, and extend the engagement construct.

Along with customers, employees also expect to be empowered in the workplace. The article by Zarei, Supphellen, and Bagozzi (2022) highlights the concept of servant leadership (SL) in relation to marketing. The authors conducted a novel systematic literature review of the effects of SLon marketing outcomes, extracting publications in marketing-indexed journals over the past 52 years. They suggest that SL is more conducive to creativity in marketing organizations than other common leadership styles. Following their review, they propose a conceptual model for future research on SL effects on marketer creativity. The model considers 16 studies that establish the outcome categorized into three dimensions: servanthood, empowerment, and ethical behavior. Furthermore, the study compiles several variables as mediators and moderators of servant leadership. Such leadership helped firms smoothly adopt digital transitions during the pandemic, and enabled business transformations.

Shukla, Singh, and Wang (2022) contribution to the special issue explores another dimension of creativity in the marketing domain, i.e., the role of creative packaging in consumer decision-making. The article employs experimental design methodology and examines how the dimensions of packaging design creativity, such as divergence and relevance, influence the customer decision process, persuasion, and response measures. The authors show that creativity through divergence allows customers to relate to marketing messages, affecting the purchase intention. Furthermore, the study introduces the concept of relevance, which is critical in devising a communication strategy that can help managers reach out to potential customers. The study provides new insights and implications for retailers, brand managers, and packaging designers to understand rapidly shifting patterns of customer decision-making.

Jain et al. (2022) recognize the primary cultural enablers and inhibitors for adopting collaborative fashion consumption. They utilize a systematic literature review (SLR) method to enable identification, selection, critical assessment, and synthesis of the relevant studies on the rental phenomenon of fashion consumption. Additionally, the study considers different formats (online versus offline) and users' experiences with fashion renting and identifies the role of personality characteristics in adopting it by expanding the demographic, geographic, and cultural scope. The research includes managerial implications such as the importance of value co-creation by consumers, the challenge of illegal renting behavior, and potential brand dilution. The study suggests marketing strategies for luxury fashion renting, targeting young consumers to design and develop a sustainable business model.

Next, the article by Tripathi, Bansal, and Bansal (2022) investigates how socio-cultural changes and gender stereotyping affect the creative aspects of advertisements. The study theorizes that major socio-cultural changes result from improved educational standards and economic development, ultimately improving the status of women in society. They analyze television-based advertisements from the past 20 years across five product categories in an emerging economy. The robust selection of advertisements provides comprehensive coverage of gender-centric products. In addition, the research uncovers interesting insights regarding women's images in advertisements. The study applies self-congruence theory to understand reactions to the selected advertisements. The article seeks to further explore gender and advertising, especially regarding portrayal.

Next, the article by Roy and Mohapatra (2022) explores the culture–creativity–innovation triad in the handicraft industry using an interpretive approach and contributes to the role of culture in handicrafts. The research finds support for cultural embeddedness in influencing the trajectory of innovation in the handicraft industry. The focus group discussions (total $n = 37$) were adopted with the Pattachitra artisans, Bamboo artisans, and Talpatra artisans from rural India, supported by documents, photographs, videos, and observers' notes. The study explores the role of cultural embeddedness in the triadic relationship between culture-creativity-innovation and explains the role of cultural clustering as a moderator between creativity and innovation. The authors suggest three components of creativity, i.e., domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivation. The study has multiple implications for practitioners and policymakers, who can contribute through digital and financial inclusion, training, and policy reforms for artisans. Such practices will conserve handicrafts as a sustainable cultural heritage and enhance handicraft marketability.

Organizational recruitment has become feasible and effective through professional social media platforms, providing a wide range of career opportunities and talent sourcing due to its broader reach. The article by Ruparel, Bhardwaj, Seth, and Choubisa (2022) proposes to synthesize prior literature and critically review existing studies on Professional Social Media Platforms (PSMP) used by various stakeholders such as contemporary organizations, recruiters, students, employees, hiring managers, and strategic decision-makers. The impact of PSMP on organizational and career development outcomes can help develop competent and profitable management strategies for organizational effectiveness and business proliferation. A content analysis of $n = 51$ studies was done to identify emergent themes in PSMP use. The study findings were integrated into the BACD framework, and Scopus and Web

of Science databases were used for SLR analysis. The study proposes to extend its scope towards using PSMPs in cross-sectoral and cross-national research. Managers can also consider using AI and machine learning for screening prospective candidates through PSMPs.

Finally, the contribution by Das, Patel, Sharma, and Shukla (2022) discusses future directions for marketing scholars and presents a literature review of creativity in marketing. The authors present a comprehensive bibliometric academic review of the intellectual structure of creativity in marketing (CiM) using citation, keyword, and authorship analyses of the corpus comprising $n = 375$ articles from 1973 to 2021. The article highlights critical pointers for future research by systematically categorizing research. Through co-authorship network analysis, the authors reveal the lack of a robust authorship network. With structural topic modelling analysis, they extract ten key themes of CiM research. Further, they identify various dimensions of creativity, i.e., person-based, process-based, product-based, and press-based, explaining the nuances of CiM. The article explores the concept of CiM from different contexts through the lens of creativity characteristics and identifies significant research gaps.

Taken together, these contributions discuss critical aspects of creativity, including concepts and methodologies that provide the knowledge required to handle the complexities of the contemporary era. Creativity research needs to embrace socio-cultural change; it must be collaborative, engage deeply and in new ways with audiences, and be grounded in increasingly complex patterns of consumer decision-making. Moreover, in terms of methodologies, it needs to harness the potential of storytelling, requires the ethical stance of servant leadership and the strategic stance of ambidexterity; this means it has to be open to trial and error. The creativity and culture studies in this volume respond to current complexities and disruptions and help a range of industries flourish in the process. We believe that they will profoundly shape the direction of future research.

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