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GENERAL PRESENTATION

RE-EXAMINING CREATIVITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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It is common knowledge now that entrepreneurship plays an important role in any society because it generates economic benefits that are often larger than the private benefits reaped by the entrepreneurs themselves (van Praag, Versloot, 2007). Entrepreneurship creates jobs, enhances workforce dynamics, increases utility, and fosters productivity and socio-economic development (Ghio *et al.*, 2015).

In studying this phenomenon, researchers find strong connections between creativity and entrepreneurship (Gilad, 1984). Recently, the United Nations acknowledged the emergence of a new paradigm in which creativity and innovation are the main drivers of the world economy (UNCTAD, 2010; Araya, Peters, 2010). More and more, firms have recognized that creativity plays an important role in the making or reshaping of successful business models. Creativity enables organizations to build competitive advantages and achieve successful performance (Amabile, 1996; Anderson *et al.*, 2014). It allows organisations to take advantage of opportunities resulting from

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changing environmental conditions (Shalley *et al.*, 2004). It can provide the basis for innovation and business growth, as well as impacting positively on society generally (Bilton, 2007; Burger-Helmchen, 2012). And the list goes on.

It is not surprising that creativity in entrepreneurship has been discussed extensively in the related literature. Since future advancement of the field depends on both existing scholarship and new knowledge generated by contemporary contributors, it is necessary to take stock of the contributions to date. This paper reviews the literature related to development of the literature on creativity in entrepreneurship field to suggest key directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW STRATEGY

To cover the literature on creativity in entrepreneurship as exhaustively as possible, we used several different search strategies. First, we looked in databases (ABI/Inform Complete, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, and Pro-Quest Dissertation & Theses database, and Google Scholar) to identify studies on the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurship. Then we carried out searches within the most important journals in entrepreneurship (e.g. *Journal of Business Venturing*; *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*), management (e.g. *Academy of Management Journal; Administrative Science Quarterly*), strategy (e.g. *Strategic Management Journal*; *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*), creativity and innovation management (e.g. *Research Policy*; *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Creativity Research Journal*; *Creativity and Innovation Management*), and applied psychology (e.g. *Journal of Applied Psychology*; *Journal of Organizational Behavior*). The keywords used in our search are *creativity*, *creativeness*, *entrepreneurship*, *entrepreneurs*, *entrepreneurial opportunity*, *performance*, *business*. To trace the development of the literature, we did not limit the date.

This search resulted in 400 documents for preliminary analysis. A close review of their abstracts allowed us to identify 150 articles that covered issues related to creativity in entrepreneurship. Reading these articles lead us to focus on 77 documents which treat creativity in entrepreneurship as the main focus. We coded these documents in Microsoft Excel by (a)

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author, (b) date of publication, (c) publication type, (d) publisher, (e) key words provided by the authors, (f) abstract, (g) methodology, and (h) main results.

To provide a visual portrait of the qualitative data, we ran the abstracts of these 77 selected documents through the Wordle online system (http://www.wordle.net). In this word-cloud method, each word is treated as a unit of analysis and then is assessed for its frequency in the text. Next, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of this dataset to investigate possible themes.

RESULTS

Figure 1 – Wordle cloud generated from the 77 articles reviewed

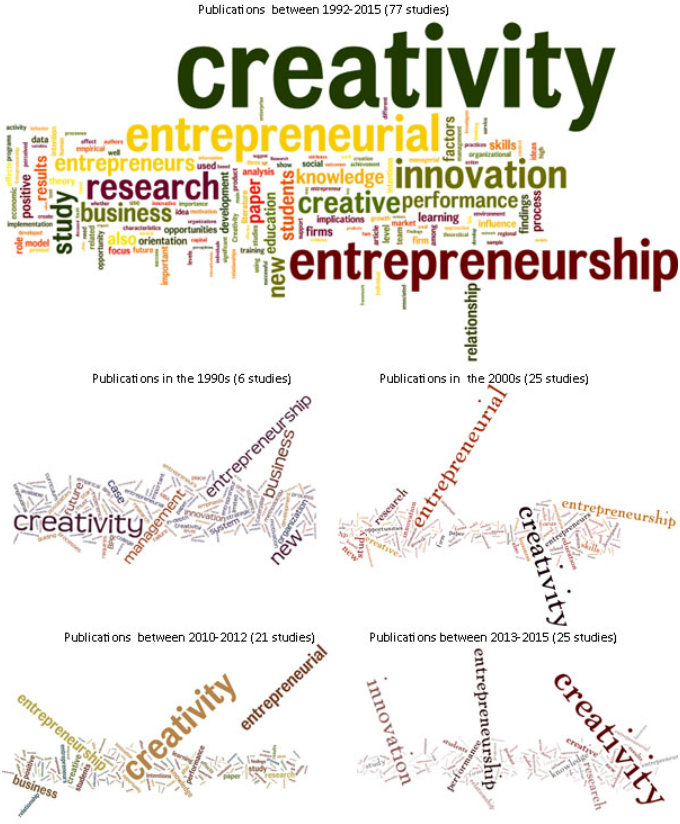

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Table 1 – Summary of the characteristics of publications on creativity in entrepreneurship

		1990s	2000s	2010s	Total
Number of studies		**6**	**25**	**46**	**77**
Methodology	**Conceptual**	**3**	**8**	**8**	**19**
	Qualitative methods	**2**	**3**	**4**	**9**
	Qualitative case study	1	1	4	
	Expert interview & focus group		2		
	Self-reflection	1			
	Quantitative methods	**1**	**13**	**30**	**44**
	Questionnaires and survey	1	9	26	
	Experiment		1	1	
	Statistics		3	3	
	Mixed method		**1**	**2**	**3**
	Meta-analysis			**2**	**2**
Topic	**Concept of creativity in entrepreneurship**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**8**
	Role of creativity		**13**	**36**	**49**
	Entrepreneurial orientation		3	8	
	Opportunity recognition and business creation	1	2	1	
	Entrepreneurial performance				
	Individual performance		1	6	
	Organizational performance	1	5	16	
	Regional performance		1	3	
	Fostering creativity in and for entrepreneurship	**2**	**9**	**17**	**28**
	Conditions		3	6	
	Individual effort			2	
	Corporate programs	1	1	1	
	University programs		3	3	

A Wordle cloud of our reviewed documents' abstracts (Figure 1) gives a brief glimpse of the literature and reveals some meaningful keywords: creativity, entrepreneurial, entrepreneurship, innovation, research, creative, business, study, new, entrepreneurs, knowledge, performance, students, process,

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education, learning, skills, development, opportunity, orientation, etc. These keywords suggest five themes: entrepreneurial process, innovation, research and development, education and training, and performance.

During the early days, researchers explored creativity in new business and management. In the 2000s, the literature focused on entrepreneurial characteristics. Then it moved onto training for creativity to enhance performance. In the last 2 years, the literature has shifted focus to studies of innovation's performance. A close reading of the articles distilled the themes addressed and methodology utilized (Table 1). The following sections elaborate the knowledge contributed by this body of literature to date.

The concept of creativity in entrepreneurship

Creative ideas in a business context are everyday occurrences (Penaluna *et al.*, 2010). Creativity is the balanced unfolding and converging of experience and entrepreneurship is the management of radical change (Nyström, 1993). It is manifested in resource construction associated with entrepreneurial bricolage, new combinations of existing resources, and the entrepreneur's improvisational behaviour (Lin, Nabergoj, 2014). Creativity can be conceived as existing in three different pockets: product, process, and resources (Seidel *et al.*, 2010). Each of these pockets is subject to different kinds of uncertainty and constraints.

It is important distinguish between creativity and innovation (Wilson, Stokes, 2005). The former is the crafting of creative solutions into new products, processes, or services whereas the latter is the successful implementation of creative ideas and acceptance by various stakeholders in organizations (Duxbury, 2012).

Creativity is a process of divergent and convergent thinking: divergent thinking has an indirect effect on venture growth through generating original business ideas; constraining information weakens the relationship between divergent thinking and business idea generation (Gielnik, *et al.*, 2012). To understand creativity, it is important to analyze people, their environment, and the culture (De Miranda, *et al.*, 2009).

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Role of creativity

Creativity is considered the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (Tsai, 2014). The entrepreneur is a visionary activist capable of constructively handling the often conflicting demands of unpredictable emerging situations. Entrepreneurial creativity has an impact throughout the lifetime of the entrepreneur, not just during the span of the business (Rangarajan, Lakshmi, 2013).

Creativity plays an important role in the entire entrepreneurial process (Nyström, 1993; Zhou, 2008). It influences individual, team, organizational, and multilevel innovation (Anderson *et al.*, 2014), particularly in the process of generating knowledge and finding resources for innovation (Nyström, 1993). Across the literature, creativity is viewed as a competitive advantage, a strategic weapon, an embedded philosophy, contributing to employer and employee motivation, problem solving and improved performance (Fillis, Rentschler, 2010).

Entrepreneurial orientation

Lupşa-Tătaru (2014) demonstrated that the entrepreneur must be a creative person. While creativity is an important characteristic normally associated with entrepreneurs and successful managers (among other characteristics such as inter alia, internal locus of control, risk taking, self-confidence, a need for independence, commitment, and high energy levels), in general entrepreneurs possess higher levels of growth-oriented traits than do managers (Roodt, 2005). In fact, creativity has been treated as a personality factor that drives people to become entrepreneurs (Zampetakis, 2008; Edwards-Schachter *et al.*, 2015).

Audretsch and Belitski (2013) specify that knowledge spillover into entrepreneurship depends not only on ordinary human capital, but also, more importantly, on creativity embodied in creative individuals and in diverse urban environments that attract creative classes. This might result in creative individuals self-selecting into entrepreneurship or enabling entrepreneurs to recognize creativity and commercialize it. Zampetakis *et al.* (2011) found that the more people consider themselves to be creative, the higher their entrepreneurial

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intentions are. This is true for both male and female populations (Phipps, 2012).

High scores on a creativity test and prior entrepreneurial experiences are positively associated with entrepreneurial intentions (Daniel Yar *et al.*, 2008). Among the components of creativity, fluency and initiative are positively related to the motivation to engage in entrepreneurship (Ghasemi *et al.*, 2011). The relationship between individual creativity and entrepreneurial intention is fully moderated by perception of risks (Daniel Yar *et al.*, 2008) and education and training (Zampetakis *et al.*, 2011; Farrington *et al.*, 2012).

Baron and Tang (2011) found that positive affect among founding entrepreneurs is significantly related to their creativity and that creativity, in turn, is positively related to firm-level innovation. They found that both relationships are moderated by environmental dynamism, where highly dynamic environments have a stronger influence than stable environments.

Opportunity recognition and business creation

A study by Shane and Nicolaou (2015) reveals that people with creative personalities are more likely to identify business opportunities and to start businesses. The authors also found that common genetic influences are involved, where creativity in the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities is enhanced by greater self-supported efficacy (Kinghorn, 2008).

A regional study by Lee *et al.* (2004) gave strong evidence that creativity is positively related to new firm formation. This is confirmed by recent studies (Lupşa-Tătaru, 2014). The link is strong, even in female entrepreneurship (Apergis, Pekka-Economou, 2010).

Heinonen *et al.* (2011), however, found that creativity is not directly associated with the viability of the business idea but that it does strengthen search strategies for creative opportunity and strategies for opportunity identification based on knowledge acquisition.

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Entrepreneurial performance

Individual performance

Courage to risk, openness to new information, flexibility, creativity and determination are the features of successful entrepreneurs (Elenurm, Alas, 2009). Entrepreneurs create new value by investing in ideas, and researchers make specific recommendations for creating supportive structures, building teams of creative individuals, and successfully championing ideas to acquire the resources needed to produce innovations (Duxbury, 2012; Ahlin *et al.*, 2014). People who consider themselves as having higher perceptions of creativity will have higher tendencies to learn and to exploit learning (Fernando, Dilani, 2011).

Creativity is also likely to exercise both positive and negative effects on performance (Soda, Bizzi, 2012). Sarooghi *et al.* (forthcoming) found a strong positive relationship between creativity and innovation at the individual level. However, Antonio *et al.* (2014) found that the correlation between creativity and entrepreneurial achievement is not significant.

Organizational performance

Creativity is a driver of competitive advantage, a key competency linked with related issues such as innovation, vision, leadership and motivation (Fillis, 2002). The perceived viability of the business idea is influenced by creativity through opportunity search strategies and knowledge acquisition (Heinonen *et al.*, 2011). Creativity in knowledge creation helps firms to initiate novel and appropriate products, which in turn increase new product success (Im, Workman Jr, 2004; Chang *et al.*, 2014). In fact, creativity affects the quality and quantity of both disruptive and sustaining innovations and is increasingly important, especially for companies operating in markets with multiple opportunities to differentiate goods and services (Ireland *et al.*, 2003). It significantly impacts customer problem solving (Ebrahim, Samipour, Samipour, 2014) and enhances aura – a cover that is related to the feeling-experiences of beauty, exclusivity, uniqueness and authenticity that a product, service or a

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brand creates – and thus helps firms to make their values tangible in the customer's mind (Björkman, 2002).

Firm performance and corporate entrepreneurship are significantly influenced by creativity at all levels, namely individual, team, and organization (Seung Won *et al.*, 2010; Bratnicka, Bratnicki, 2013; Gundry *et al.*, 2014). Team creativity was found to have significant impact on teams' collaborative knowledge creation practices and perceived team performance (Seung Won, *et al.*, 2010). Project performance is directly influenced by firm-level experiential knowledge and process-based creativity, and is indirectly influenced by team-level experiential knowledge through the mediation of process-based creativity (Suh *et al.*, 2010). If an organization wants to achieve business excellence it must create a change-oriented environment where the creativity of the employees is nurtured, developed and sustained through education and training, involvement and teamwork (Eskildsen *et al.*, 1999; Weinzimmer *et al.*, 2011). An enhanced creative climate will also increase the performance of all organizations including non-profit organizations (Barrett *et al.*, 2005).

It should be noted that the relationship between creativity and innovation is an inverted U-shape (del-Corte-Lora *et al.*, 2015; Sarooghi *et al.*, forthcoming). Team creativity enhances innovation implementation only when the climate for innovation is high (Somech, Drach-Zahavy, 2013). Employees' core knowledge creativity is negatively related to firm performance when orientation to risk is high but positively related when realized absorptive capacity is high (Gong *et al.*, 2013). The relationship is more positive in small firms than in large firms (Gong *et al.*, 2013). However, larger firms exhibit a stronger relationship between creativity and innovation than smaller firms (Sarooghi *et al.*, forthcoming). The relationship is weaker in firms operating in high-technology industries compared to those in low-technology industries.

Regional performance

A country's creativity plays a critical role in promoting the country's innovation, entrepreneurship and economic performance (Haifeng, 2010) as well as its exports (DiPietro,

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Anoruo, 2006; Gil-pechuan *et al.*, 2013). Risk taking and creativity are important for the birth of new ideas, processes, products, and services, thereby increasing entrepreneurial activity (Alvarez, Urbano, 2012). In a similar line of inquiry, Bradley *et al.* (2012) gave concrete evident that capital is not enough, and that countries need creativity.

Fostering creativity in and for entrepreneurship

Given the important role that creativity plays in all aspects of entrepreneurship, researchers have developed a significant body of literature on measures to foster creativity. They highlight the conditions necessary for creativity in entrepreneurship (as well as causes for the lack of such creativity). They examine efforts embarked on by entrepreneurs as well as programs carried out at companies and universities. They agree that creativity development should not be taken for granted in entrepreneurship education because even though venture managers do perceive themselves as creative and their ventures as innovative, implementation orientation is lacking (Pretorius *et al.*, 2006).

Conditions

Creativity is an output of different processes pertinent to the entrepreneurs (Fillis, Rentschler, 2010). Creativity requires a combination of intrinsic motivation and certain kinds of extrinsic motivation – a motivational synergy that results when strong levels of personal interest and involvement are combined with the promise of rewards that confirm competence (Amabile, 1997). Moreover, the results of a study by Ghasemi *et al.* (2011) showed that girls were higher than boys in creativity, achievement motivation, and entrepreneurship.

In corporate settings, an employee's creativity is determined by both personal and contextual characteristics (Shalley *et al.*, 2004). It is positively associated with the supervisor's promotion focus (Wu *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, context resource constraints also facilitate the emergence of entrepreneurial creativity (Lin, Nabergoj, 2014).

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Social networks are critical to the efficient acquisition of new knowledge and to improve innovation performance (Ko, Butler, 2007; Del Giudice *et al.*, 2014). However, network relations are likely to have both positive and negative effects on creativity. As a result, organizations must consider trade-offs in their strategic choices and initiate research on the social side of creativity (Soda, Bizzi, 2012).

Freer societies and societies that place a higher value on boldness, tend to have higher overall levels of economic creativity (DiPietro, 2003). In a case study of Lithuania, Mačerinskienč and Bulygina (2013) delineated factors leading to poor creativity in organizations: fear to take risks; avoidance of creative problem-solving methods; lack of trust; lack of team work; lack of autonomy and freedom of decision-making; lack of the use of innovations; lack of development according to needs; unmodified services; stagnation; lack of types of innovations applied in organizations.

Individual effort

Basing on systems models, Duxbury (2012) proposed that entrepreneurs can fully realize potential in their organizations if they themselves take the lead in harnessing their own creativity. Nevertheless, there has not been an adequate explanation for how these individuals apply their entrepreneurial practices, discourses, (social) creativity and novel organizational skills to maintain communal, organizational, familial and personal wellbeing (Imas, *et al.*, 2012).

Corporate programs

Creativity can be developed and assessed through other ways besides algorithmic (left hemisphere) pedagogies. Engaging expertise from the creative industries in business training can be an effective measure to foster creative ideas (Penaluna *et al.*, 2010). In order to create supportive structures, building teams of creative individuals allows people to acquire the resources they need to produce innovations (Duxbury, 2012).

Communication, support and knowledge sharing as well as a dialogue among employees, team members, supervisors and

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managers are all valuable techniques (Božic, Ozretic-Došen, 2015). Paper (1997) demonstrated that employee creativity is fostered by participation in empowered teams, brainstorming sessions, creativity training (problem solving, right-brain exercises, and idea generation), rewards, and team mission statements.

In fact, firms exhibiting high intensity organizational innovation are very likely to use knowledge sharing practices, to introduce knowledge management systems, and to cooperate with clients and suppliers. They display the highest probability to carry out training activities focused on creativity (Trigo, 2013).

University programs

Assessment of ideas generation, innovation and opportunity recognition is "*Central to developing and learning entrepreneurial behaviours*" (Penaluna, Penaluna, 2009). As this assessment is inherently a product of creativity, most entrepreneurship educators consider creativity/innovation training to be a very important component in their programs (Benson, 1992; Schmidt *et al.*, 2013).

A recent review of award winning entrepreneurship education programs reveals that most of these programs have stand-alone courses to enhance creativity (Schmidt *et al.*, 2013). There is an increasing focus on the general utility of entrepreneurial skills and aptitudes (i.e. creativity, independent thinking, opportunity recognition and exploitation, etc.). Binks (2006) suggested that entrepreneurship education offers an innovative new paradigm for business school education that answers some of the criticisms that are currently levelled against MBA training.

Kirby (2004) stressed that entrepreneurship should not be equated with new venture creation or small business management, but with creativity and change. Therefore, the author suggested that the emphasis on educating "about" entrepreneurship be shifted to educating "for" it. On this topic, Penaluna and Penaluna (2009) highlighted clear parallels between the pedagogic approaches from "design" disciplines and the learning outcomes advocated in generic curriculum development "for" entrepreneurship. Creativity training can be offered in simulation, a highly contextualized way of embracing the

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reality of process and contexts that entrepreneurs most likely experience in their endeavors. This method has been proven to be highly effective (Lin, Nabergoj, 2014; Antonites, 2004).

However, Zampetakis and Moustakis (2006) found that the contemporary university environment does not promote entrepreneurial intention through the development of creative thinking. Zampetakis *et al.* (2011) also found that support for creativity in the university has no effect on students' creativity or on their entrepreneurial intention.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

The four papers included in this special issue follow the trends of research on creativity and entrepreneurship we highlighted above. Schaeffer (2015) examined creativity exhibited by candidates in start-ups contests sponsored by large mature firms. Such contests appear to be a new way to stimulate corporate entrepreneurship. She explored this phenomenon through case studies in the context of France to characterize the mutual benefit derived by large firms and startups. She underlined the differences in creativity between industrial and service focused firms in their relations with the winning start-ups. Especially she highlights the influence of the Internet as an accelerator and enhancer of such contests.

Puhakka (2015), similar to the work of Shane and Nicolaou (2015), suggested that opportunity creation is indeed a social process. In his study, he elaborated on the social creation of entrepreneurial opportunities which are defined by the strong vision of the entrepreneur, combining knowledge and incorporating feedback as well as further active communication of the opportunity. By combining these features, entrepreneurs are able to exceed current operational boundaries and create mutually interesting and attractive entrepreneurial opportunities.

Cullmann, Guittard and Schenck (2015) analyzed the implementation of collective creativity in an industrial SME. In their case study, employees were invited to participate in creativity seminars in order to develop new product concepts. The creativity seminar permitted the freedom to adopt new concepts over previously dominant designs. Although the

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company sought to innovate through the creation of new concepts, it did not try to introduce a radical change. Its aim was to "*be creative while keeping one foot in the box*". This approach allowed the company to maintain a competitive advantage, while limiting costs, risks and delays related to the development of innovative products. In this work Cullmann *et al.* (2015) highlighted the challenges of being creative without losing the classical elements that customers still want.

Finally Monika Musial (2015) explored the management of creative individuals in creative companies. She focused on the shift from industrial to post-industrial business development and the dynamic settings of creative companies, which contrast with static and traditional firms. Entries and exits of creative individuals in organizations were discussed as a new management method that combines the traditional career perspective with the boundary-less and boundary-crossing careers of creative individuals. The paradox of creative freedom and management control reveals that both factors must be addressed to achieve optimal management of creative individuals.

KEY DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The literature acknowledges that opportunity recognition is a key aspect of entrepreneurship (Ozgena, Baron, 2007) and that it is a creative process (Hills *et al.*, 1999). However, very little is known about how creativity leads entrepreneurs to different types of entrepreneurial opportunity. Nor do we know how individual vs. organizational creativity influences this process. Research in this stream is highly needed.

Another area that needs attention is the role of creativity in establishing new enterprises. The literature shows that creativity fosters formation of new firms but it does not show which type of firms creative people build. Entrepreneurship may be productive, unproductive, and even destructive (Baumol, 1990). Entrepreneurship may happen in the formal sector or in the informal sector, i.e., outside of regulatory radars (Thai, Turkina, 2012). It may be designed to serve shareholders or stakeholders (Hill, Jones, 1992). It may be oriented towards high-growth or other entrepreneurial objectives (Carsrud,

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Brännback, 2011). It can materialize within or across national borders (McDougall, 1989). It may develop quickly or slowly (Capelleras, Greene, 2008). Its objective may be to generate economic return or social benefit.

The majority of the papers we reviewed in this study demonstrate that creativity boosts entrepreneurial performance and for that reason creativity should be fostered. We found that most of the papers on the topic of developing creativity only study it in the context of university programs. Their results reveal that while educators recognize the importance of creativity in entrepreneurship and emphasize it in their curriculum, their efforts have not yet made an impact. Therefore, there is a high need for studies of the mechanisms for creativity development which can be effectively deployed in educational programs. Furthermore, there is strong potential for studies on methods to enhance creativity in corporate settings. The results of such studies will help firms to improve organizational performance and boost corporate entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSIONS

This literature review confirms that researchers have become increasingly interested in examining different questions of creativity in entrepreneurship. They have come to agreement on the key concepts and support the argument that creativity plays important roles in entrepreneurship. Creativity increases entrepreneurial orientation, facilitates opportunity recognition and firm formation, and boosts entrepreneurial performance at all levels (individual, corporate, and regional). In light of these findings, universities and companies have looked into ways to foster creativity in and for entrepreneurship. However, research shows that these programs have not yet yielded significant results. Furthermore, the literature shows that the influence of creativity in entrepreneurship does not follow linear patterns (it exhibits an inverted U-shape in corporate settings). Nevertheless, the literature does not sufficiently address the question of creativity influence in different types on entrepreneurship. For these reasons, there are still many exciting opportunities for further research in this domain.

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