

Analytical Insight into the Use of Techniques Promoting Creativity in the Creative Industries

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Abstract

In the current turbulent and rapidly changing business environment, creativity has a pivotal role to play in management and business. Given that innovation is closely linked with creativity to unleash and exploit the creative potential is essential to economic success of businesses and organizations. Organizations use a wide range of creative methods and techniques that support individual and organizational creativity. The submission aims to identify the use of techniques and procedures supporting creativity and to assess their effectiveness in organizations in the creative industries. The basis of the research investigation was an analysis of the primary data collected by questionnaire survey in which have been participating 93 organizations operating in creative industries i.e. in areas with higher proportion of creative work. The analysis was aimed at detecting the effectiveness of creative methods and techniques in comparisons with traditional methods and techniques. Attention was also paid to the examination of time-consuming of creative methods and techniques used in examined organizations.

Key words: creativity, creative techniques, creative industries, management

JEL Classification: M19, O32

1 Introduction

Entering into the third millennium enterprises have started to pay considerable attention to promoting creativity as a source of competitive advantage, which is based primarily on the ability of employees to be innovative and creative. This led the organizations to develop concepts and management styles leading to the creation of an environment enabling employees to be creative. An interactive environment contributes to interconnection and transfer of knowledge and accumulated gained experience in order to develop creativity to ensure the maximum development of an organization (Ageyev, 2008, 2010, in Hayel Al-Sroua a Al-Oweidi 2013).

Creativity is an important determinant of the success of businesses and organizations, as this significantly affects the development of innovation and ingenuity, and consequently the business success and profit. In this regard, for example, Dubina et al. (2012, p. 2) points out that “creativity in combination with knowledge is being considered the most important economic resource in the world with increasing populations and decreasing natural resources”. According to the authors Sweeney and Curtis (2013) creativity is undoubtedly important in business and organizations, whether in the context of generating ideas for radically new products, the gradual improvement of existing products and processes, or to

solve old problems in a new way. Efforts to generate or commercialization / marketing, too many ideas can lead to non-concentrated efforts, while the lack of creative ideas, too narrow a field for assessment of thoughts / ideas or bad investment of time and resources in the transformation of thoughts / ideas for products sold may lead stagnation. Lundvall (2008, p. 1-2) aptly notes that „creativity is for the economy as salt for cooking“ and „the most successful economies in the world are those that engage ordinary workers in processes of creative thinking, doing and using“.

In order to promote innovation as the output / result of creativity, organizations have to create an environment and culture supporting individual and group creativity. Therefore, the particular importance of creativity in business and management and its importance is growing, as evidenced by the formation and development of concepts related to creativity, particularly the creative economy, creative industries, creative tourism, creative products, creative cities, creative classes, etc..

Henry (2006) during his 22 years of research found that creativity is more often killing than supported. It is not because managers are skeptical about creativity, on the contrary, the majority of them believe in new and useful ideas. But creativity is hampered unintentionally every day in the work environment to maximize business imperatives such as coordination, productivity and management. Of course, the managers can not be expected to ignore the commercial imperatives, but should work alongside these imperatives to develop the creativity of their employees. His research has shown that it is possible to develop the best of both worlds. The organization will focus on both the business imperatives but also creativity flourishes. Just such organizations show us how important management practices to promote creativity.

2 Creativity in Regional Context

Over the decades passed regions in order to achieve economic growth and development have undergone various phases using a variety of procedures and processes to achieve this – from development theories focused on support of demand (export base theory), through a strategy of deepening inter-regional differences (theory of polarization) to the strategy of innovation and knowledge development (theory of learning regions). It is obvious that because of the constant progress and change of the preferences of economic entities it is not sufficient and correct representatives/officials of regional governments to focus or meet just one theory (Adamská, 2012).

Creativity as the ability to find innovative solutions to problems, to create new products and processes, to set up new firms, and to expand into new areas that create economic value is essential for the development of sustainable production and consumption patterns for the future. It should be linked to innovation and entrepreneurship in order to guarantee its translation into market opportunities (Sleuwaegen & Boiardi, 2014).

The perception of creativity as a factor of economic development of cities and regions has led to the development of the concept of creative economy. Creative economy is accroding Vaňová et al. (2013) a new concept of supporting the area development. The concept of creative economy “represents also one of the most discussed concepts of the modern global economy” and accentuates the growing “significance of creativity as an economic factor, characterizing a qualitative transition of the modern economy to a new level” (Dubina et al.,

2012, p. 2). Based on the quantification of standardized values of indicators of the creativity index is evident that all regions (NUTS 3) in Slovakia, as compared to Bratislava self-governing region (BSK), are backward (Vaňová et al., 2013). Degree of impact of the creative economy in the area (territory) is most commonly expressed through creative professions's share of total employment, or through creative sector's share of GDP (Vaňová et al., 2012).

Currently, European leaders are beginning to talk about the need for a paradigm shift in order to successfully compete in global markets and resist the financial crisis. Innovation - the main EU instrument in the competitive struggle – has long been a priority for the EU, but paradoxically creativity (together with its main source - culture) which is a driving force of innovation starts to be taken into account only in recent years, particularly in the context of the creative economy. In this sense, we are at the beginning of the journey and we first need to define the different instruments and procedures of public policy, based on a wider concept (than just technical or technological innovation) for successful adjustment of support programs and financial schemes aimed at creativity and innovation. Businessmen and creative leaders are in agreement that to get all the benefits of creative potential in Europe, it is necessary to combine art and creativity with entrepreneurship and innovation. This so-called. “cultural creativity” depends on the ability of people to think imaginatively or metaphorically, to avoid conventionality and communicate emotionally or through symbols. Such creativity has the potential to distract from the usual way of thinking, and thus enable the development of new visions, ideas or products (Zlatá, 2011).

Laura Pierantonio (2014) perceives culture as a strategic factor for territorial development that can be used as a strategic element within processes of regional development (points to the example of the Veneto Region), especially in territories undergoing a moment of inertia. Zlatá (2011) argues that culture is also an appropriate instrument for urban regeneration. Culture within the urban/ regional public policy is broadly seen as a contribution to the development of the city/region and urban regeneration and revitalization. There are two types of cultural policy in the city/ region: one that focuses on it to make the city/region known (internationally) and the second focuses inwards the city/region in order to improve the quality of life of the residents. Benefits of urban regeneration through culture include: economic benefits for the city/region, job creation, positive impact on the city/region image; increasing social cohesion, improving quality of life and reducing crime, promoting the development of new cultural infrastructure and the like (Zlatá, 2011).

3 Creativity and Management

Undoubtedly, managers/leaders play very important role in creating a supportive environment for creativity and innovation. Hennessey and Amabile (2010, in Liu et al., 2012) argued that leader behaviors have a significant role in the growth and prohibition of creativity and in this context George (2008, in Liu et al., 2012) states that leaders have been conceptualized as an important contextual factor that cultivates or stifles employee creativity. According to Pratt and Ghobadian (2008, in Ali Taha and Tej 2012) successful are those managers who - on the basis of cognitive and intellectual skills and use of management concepts and techniques - are able to carry out their work competently, can bring new and creative solutions to problems and deal with unexpected and unforeseen situations.

Cummings and Oldham (in McLean 2009) contend that managers and employees are the core of the process of creativity and if organizations want to improve the speed and quality of

innovation and its outcomes have to employing only employees with talent or potential for creativity, but also to ensure that their culture and structures promote innovation and the flow of creative “juice”.

Considerable attention and a lot of researches are devoted to studying the effects applied management style on employee creativity. For example, Shin and Zhou (2003 in Liu et al., 2012) point to many of research examining the link between positive leader behaviors (such as „transformational leadership“) and employee creativity. Herrmann and Felfe (2012) based on their researches argue „that, besides leadership style, the creativity technique that a leader employs is an important means of stimulating employees’ creativity“. Their opinion is derived from Huber's point of view (2006, in Herrmann and Felfe, 2012) who indicated that besides using a leadership style that is conducive to creativity, a leader may also take advantage of creativity techniques in order to enhance followers’ creativity.

In the context of a positive effect on employee creativity is often mentioned concept of transformational leadership which – according to many authors e.g. DeGroot, Kiker and Cross (2000), Dumdum, Lowe and Avolio (2002), Lowe, Kroeck and Sivasubramaniam (1996), Patterson et al. (1995) - can positively influence employees' (followers') performance and satisfaction across various organizational settings and different cultures. Transformational leaders are able to intellectually stimulate their followers and activate their creativity potential (Avolio, 1994; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Conger and Kanungo, 1992, in Eisenbeiß and Boerner, 2013).

According to Powell (2008), managers and leaders must adopt styles that are unique and based on consensus / adaptation, responsiveness and speed of decision making. The author emphasizes that organizations should not only be introspective, ie reflecting internal and external context, but also progressive, ie capable of thinking strategically about how stakeholders - clients, customers and employees - can increase the overall creative ability of the organization. Thin, on the contrary, it becomes a process of knowledge (Gurteen 1998, in McLean 2009).

4 Managerial Methods, Techniques and Practices Promoting Creativity in Organizations

Until the late sixties, creative techniques played no significant role. Later in the seventies theme of creativity began to develop very quickly, despite any technology incurred by at the time, was not applied in practice. First of all, these techniques have started to use the utility industry and also advertising agencies, as these sectors traditionally require many new ideas and the corresponding rate of innovation (Trommsdorff and Steinhoff, 2009). “Specific methods and techniques supporting creativity (including computer and other supporting tools) were developed for the development and promotion of creativity, breaking preconceptions and encouraging imagination. The use of these techniques in businesses and organizations allows fully benefit from the creative potential of employees and transform it into production and creation of outputs” (Ali Taha and Tej, 2012). The creative management techniques help the elaboration of a favorable environment for productivity and innovation (Schlemm, 2006, in De Prá Carvalho et al., 2012).

The range of creative methods is broad, diverse and varied is their use. Majority of creative techniques is aimed at enhancing creativity. According to Schlicksuppa (1989, in Herrmann-

Felfe 2012), there are over 100 different creative techniques. With the exception of research aimed at brainstorming techniques there is very little research (and empirical evidence) comparing the effectiveness of various creative techniques. Effectiveness of specific techniques heavily depends on the style of leadership - whether transformational and transactional (Herrmann-Felfe 2012). Rodrigues (2009, in De Prá Carvalho et al., 2012) states that there are 67 most known techniques.

Some of the techniques are very simple, while others very complex and sophisticated. But all help explore and deepen the knowledge of the world and its mysteries, and also allow to do things and activities easier and more effective (Mikuláščík 2010, in Ali Taha and Tej 2012). The most widely used classification of creative methods is based on the creative process itself and differentiates following techniques and methods:

1. aimed at defining the problem,
2. aimed at creating ideas,
3. focused on the selection of ideas,
4. aimed at implementing ideas,
5. focused on processes - techniques which supervise the whole process from beginning to end (http://www.mycoted.com/Category:Creativity_Techniques).

The best known and most widely used creative techniques include:

- various modifications of brainstorming (classic, inverse/reverse brainstorming, brainwriting, etc.),
- mind (mental) maps,
- Delphi method,
- Fishbone (also called fishbone or Ishikawa diagram)
- Lotus flower,
- Osborn list and its various modifications (e.g. SCAMPER, SCAMMPER, etc.)
- “provocation” techniques
- Six thinking hats
- “Stand-up” meetings,
- outdoor learning,
- staging and role playing methods etc.

5 Research Focused on the Use of Creative Techniques in Organizations in the Creative Sector

The aim of the research was to identify and analyze the use of creative techniques by managers in Slovak organizations. Primary data collection was conducted through questionnaire investigation among managers and executives working in sectors of the creative industry. The research was conducted on a sample of 93 respondents, 61 men (66%) and 32 women (34%). The largest representation in the sample had managers aged 31 - 40 years (53%), followed by managers under the age of 30 years (28%) and managers in the age of 41-50 years (16%). The smallest representation (3%) had the group of managers old 51-years and over.

In the survey participants (managers) were asked whether they consider creativity as important factor in their work performance. All participants indicated that this was the case. The results showed that all managers consider creativity as important in carrying out their profession, the majority of respondents (77%) strongly agree and 21 respondents (23%) agree.

Research also explored which creative methods and techniques are most effective (Figure 1). From among the offered spectrum of creative methods and techniques respondents (based on their previous experiences) should choose those they consider most effective.

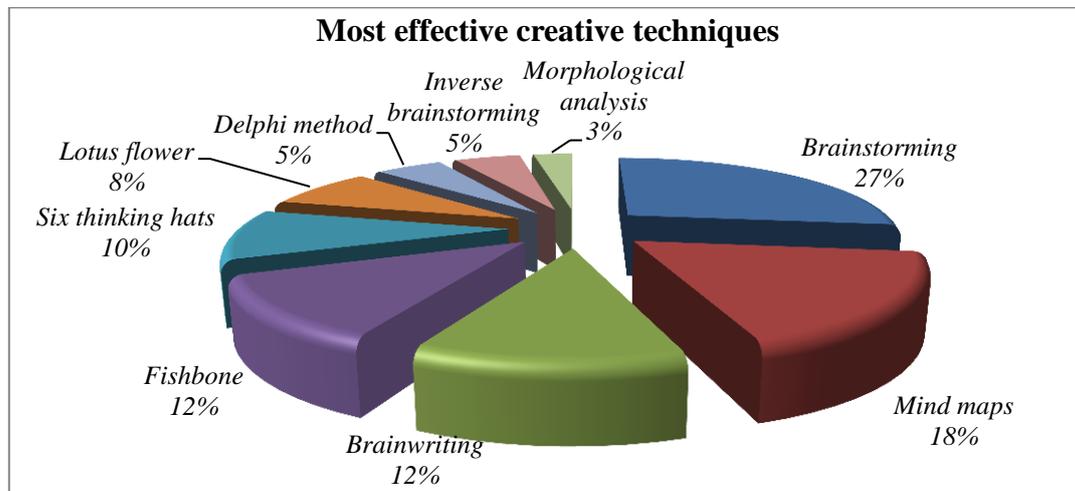


Fig. 1 Selection of effective creative techniques

Source: authors

Managers considered the most effective brainstorming (technique) which has been chosen by 25 respondents (27%). Mind maps) appear to be also very effective (systematic-analytical) creative technique chosen by 17 surveyed managers (18%). The same number of respondents- 11 respondents (12%) consider most effective brainwriting (intuitive-creative technique) and Fishbone method (systematic-analytical technique). Other creative methods were marked by less than 10% of respondents. The survey results point to a (slightly) higher efficiency of intuitive creative techniques (59%) compared to systematic-analytical techniques (41%).

An obvious obstacle for non-use of creative methods and techniques is their difficulty and time-consuming. As a part of the research we investigated the time requirements of the creative techniques implementation (Figure 2). The questions in the questionnaire have the form of statements and respondents on a 5-grade Likert scale (1-very fast, 2-fast, 3-average, 4-slow, 5-very slow) express their opinion about time-consuming of creative techniques.

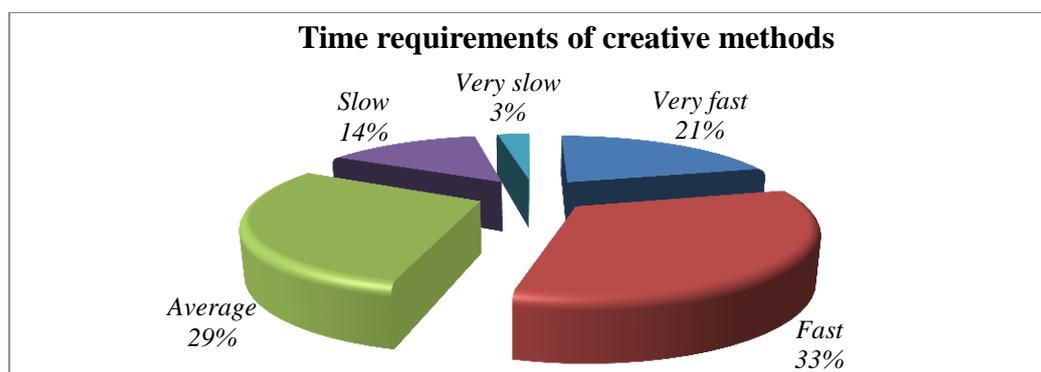


Fig. 2 Time-consuming of the problem solving using creative techniques

Source: authors

In general we can say that the use of creative techniques is time saving. Figure 2 indicates that almost 54% of respondents consider problem solving by creative techniques as time saving – 21% consider it as very fast and 31 respondents (33%) as fast. Average time consuming

troubleshooting by using creative techniques marked 27 respondents (29%). The rest of respondents regarded creative methods and techniques as slow or very slow.

In the context of addressing the issue and based on the assumption that the use of more i.e. combination of several techniques and methods can be better, faster and more efficient in addressing the problems and task we investigated whether the respondents in dealing with work tasks and solving problems tend to use one or more techniques promoting creativity. Respondents on five-point scale expressed their opinion concerning whether it is more efficient (based on their experience) to use several methods to solve the problems. The results are shown in Figure 3.

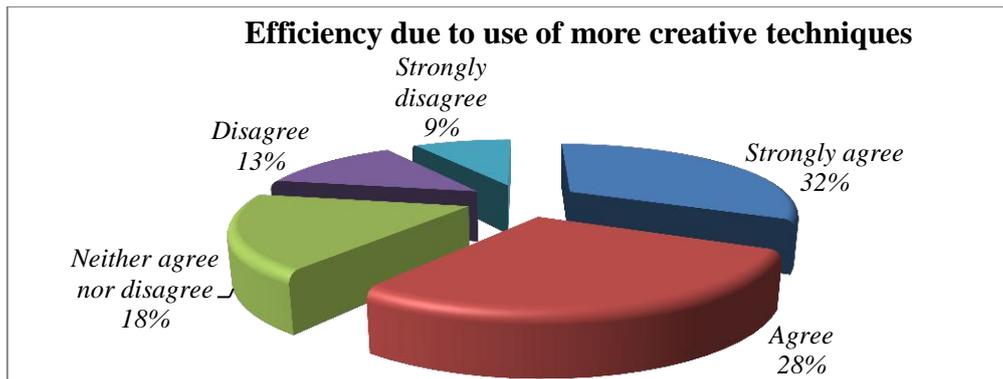


Fig. 3 Use a combination of creative techniques (for higher efficiency)

Source: authors

Based on the results it can be concluded that using several creative techniques when solving problems and tasks is more effective than using just one creative technique. The majority (60%) of respondents agree with the statement, while 32% of them strongly agree and 28% of respondents agree with the statement. Neutral response was chosen by 17 respondents (18%), which may be caused by efficiency equilibria between the two choices (agreement and disagreement) or by the lack of experience. The rest of respondents disagree with the statement and is identified with the opinion that using a single method/techniques supporting creativity in solving the problem is more efficient than using several methods/techniques.

Research hypotheses

In the previous text, we examined individual phenomena – applied creative techniques, their effectiveness and time-consuming – in isolation. In the next section we find out connection between phenomena and in this respect we hypothesized:

- H1: Effective creative techniques used by the managers (organizations) are time saving (hence more than 50% of respondents indicate responses pointing to time undemanding of used creative methods (i.e. answer “fast” or “very fast”).
- H2: Using several creative techniques to problem/task solving helps / allows to achieve greater range of creative ideas and thus consequently, the right choice of solutions to the problem.
- H3: Creative techniques are more effective (allowing to achieve better results) if they are used in the team compared to their use by individuals (i.e. the use of creative techniques in team produce better results than the individual use).

The hypotheses we tested and sample data were analysed by the statistical techniques, namely correlation (examining the relationship between variables), chi-square test and z-test. Table 1 shows the results of testing first hypothesis (H1)

Tab. 1 Hypothesis (H1) testing using z-test

Effective creative techniques		Time consuming of problem solving using effective creative techniques:					Total
		Very slow	Slow	Average	Fast	Very fast	
Brainstorming	n	0	0	1	19	5	25
	%	0,00	0,00	4,00	76,00	20,00	100,00
Brainwriting	n	0	0	5	2	4	11
	%	0,00	0,00	45,50	18,20	36,40	100,00
Delphi method	n	0	2	0	3	0	5
	%	0,00	40,00	0,00	60,00	0,00	100,00
Fishbone method	n	0	0	6	3	2	11
	%	0,00	0,00	54,50	27,30	18,20	100,00
Inverse brainstorming	n	0	0	3	0	2	5
	%	0,00	0,00	60,00	0,00	40,00	100,00
Lotus flower	n	0	3	2	1	1	7
	%	0,00	42,90	28,60	14,30	14,30	100,00
Six thinking hats	n	1	4	3	0	1	9
	%	11,10	44,40	33,30	0,00	11,10	100,00
Morphological analysis	n	2	1	0	0	0	3
	%	66,70	33,30	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00
Mind maps	n	0	3	7	3	4	17
	%	0,00	17,60	41,20	17,60	23,50	100,00
Total	n	3	13	27	31	19	93
	%	3,20	14,00	29,00	33,30	20,40	100,00

For accepting hypothesis the majority (more than 50 percent) of responses must indicate less time consuming (responses “fast” or “very fast”). The results showed the majority of methods/techniques is considered to be fast or very fast - the overall percentage of both options is 53.7%, however z-test did not evaluate this value as statistically significant ($z = 0.714$, $p = 0.238$), so that the *hypothesis is rejected*.

Analogous to the first hypothesis was tested second hypothesis, while positive inclination (tendency) of respondents to use combination of methods or only a single method to solve problems and tasks was detected by two questions in questionnaire. Table 2 shows the joint distribution of two variables.

Tab. 2 Hypothesis (H2) testing - tabular display of joint distribution

			It is more effective to use several creative techniques to solve problems and tasks.					Total
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
It is more effective to use only one creative technique to solve problems and tasks.	Strongly disagree	n	0	0	0	24	5	29
		%	0,00	0,00	0,00	82,80	17,20	100,00
	Disagree	n	0	0	0	0	25	25
		%	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00	100,00
	Neither agree nor disagree	n	0	0	17	2	0	19
		%	0,00	0,00	89,50	10,50	0,00	100,00
	Agree	n	12	1	0	0	0	13

		%	92,30	7,70	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00
	Strongly agree	n	0	7	0	0	0	7
		%	0,00	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00
Total		n	12	8	17	26	30	93
		%	12,90	8,60	18,30	28,00	32,30	100,00

Compared two questions are complementary issues and thus it can be assumed that respondents answered both questions complementary – conversely, i.e. if respondent answered one question affirmative (positive), the complementary question answered disapprovingly (negative). To a question on the preferences of several methods 5 respondents answered positively (60%), which is significantly more than 50% ($z = 1.929$, $p = 0.027$). A similar result was recorded in the complementary question on preference of one method (54 respondents, 58%), just above the measured level of statistical significance ($z = 1.543$, $p = 0.061$) that indicates partial acceptance of the hypothesis. Due to failure to reject our hypothesis we can assume that *using several creative methods and techniques for solving problems and tasks will be achieved more creative ideas and thus greater efficiency in solving the problem.*

Third hypothesis examined whether the use of creative techniques in team produce better results than the individual use. Table 3 shows the joint distribution of two variables.

Tab. 3 Hypothesis (H3) testing - tabular display of joint distribution

			It is more effective to solve the problem by using (applying) creative techniques by an individual?					Total	
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
It is more effective to solve the problem by using (applying) creative techniques in the team.	Strongly disagree	n	0	0	0	10	0	10	
		%	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00	0,00	100,00	
	Disagree	n	0	0	0	2	10	12	
		%	0,00	0,00	0,00	16,70	83,30	100,00	
	Neither agree nor disagree	n	0	0	5	1	0	6	
		%	0,00	0,00	83,30	16,70	0,00	100,00	
	Agree	n	26	0	1	0	0	27	
		%	96,30	0,00	3,70	0,00	0,00	100,00	
	Strongly agree	n	4	34	0	0	0	38	
		%	10,50	89,50	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00	
	Total		n	30	34	6	13	10	93
			%	32,30	36,60	6,50	14,00	10,80	100,00

By comparing two complementary (respectively contradictory) questions is evident that respondents consider the use of creative techniques in team as more effective than their use by an individual. Due to failure to reject our hypothesis we can assume that *creative techniques are more effective (allowing to achieve better results) if they are used in the team.*

6 Conclusion

The survey showed that most managers are considered creative and they consider creativity as important in their job performance. Given the general awareness and popularity is not such a big surprise that the most effective creative methods / techniques is brainstorming and mind maps. Managers less likely use other creative techniques such as morphological analysis, Delphi method and inverse (reverse) brainstorming. However, most managers considered the use of these creative techniques as essential for their work and their use contributes to improved performance of themselves and generation of new ideas. This leads us to the conclusion that those creative techniques are effective.

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