
This is the **submitted version** of the article:

ESTANYOL, Elisenda, ROCA, David, 2015. Creativity in PR consultancies: perception and management. *Public Relations Review*. Vol. 41, no. 5, p. 589-597

DOI [10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.08.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.08.004)

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/189372>- Users should check here the license of this document

ABSTRACT

Business in general, and advertising in particular, recognise creativity as a crucial component of success and competitive advantage, but it has received little research attention in Public Relations (PR). This study seeks to address that neglect in relation to the understanding of how creativity is perceived and managed in PR consultancies. It involves a total of 23 interviews that included international PR creative directors as well as senior managers of PR consultancies operating in Spain. The initial findings suggest that creativity is considered a skill required by PR professionals, is seen as something valuable for clients, and is acknowledged in PR industry awards. Nevertheless, the article argues that some unhelpful myths and prejudices still exist around the area of creativity and that creative processes common elsewhere are not widely used in PR consultancies. It concludes by identifying elements that could encourage creativity within the sector.

Key Words: public relations, creativity, consultancies, industry

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 30 years, creativity has been considered a competitive advantage and a crucial element in business (Golen, 1983; Mumford, 2000; Florida, 2012), as well as a central component in the advertising sector (El-Murad & West, 2004). Even so, there has been very little scientific investigation focused on creativity in PR although authors in the PR literature cite it as part of the professional competence of a PR practitioner (see Wilcox *et al.*, 2007, Gregory, 2008). The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of how creativity is perceived and managed in PR consultancies, to discover the creative processes and techniques that do operate there, and to examine the role of the creative director. It concludes with proposals for further encouraging creativity within the sector.

2. RESEARCH APPROACHES TO CREATIVITY

Defining the concept of creativity is complex (Runco, 2007). Creativity simultaneously refers to a cognitive process and the result of this process (the product or creative idea), to an attribute of the individual, and also to an environment (Rhodes, 1961). Psychology has been one of the disciplines which has studied creativity in more depth with theories generated as early as the 19th century in the London School of Differential Psychology (1869) and the Experimental School of Leipzig (1879). In the 20th century Guilford (1950) is commonly named as the catalyst in generating scientific interest in the matter with his definitions of two types of thinking: *convergent thinking* (logical, rational, vertical) and *divergent thinking* (original, free-flowing and flexible). Subsequent notable scientific theories on creativity include the Associative Creativity Theory (Mednick, 1962), The Conceptual Spaces Theory (Boden, 1996), The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2004), The Investment Theory of Creativity (Sternberg, 2006) and Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

The concept of creativity has evolved throughout history (see Tatarkiewicz, 2002). Taylor (1959), for example, considered the process of creativity as consisting of a system that entails shaping or designing a stimulating environment in which problems could be transformed into productive solutions through facilitation. In contrast, Landau (1987) claimed that creativity resided in the capacity to discover connections – between previously unrelated experiences – which can, in turn, transform into new mental schemes generating ideas or novel products. The creative process has similarly been the subject of studies, with Wallas (1926) being one of the first to define its stages (*preparation, incubation, illumination and verification*). Thereafter, authors as Osborn (1953) and Koestler (1964) expanded and deepened that line of study.

Creativity is more important now than ever before, because is a useful and effective response to evolutionary changes (Runco, 2007). Advertising creativity agencies that win awards, attract large clients and reinforce the creative capacity of the agency (Verbeke *et al.*, 2008). In addition, creative messages increase ad recall (Lehnert *et al.* 2013), enhance purchase intention in some situations (Heiser *et al.*, 2008), lead to product evaluation if consumers are sufficiently motivated (Dahlén *et al.*, 2008), and impact brand attitudes in some situations (Sheinin *et al.*, 2011). Thus PR consultancies should consider it as valuable for their clients.

Compared to advertising, creativity research in PR is much smaller in size and scope and has a shorter history. Although Lesly already claimed in 1966 that the proliferation of new mediums of communication demanded more creativity in public relations in order to make an impact on a more and more fragmented audience, the literature on the subject remains sparse. Notable exceptions are Moriarty's (1997) chapter, and the two editions of Green's (1999; 2010) book on *Creativity in Public Relations*. Equally sparse are empirical studies on the management of creativity in the PR

industry. Nevertheless, the first edition of *Creativity in PR: A Global Study* (The Holmes Report, 2012) provides relevant international data. Based on a survey of 650 professionals from more than 35 countries, this study finds that 50% of the PR organisations have no clear creative objectives and 42% do not reward creativity at all. The second edition of the same study reveals that clients want better creative quality, with only 18% satisfied with their current agency's creativity (The Holmes Report, 2013). Previously, two studies carried out in the UK showed similar results. In the first, Daymon's (2000) qualitative research found that the level of creativity in UK public relations consultancies depended on the encouragement given by management to aspects such as unconventionality, autonomy, and risk among their staff members. The second study, by Parker, Wayne & Kent Ltd (2005) carried out a survey amongst 104 professionals belonging to The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). It discovered that 96% considered creativity plays an extremely important role in the public relations process, but less than 44% were familiar with models of creative thinking. In Spain, some studies not focused on creativity but on the evolution of the PR industry show that creativity is demanded by clients more and more each day (ADECEC, 2008; Grupo Consultores, 2009, 2011, 2013).

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews was used with the objective "to capture tacit knowledge which is gained from the reflexive accounts of relevant interviewees" (Partington, 2000). Due to the absence of formal creative directors in the Spanish market, the research focused on international Creative Directors [CD] from global PR firms, as well as Senior Managers [SM] of PR consultancies operating in Spain. All of them were professionals whose opinions have real implications for how creativity is managed in the PR industry. Two main research questions were developed:

(RQ1) How is creativity perceived in PR consultancies?

(RQ1a) Is creativity differently perceived among PR senior managers and creative directors?

(RQ1b) Is creativity valued as a professional PR skill?

(RQ2) How is creativity managed in PR consultancies?

(RQ2a) Which creative processes and techniques are used?

(RQ2b) Do differences appear between the largest agencies and the most awarded ones?

(RQ2c) What are the elements that limit and encourage creativity?

(RQ3d) What is the role of creative director in PR?

3.1. Sample selection

The investigation was carried out in three complementary phases, each one comprised of non-probabilistic directed samples:

- The first phase sample (Phase A) was composed of international creative directors from world leading PR agencies from the Global Ranking by *The Holmes Report* (2010). Of the top ten public relations companies, four formed part of this sample (see Appendix 1).

- The second phase sample (Phase B) was composed of senior managers from large PR consultancies operating in Spain with offices in at least Madrid and Barcelona. Due to the lack of a unified database, the initial list was derived from the following diverse sources: ADECEC (Spanish Association of Communication and Public Relations Consultancies), *PR Noticias* ranking, *PR Scope* (Grupo Consultores, 2009) and the report *El sector de las Relaciones*

Públicas en España (Puesto Base, 2011). Saturation was attained after 9 interviews. Five of the interviewees work for PR global multinationals, and five for national agencies with international clients (see Appendix 2).

- In the third and last phase (Phase C), the sample was composed of senior managers of the most awarded agencies in the field of public relations in Spain. In order to ascertain such agencies 11 PR awards were analysed (edition 2011) - ADECEC, *PR Noticias*, *PR Week* Awards, IPRA Awards, SABRE Awards, European Excellence Awards, Eventoplus, ASPID, El Sol, Eurobest and Cannes Lions Awards. From the 16 most awarded agencies (six multinationals and ten nationals), four coincided with the sample from Phase B, and consequently these directors were not interviewed again. The remainder, with the exception of two agencies that declined to participate, formed part of this study. Therefore, the final sample from Phase C was formed by 10 directors from the most awarded agencies (see Appendix 2).

3.2. Interview guide elaboration and development

To answer the two research questions, the research carried out semi-structured interviews using a pre-determined script with 11 open questions. The script was designed to be flexible and open with the objective of obtaining the most complete, in-depth and rich information possible. The word “creativity” was intentionally excluded from certain questions so as not to influence the interviewees' responses and thereby increase the validity. Three pilot interviews were carried out in order to improve the reliability of the instrument.

3.3. Data collection

Each participant was initially informed about the study. On average, each interview lasted between 33 and 95 minutes. They were conducted between the period of July 2010 and February 2013. All interviews were recorded in Mp3 format and then transcribed.

3.4 Analysis of data

Data analysis was performed through codification. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1998) methodology, coding took place simultaneously with data collection. During open coding, phenomena uncovered in the transcribed text was identified, named and categorised. Afterwards, during axial coding, the codes (categories and properties) were related to each other via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking.

4. RESULTS

After research seven thematic clusters emerged (see Table 1):

4.1. Creativity perception

All interviewees acknowledge that clients are demanding more and more creativity in proposals, that creativity is highly valued at PR industry awards, and that in a changing communicative paradigm it is necessary to increase creativity. As one of them states,

in many cases, the creative idea is that which can result in one deciding which proposal to choose . . . Creativity at times has led to the winning of the project, and at others the loss due to the fact that another agency has been more creative. Even if the other proposal is more costly in terms of its implementation, if the creative idea is appealing to the client it can be the factor which makes them opt for the other agency. (SM5)

The general perception amongst senior PR managers interviewed in the study is that creativity basically helps projects “gain notoriety,” and “be original,” “exciting,” “unpredictable” and “surprising.” In the words of one of them: “Creativity is a way to stand out, to surprise . . . to make a strong impression” (SM7).

Even though creativity is valued as an important factor to PR success, creativity still evokes a number of myths and prejudices between the senior managers interviewed. Some of them claim that creativity is much more associated with, and necessary in, the advertising sector, and some only associate creativity with the visual aspects of communication. Some even define creativity as “fireworks,” “crazy ideas,” or “experiments with soda,” and distance themselves with their opinion that “in the PR industry one must keep one’s feet firmly on the ground” (SM3).

Otherwise, the international creative directors interviewed have a deeper notion of creativity, considering it to be “a necessity in all proposals and PR activities,” “a way of resolving communication problems,” “a way of achieving that the PR message reaches the target public,” and “a way of finding multiple alternatives, and novel and effective solutions to the challenges set by the clients.” As such, they define the creative idea in public relations as: “different,” “risky,” “original,” “relevant,” “imaginative,” “fresh,” and “effective.”

4.2 Creativity and PR specialities

Some PR senior managers are of the opinion that creativity is needed in all areas of specialisation. Nevertheless, the majority of them consider that marketing communication and event organisation are the PR specialities that currently demand higher levels of creativity,

Creativity, especially in marketing communications, is extremely important. One example is all the actions which aim to achieve news reporting . . . or go

viral or generate word of mouth diffusion. All types of communication which fall into the category of Business to Consumer are where heightened creativity is required. (SM5)

In contrast, all the international creative directors interviewed claim that all areas of speciality in public relations require the same level of creativity. Since, as one creative director asserts, “If you look at creativity ultimately as the primary way to solve problems, everything needs creativity” (CD2).

4.3 Creativity techniques

Brainstorming as a creative technique was named by almost all the PR senior managers interviewed. This made it definitely the most applied in the sector. Beyond brainstorming, however, there is an obvious lack of awareness of alternative techniques. Such other techniques as *mind mapping* and *free association* were named by only a very few. As one interviewed senior manager acknowledged, “We brainstorm . . . though little else. For sure, there's little training. But if I'm totally honest, that's how it works” (SM5).

In fact, the international creative directors who were interviewed regret that *brainstorming* has become almost synonymous with “creativity” since they consider that this technique proposed by Osborn (1953) is just one of those which may be employed in order to stimulate the creation of ideas. In the words of one of them, “There are hundreds of techniques for creative thinking. It is important to vary and rotate the techniques you use, to help keep the thinking process fresh” (CD3).

Consequently, all creative directors encourage the application of alternative techniques such as, *mind mapping, attributes and elements, solo and visual brainstorming, metaphors and analogies*,

force fitting, check list, free association, SCAMPER, role playing, Six Thinking Hats (De Bono & Markland, 1999) and the ones recompiled in *Thinkertoys* (Michalko, 2010).

4.4 Creative process and agency structures

Although it is commonplace – as much in large PR consultancies as in the most awarded agencies – that accounts teams form the structures, these tend to specialize in various areas, in PR techniques, or in sectors where their clients operate. Even so, in some of the most awarded agencies their managers advocate deliberately breaking “the considered traditional organisation which is unable to adapt to the new requisites of the clients in a changing communicative environment” (SM19). These agencies back more transversal teams that at the same time rotate and combine ad hoc for each client because this is considered to promote diversity and the flexibility to adopt different perspectives and so favour creativity. As one of the directors states, “When we analyse a briefing, we do it from different perspectives since if only the specialists in the field do so, there is the possibility that always the same solutions are presented” (SM16).

4.5 Creativity as a professional skill

When asked which qualities and competencies are required in a PR professional, the senior managers who were interviewed agreed that amongst numerous other attributes, two directly linked to creativity are “curiosity” and “open mindedness.” They also named other characteristics of creative individuals as: “willingness and ability to learn,” “flexibility,” and “enthusiasm.” Furthermore, almost half of the interviewees made specific reference to creativity as one of the

essential skills professionals must possess whilst the remainder consider creativity as, “nice to have, but not a must have” (SM5).

4.6. The figure of creative director

Senior managers in Spain offered conflicting views about the significance of creative directors for the public relations industry. While some believe that this figure represents commitment to creativity, others argue that creativity is (or should be) an inherent quality of all public relations professionals, and consequently there is no need for a special role: “I don't see the role creative directors play in public relations. I do not quite see the point . . . This is a concept that draws heavily on the advertising industry” (SM10).

Size and available resources are also given as other reasons why the figure of creative director is not widespread in the Spanish market. However, as this study also shows, it does exist at a continental and international level in some of the global PR firms. Creative directors interviewed describe their main function as being “creativity facilitators.” Whether it be participating directly in the conception of campaigns, organising creativity workshops to employees, or elaborating creative resources:

I was always available to discuss client briefs, to act as an extra pair of eyes to make sure we were looking in the right place for ideas. I was also encouraged to challenge colleagues thinking, to help ensure they were following the right strategy and being bold in their thinking. (CD3)

4.7 Elements which limit and which stimulate creativity

For the senior managers who were interviewed, the lack of greater creativity in their proposals was attributed to a lack of time and resources. For the creative directors interviewed, the main factor limiting creativity in PR consultancies is negativity – understood in the broad sense as pessimism, lack of self-confidence, fear of rejection, insecurity and being afraid of making a fool of oneself. As one of the creative directors states,

Many people keep creative ideas to themselves because they fear being judged that the ideas aren't strong enough to be shared. I've found this especially true with people who hold positions in areas of PR that are perceived as non-creative, such as our corporate/healthcare practices. (CD4)

Consequently, creative directors consider it essential to create an environment of trust and freedom: “The atmosphere must encourage creativity by providing them with numerous opportunities to express their ideas as well as the freedom to use this without judgement” (CD3). In the words of another creative director,

These phrases don't help: “I don't like that” (try it, you just might like it), “That won't work” (never know till you try), “That's already been done” (we could do it differently or better). (CD1)

Table 1

Cluster #	Thematic cluster	Individual themes (Frequency)	Individual themes (Frequency)
		SENIOR MANAGERS IN SPAIN	INTERNATIONAL CREATIVE DIRECTORS
1	Creativity perception	Something related to visual design (8) Something more linked to advertising sector (7) Something even more and more demanded by clients (7) Something that helps to win awards (4) “fireworks” (1), “crazy ideas” (1), “experiments with soda” (1)	A way to resolve communication problems (4) A way to find novel and effective solutions (3) A way to search for multiple alternatives (3) A way to ensure that messages reach the stakeholders (2)
2	Creativity and PR specialities	Marketing Communications (14) Event planning (6) Online Communication (3)	All areas require the same level of creativity (4)

		Media Communications (2) All areas require the same level of creativity (4)	
3	Creativity techniques	Brainstorming (18) Mind mapping (1) Free association (1)	Brainstorming (4) Mind mapping (3) Free association (2) <i>Thinkertoys</i> (2) Solo and visual brainstorming (1) Attributes and elements (1) Metaphors and analogies (1) Force fitting (1) Checklist (1) Role-playing (1) <i>Six Thinking Hats</i> (1)
4	Creative process and agency structure	Generalists or full services (teams 13 specializing in PR techniques, PR specialities or the client's sector) (13) Specialised in a PR field (3) Integral communication creatives (3)	Global firms (4)
5	Creativity as a professional skill	Curiosity (11) Open-mindedness (10) Creativity (9) Enthusiasm (8) Willingness and ability to learn (7) Flexibility (6)	Creativity should be encouraged in all PR professionals (4)
6	The figure of creative director	This figure does not exist at a national level (16) This figure exists at a national level (3) It is not necessary, creativity should be provided by the account teams (16) The size and available resources of the agency do not allow us to include this figure (10) It is a figure which belongs to the advertising sector, not "ours" (6)	Functions of an international creative director: -Lead teams in creation (4) -Internally train agency professionals and share creativity knowledge (4) -Organise and lead creative sessions (3)
7	Elements which limit creativity	A lack of time (7) A lack of financial resources (6) Clients fair (6)	Negativity (4) A lack of flexibility due to hyper specialisation (4) A lack of time (3) A lack of investigation (2)
8	Encouraging creativity	Client backing (7) Assume risks (3) Work in cohesive teams (1) Out of work games and cultural and open air activities (1)	Specific training (4) Freedom and autonomy (3) Assume risks (2) Eliminate negativity and censorship (2) Increase self-confidence (2)

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Recognising creativity

It is necessary to go beyond the recognition of creativity as one of the qualities that a PR professional should have. Creativity cannot develop within the PR industry without clear and full backing from management in the form of stimulation and acknowledgment.

However, as the results of this study show, the fact that, for a significant number of the senior managers, creativity is still perceived as somewhat tactical, associated with the artistic world, visual, and even “belonging” to the neighbouring sector of advertising, does not help. Therefore, there is a need for creativity to be perceived as part of the strategic process of PR. As one of the interviewed creative directors stated, “Creativity is not just window dressing in a presentation; it wins business” (CD3).

5.2. Stimulating creativity

Stimulating creativity involves reinforcing and valuing the specific individual qualities of the professionals who work in PR consultancies. These qualities are linked to creativity and identified through psychology by authors as Landau (1987) and Sternberg (2006): an open attitude to questions, novelty and experimentation; the confidence in express oneself; the willingness to overcome obstacles; the capacity to assume risks; and the capacity to tolerate ambiguity.

Beyond personal qualities and professional competencies, our study also suggests the following cultural/environmental attitudes that could help to stimulate creativity in public relations:

- *Dare to take risks:* Creativity *per se* implies risks but managers and clients are reluctant to take them (El-Murad & West, 2003), and, consequently, in addition to the project design, creatives have the additional task of having to convince the clients. In the words of a creative director, “By its very definition, there is no such thing as a Big Idea which is safe. A Big Idea must break the rules, be risky, and more than likely, cause lots of people to be anxious” (CD2). As stated by the president of one of the most awarded agencies, “today the risk is to not take risks, since if you do what you've done a thousand times before you cannot expect very different results” (SM19). Creativity, being understood as part of the problem-solving process also requires individuals to be flexible (Runco, 2007). In PR this will mean new ways to deal with clients' communication issues.
- *Improve creativity training:* Moving away from determinism, the scientific investigation has helped to destroy the myths surrounding creativity and consider it a capacity that can be driven and, therefore, can be stimulated and developed (Boden, 1996; Sternberg, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). In the light of this, PR professionals should have training in creativity because, as one creative director assert, “Most people have no articulate and specific idea what creativity is. And yet, we expect people to be able to perform creativity. You wouldn't expect an employee to perform any other skill without training, why creativity?” (CD2).
- *Modify agency structures, shun hyperspecialisation and promote diversity:* Although there is efficiency in **specialisation** in public relations, creative directors point out that organisation

structures with hyperspecialised teams – whether by PR practice or client sector (actually the most widespread) – can hinder the capacity of their professionals when it comes to finding alternative solutions. Furthermore, as some studies suggest (Kurtzberg, 2010, Basset-Jones, 2005, Egan, 2005), diversity in expertise, background, gender, culture, abilities and skills between the team members can help flexibility in producing more original and different ideas.

- *Foster a working environment that discourages judgmental attitudes and eliminates negativity:* To enable creative proposals to emerge, the professionals who work within the agencies need to feel confident and not fear that their ideas will be immediately criticised by their colleagues or superiors. In fact, “an atmosphere of openness, curiosity and experimentation enables creativity to truly flourish” (CD4). Sharing case studies and best practices, as well as organising workshops on creativity that encourage collaboration, could help create a culture that encourages people not to keep their ideas to themselves.
- *Broaden creativity techniques:* The application of creativity techniques (refer to section 4.3 for examples) in the various phases of the PR process can, in addition to fostering the free-flow of ideas, help to defer evaluation and favour a setting in which the hierarchy and roles change for a while.
- *Incorporate the Creative Director role.* Changes in the traditional PR agency structures could be done to foster creativity. Although limits in budget and agency structure do not allow for the formal post of Creative Director in many PR consultancies, it is still possible to designate a creative facilitator role in the PR process. The informal position could, providing that the office director formally recognises it and allows it to influence account teams on creative issues, help to fuel creativity. Another option could be to gradually incorporate freelance creative specialists

who have traits and knowledge which, according to some studies (see Torr, 2008; Verbeke *et al.*, 2008), managers lack. This would add creative sparks in the idea generation process, which is something that is already happening in some consultancies (see, e.g., SM4). This role could initially be in an advisory position, and, depending on results, it could become a formal post in PR consultancies.

- *Reward creativity and fuel intrinsic and extrinsic motivation:* As social psychologist Amabile (2000) pointed out, creativity is linked to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. PR managers could encourage it by giving more autonomy and assigning projects according to personal professional interest, but also to drive recognition and reward creativity. Therefore, the presentation of novel ideas – even though the majority of them are ambiguous at the first phases – should always be welcomed with open ears and valued. As some of the interviewees point out, “from an idea which cannot be used an element may emerge which later helps find a viable solution” (SM19).

6. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper has analysed what the perception of creativity is within PR consultancies, detecting differences between those who manage the leading consultancies in the national market (Spain) and the international creative directors of the global PR firms. It has also highlighted differences in the way creativity is handled within the largest, and the most awarded, PR consultancies, with particular focus on the process of elaborating communication proposals.

The size of the office and the lack of resources are considered the main causes for not incorporating creative directors in offices in the national field, although, at a supranational level, these exist with a

basic role as “creativity facilitator.” Valuing creativity as a PR skill is not enough if creativity does not receive specific attention during the public relations process, and many of the creative techniques, which could be applied, remain unfamiliar and, therefore, unused.

The findings have implications beyond public relations consultancies and apply to research areas from agencies structures, culture and leadership; to the teaching of creativity in PR university studies.

The new communication landscape will influence the shape of PR agencies of the future and which competences and capabilities its leaders should acquire (Gregory & Willis, 2013). In this context, having an emotional leadership dimension (Jin, 2010) and soft skills could help with the management of teams and the driving of meaningful creativity.

Even though it was not the focus of study, this paper has also corroborated different practitioner surveys where clients place importance on the need for creativity in PR (The Holmes Report, 2012; 2013; ADECEC, 2008; Grupo Consultores, 2009; 2011; 2013). However, a future approach of qualitative academic research should consider studying clients' perception of creativity and its utility for evaluating the results of PR consultancies. Although clients seem to be demanding more creativity, PR consultancies, at least in Spain, are missing the business opportunity inherent in the demand, since the clients favour new integrated communication agencies with advertising as the core business. These new agencies are also winning important creativity awards in PR categories (see Cannes Lions 2013, Eurobest 2013), which they value as a way to attract talented professionals and clients. Traditional consultancies still perceive these awards as not truly relevant to their business.

The lack of a creative PR profile and the undervaluation of creativity among PR practitioners in Spain, could be because Advertising and PR form part of the same university degree in this country and creativity is highly advertising focused. This issue is currently being debated in professional and academic forums (see Vázquez-Gestal & Fernández-Souto, 2006; Xifra, 2007; Estanyol, 2012). Detailed content analysis of the degree syllabus could be done in the future to see how it evolves and adapts to the new industry demands. Those findings could then be compared with other countries in terms of creativity. In our study, those who are managers of PR consultancies have mainly journalistic backgrounds. The absence of creativity education in their university syllabus may also explain the low regard they have for this aspect. In the future, it may therefore be advisable to carry out surveys among other PR consultancy staff (account executives, account managers, etc.) to detect if different perception exist.

One of the key limitations of this investigation is its geographical boundaries (i.e., one particular section is focused only on Spain). Future research will be expanding to include other countries. Creativity in PR remains under researched but this research has sought to shed some light on its perception and management in PR consultancies.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (CREATIVE DIRECTORS) (PHASE A)

WEBER SHANDWICK, European Creative Director

BURSON-MARSTELLER, International Creative Director (1999-2002)

HILL AND KNOWLTON, Worldwide Creative Director

KETCHUM, Executive Vice President and Global Director of Strategic and Creative Planning

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (SENIOR MANAGERS)

(PHASE B)

BASSAT OGILVY COMUNICACIÓN Barcelona, Managing Director

BURSON-MARSTELLER Barcelona, Managing Director

EDELMAN Barcelona, Deputy General Manager

EQUIPO SINGULAR Spain, Founding Partner

HILL & KNOWLTON Spain, General Manager

INFORPRESS Spain, Vice president

INTERPROFIT Barcelona, Director of Strategy and Development

TINKLE Barcelona, Co-General Manager

WEBER SHANDWICK, Consumer Division Director

(PHASE C)

ACH, CEO and Vice President

APPLE TREE COMMUNICATIONS, Founding Partner and Executive Creative Director

BUNGALOW 25, General Manager

CLOTET COMUNICACIÓN-KETCHUM Spain, General Manager

ESTUDIO DE COMUNICACIÓN, CEO

KREAB & GAVIN ANDERSON, Managing Partner Iberia

PORTER NOVELLI Barcelona, Managing Director

LLORENTE & CUENCA, Partner and Senior Director

TORRES Y CARRERA, Founding Partner and General Manager

SHACKLETON, President

REFERENCES

ADECEC. <http://www.adecec.com/> [Data retrieved: 15th May 2010]

ADECEC (2008) *La comunicación y las relaciones públicas en España: Radiografía de un sector.*

Madrid, Spain: ADECEC.

Amabile, T. M. (2000). Stimulate creativity by fueling passion. In E. A. Locke (Ed.), *The Blackwell handbook of principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 331-341) Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell.

Bassett-Jones, N. (2005). The paradox of diversity management, creativity and innovation. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 14(2), 169-175

Boden, M. A. (1996). *Dimensions of creativity*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Cannes Lions Awards. <http://www.canneslions.com/winners> [Data retrieved: 14th December 2013]

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Dahlén, M., Rosengren, S.& Torn, T. (2008). Advertising creativity matters. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48(3), 392-403.

Daymon, C. (2000). Cultivating creativity in public relations consultancies: The management and organisation of creative work. *Journal of Communication Management*, 5(1), 17-30.

De Bono, E., & Markland, J. (1999). *Six thinking hats*. New York, NY: Back Bay Books.

Egan, T. B. (2005) Creativity in the context of team diversity: Team leader perspectives. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7(2), 207-225.

El-Murad, J., & West, D. C. (2003). Risk and creativity in advertising. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 19(5-6), 657-673.

El-Murad, J., & West, D. C. (2004). The definition and measurement of creativity: What do we know? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(2), 188-201.

Estanyol, E. (2012) La enseñanza de la creatividad aplicada en relaciones públicas, en el marco de los grados adaptados al EEES. In *III Congreso Internacional Asociación Española de Investigación de la Comunicación*. Tarragona, Spain: AE-IC.

Eurobest Awards. <http://www.eurobest.com/> [Data retrieved: 14th December 2013]

Florida, R. L. (2012). *The rise of the creative class-revisited*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (2004). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Golen, S. (1983). How to teach students to improve their creativity in a basic business communication class. *Journal of Business Communication*, 20(3), 46-57.

Green, A. (2010). *Creativity in public relations*. London, United Kingdom: Kogan Page.

Green, A. (1999). *Creativity in public relations*. London, United Kingdom: Kogan Page.

Gregory, A. (2008). Competencies of senior communication practitioners in the UK: An initial study. *Public Relations Review*, 34(3), 215-223.

Gregory, A., & Willis, P. (2013). *Strategic public relations leadership*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Grupo Consultores (2009). *PR Scope 2009. El estudio de Imagen de las Consultoras de Comunicación y Relaciones Públicas en España*. Retrieved from: <http://www.grupoconsultores.com/spa/files/prscope09.pdf> [Data retrieved: 12th December 2009]

Grupo Consultores (2011). *PR Scope 2011. El estudio de Imagen de las Consultoras de Comunicación y Relaciones Públicas en España*. Retrieved from: <http://www.grupoconsultores.com/spa/files/prscope11.pdf> [Data retrieved: 12th November 2011]

Grupo Consultores (2013). *PR Scope 2013. Una investigación sobre las tendencias de la industria y la imagen de las consultoras de comunicación y agencias de RRPP en España*. Retrieved from: <http://www.grupoconsultores.com/spa/files/prscope13.pdf> [Data retrieved: 4th December 2013]

Guilford, J. P. (1950). Creativity research: Past, present and future. *American Psychologist*, 5(1), 444-454.

Heiser, R., Sierra, J. & Torres, I (2008) Creativity via cartoon spokespeople in print ads: capitalizing on the distinctiveness effect. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 37(4), 75-84.

Jin, Y. (2010). Emotional leadership as a key dimension of public relations leadership: A national survey of public relations leaders. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(2), 159-181.

Koestler, A. (1964). *The act of creation*. London, United Kingdom: Hutchinson.

Kurtzberg, T. (2005) Feeling creative, being creative: An empirical study of diversity and creativity in teams. *Creativity Research Journal*, 17(1), 51-65.

Landau, É. (1987). *El vivir creativo: Teoría y práctica de la creatividad*. Barcelona, Spain: Herder.

Lehnert, K., Till, B. and Carlson, B. (2013). Advertising creativity and repetition: recall, wearout and wearing? effects. *International Journal of Advertising*, 32(2), 211-231.

Lesly, P. (1966). Real creativity in public relations. *The Public Relations Quarterly*, 10(3/4), 8-16.

Mednick, S. (1962). The associative basis of the creative process. *Psychological Review*, 69(3), 220-232..

Michalko, M. (2010). *Thinkertoys: A handbook of creative-thinking techniques*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Moriarty, S. E. (1997). The big idea: Creativity in public relations. In C. L. Caywood (Ed.), *The handbook of strategic public relations & integrated communications*(pp. 554-563). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Mumford, M. D. (2000). Managing creative people: Strategies and tactics for innovation. *Human Resource Management Review*, 10(3), 313-351.

Osborn, A. F. (1953). *Applied imagination*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Parker, Wayne, & Kent Ltd. (2005). *The management of creativity in the public relations process*.

Retrieved from

http://www.pwkpr.com/downloads/The_Management_of_Creativity_in_the_PR_Process_PW&K.pdf [Data retrieved: 12th March 2013]

Partington, D. (2000). Building grounded theories of management action. *British Journal of Management*, 11(2), 91-102.

PR Noticias (2010). *Ranking de Agencias de prnoticias: segunda oleada 2009*. Retrieved from: <http://www.prnoticias.com/index.php/prexclusivo/26-prcomunicacion/10032109-ranking-de-agencias-de-prnoticias-segunda-oleada-2009> [Data retrieved: 15th May 2010]

Puesto Base (2011). *El sector de las Relaciones Públicas en España. Análisis económico*. Retrieved from <http://www.torresycarrera.com/blog/puestobase/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/Informe-PR-Spain.pdf> [Data retrieved: 1st April 2013]

Rhodes, M. (1961). An analysis of creativity. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 42(7), 305-310.

Runco, M. A. (2007). *Creativity: Theories and themes: Research, development and practice*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Sheinin, D., Varki, S. & Ashley, C. (2011) The differential effect of ad novelty and message usefulness on brand judgements. *Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 5-17.

Sternberg, R. J. (2006). The nature of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(1), 87-98.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tatarkiewicz, W. (2002). *Historia de seis ideas: Arte, belleza, creatividad, mimesis, experiencia estética*. Madrid, Spain: Tecnos.

Taylor, I. A. (1959). The nature of the creative process. In P. Smith (Ed.), *Creativity: An examination of the creative process*(pp. 51-82). New York, NY: Hastings House.

The Holmes Report (2010). *Global Rankings*. Retrieved from: <http://worldreport.holmesreport.com/> [Data retrieved: 15th march 2010]

The Holmes Report; Ketchum, & Now-Go-Create. (2012). *Creativity in PR: A global study*. Retrieved from: <http://www.holmesreport.com/uploadedfiles/CreativityInPR.pdf> [Data retrieved: 15th July 2013]

The Holmes Report; Ketchum, & Now-Go-Create. (2013). *Creativity in PR: A global study*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.holmesreport.com/uploadedfiles/ckfilemanager/files/CreativityInPR2013.pdf> [Data retrieved: 16th December 2013]

Vázquez-Gestal, M., & Fernández-Souto, A.B. (2006). Creatividad y relaciones públicas. Bases para una primera reflexión. *III Simposium de profesores universitarios de creatividad publicitaria* (pp. 107-112). Barcelona, Spain: Trípodos Extra.

Verbeke, W, Hans, P., le Blanc, F. And van Ruiten, Nienke (2008). Finding the keys to creativity in ad agencies: using climate, dispersion and size to examine award performance. *Journal of Advertising*, 37(4), 121-130.

Wallas, G. (1926). *The art of thought*. London, United Kingdom: Jonathan Cape.

Wilcox, D. L., & Cameron, G. T. (2007). *Public relations: Strategies and tactics*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Xifra, J. (2007). Undergraduated public relations in Spain: Endangered species? *Public Relations Review*, 33(2), 206-213.