Models for Creative Process

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Abstract

Each and every creation, artistic, scientific, or commercial, adopts certain guidelines to achieve that position. Scientific creations are the results of convergent thinking where as artistic creations are results of divergent and convergent thinking both. But in advertising it is difficult to conclude that big ideas are result of either convergent or divergent thinking or both. Considering the problem the researcher tried to identify the creative process especially used by the creative people in advertising world. It was revealed through the study that there is a common creative process followed by the creative people in advertising.

CREATIVITY

The creative act is a free and independent force, immanently inherent only in a person, a personality. Only something arising in original substance and possessing the power to increase power in the world can be true creativity... Creativity is an original act of personalities in the world. Creativity, as the experts of the field have undertaken, is simply a technique for producing ideas to achieve something new and relevant. Mayo (1959), the psychologist, defined this concept in his Psychological Technology as, the process of bringing something new into birth. On the other hand, Young (1960) was of the view that the combination of existing in new and unexpected ways could be conceptualized as creativity. Whereas Frank Barron (1969) highlighted this idea as "a discovery of something i.e. not only novel but also useful, is relevant or economical, elegant or valuable".

In this context it is pointed out that there are many definitions presented by the scholars emphasizing on different facets of creativity. Baron's definition has emphasized output of creative efforts, whereas there

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are some others who have given emphasis on creative process. They have undertaken it as divergent thinking, the seeking of relationships between previously unrelated concepts or frames or references, of exploring the under known. But they may be creativity or may not be creative. Therefore, we can say that this is a process of creativity rather than creativity itself. All others have emphasized on certain aspects of creativity and correlated with certain states of being. Psychologist like Maslow (1959) and Barron (1969) identified creativity with openness in expressing feelings. They have also identified a number of additional personality traits and utilities that distinguish creative from non-creative persons. Kandwalla (1984) reviewed all the above propositions and asserted that each one of these views of creativity was flawed.

The term creativity may be defined as a creative state of mind for expressing the rational feeling to bring something new, relevant, useful and valuable from existing matters or ideas. The rational aspect is a by-product of the available alternate ways to suit with a particular creation. The creative state of mind and the output of this stage i.e. creative thinking consists of alternate phases of imaginative (divergent) and rational (convergent) thinking. It is not necessary that if people think in divergent way, the outcome will be definitely creative but it is an effort in the way of creativity

The present research paper focuses on creative process in advertising; therefore, the concept of creativity as defined in various ways has to be rationalized so that it would be helpful in identifying common creative process. We have undertaken this concept to understand and analyse the frame of reference and the state of mind of those advertisers who have created particular advertisement for products. "The impetus for creativity lies in the desire to improve in the urge to replace the existing by a new improved one. It is an ability to deal with complexities and subtleties to shatter structure and see problems from new perspectives".

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to discover 'new facts' and 'verify the old' regarding creative process. To access the most common creative process used by the creative people in the field of advertising. In view of lack of definite research findings on creativity in India, hypothesis has not been framed in the present research paper. However, we have found research questions to be more suitable with objectives set for the research. In accordance with demand of the problem and objectives, given research question has been formulated:

➲ Which is the most common creative process used by the creative people?

UNIVERSE AND SAMPLING

The area of present research work was spread all over India. Metropolitan centers and big industrial cities have been reported as center of mega advertising agencies. (Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkatta, Madras, Ahmedabad). The people working as art directors, copywriters, visualizers, producers, directors, photographers etc in different advertising agencies are selected for study. The sample size is 50 (fifty).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To assess and examine creative process an elaborate interview schedule and questionnaire was prepared for collecting information. Before taking up actual field investigation, a pilot study was conducted randomly. The objective was to test and verify the questionnaires. On the basis of the findings a summary report was prepared and that suggested many points for reconsideration. The pilot study also called for some fundamental changes in body structure of interview schedule. After in-depth consideration of creative process, it was felt necessary to formulate different types of interview schedule to judge the aspects of creativity.

Any scientific research has not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. Therefore, each and every research work has some limitations

and one must highlight these limitations, which will become the objective or guideline in future study. It is very difficult for any individual to work alone on such a vast and virgin topic like 'Creative Process'. But an effort has been made in this direction in the Indian context in the best possible way. Inspite of this, there are some points which the researcher feels needs further in-depth study.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Each and every creation, whether it is artistic, scientific, or commercial adopts certain guidelines to achieve that position. The only difference is that scientific creations are the results of convergent thinking where as artistic creations are results of both divergent and convergent thinking. When creativity is related to advertising things automatically become complex.

In advertising the word creation is mainly used for the big idea or creating an idea. Creativity is both the brain and heart of the advertisement. Brain because it directs and regulates the element or association of the advertisement towards problem solution, heart because it purifies and feeds the elements of the advertisement. Thus, each and every effort of advertising creative persons is directed towards the generation of creative ideas in the form of solving a particular problem. But, one thing, which remains a mystery : how is an idea generated?

Several experts were interviewed for this purpose all over the world but nobody was able to shed light on any scientific process for idea generation. Sometimes, people in advertising comment that they even don't know how they achieved or arrived at an idea. It simply came to their minds. This is applicable to the idea generated by an individual. But when a group or team is working on particular problem, a small spark of light can be seen. Because of teamwork they were able to say something logical, which can be interpreted as a creative process for idea generation.

From time to time several advertising (creative) experts generated different hypothesis of the creative process. However, none of these hypotheses on creative process have been accepted in general. It is only a stop-and-go, catch-as-catch-can operation which can never be exact enough to rate it as a scientific process but definitely it is the means to an end.

German Scientist, Hermann Von Helmholtz in the 1920s, propounded the very first theory. He suggested that the creative theory is developed in three-stages i.e. preparation, incubation and illumination.

Moreover, these three stages were accepted and added to another stage: Verifications, by the English Political Scientist and Sociologist, Graham Wallas. His hypothesis was accepted and Graham was considered to be master of idea generation process for further 35 years. But in 1960, a total new concept was created without any reference to existing ideas. James Webb Young formulated a technique for producing an idea as follows:

1. The gathering of raw materials - both the materials of your immediate problem and the materials which come from a constant enrichment of your store of general knowledge.

2. The working over of these materials in your mind.

3. The incubating stage, where you let something besides the conscious mind to the work of synthesis.

4. The actual birth of the idea - the "Eureka! I have it!" stage.

5. The final shaping and development of the idea to practical usefulness.

James has given the theory, which neither contradicts the existing theories nor accepts it. Young refers to the incubation stage as a period for digesting food or turning the problems over to the unconscious. He also refers to the illumination stages as a period of idea appearance and the verification stage as a period of adopting the idea to reality. Thus, young relies strictly on the guideline of the different stage not the stages as a whole. During this period only most popular and widely accepted theory for creative process was propounded. Alex Osborn extended the existing

theories by adding three more stages in creative process and stated that it in no way matches the scientific accuracy.

The phases are:

1. Orientation : Define the problem
2. Preparation : Gathering pertinent data
3. Analysis   : Breaking down the relevant materials.
4. Ideation   : Piling up alternatives by way of ideas.
5. Synthesis   : Putting the pieces together
6. Evaluation   : Judging the result and ideas

Osborn way of idea generation was accepted and appreciated by every one. The addition in Wallas model by Osborn suggested Orientation stage where creative individual orients the self toward the problem to be solved. But this only makes you realize your full potential in idea generation. It can't develop your creative skills.

In the mean time one more theory came into existence propounded by Frank Alexander Armstrong, which has the following phases:

1. Assessing the situation

2. Defining the Problem

3. Use of the subconscious in creativity

4. The idea producing session

5. Use of Judgment in selecting the Best Idea

He also provided the checklist that whether you are following the right process or not, which means that he compared the maximum possibilities where people fail in idea generation.

In addition to above theories, Pradip N. Khondwalla has given a purely thinking base creative process which is best described as "a cycle of convergent thinking (preparation) - divergent thinking (illumination that restructures the problem) - convergent thinking (verification and extension)

Despite the difference of opinion in the stages of creative process there are similarities, which shape the creating process in a concrete form. Like, all the models included in the preparation stage, when information and material are gathered. In this stage, orientation was summed up that the creative people would take the problem to the right direction.

Next, follows a kind of hiatus period, when the information and material are left to percolate in the mind, i.e. ideation stage. In this stage the creative person recycled the whole process of orientation and preparation in a way that nothing was left untouched. Then the real incubation starts. Whereby it means it "to lie down", thus it carries a connotation of purposive relaxation. In this application to the working of the imagination, the term covers the phenomenon by which ideas spontaneously well up into the creative person consciousness.

Incubation is followed by a period of insight, the "Eureka" illumination stage. This stage is the emergence of an idea or solution. Don Fabun calls this 'A-ha' stage. The solution has come into view, and the conscious mind grasps it with pleasure and relief. Archimedes names it as Eureka'!

And, finally in verification stage, the idea or problems solution is elaborated and brought to reality. The final stage once again, coming down gives way to rejuvenation and paves the way for re-entering the creative process all over again as one tackles a new problem. And, of course, testing is the surest form of verification. It also includes new surveys. This could do most to confirm or repudiate the value of the idea.

All the above four stages, thus became parameters of the creative process. James L. Marra in his book, "Advertising Creativity: Technique for Generation of Ideas", has also, given the consent for all the four stages i.e. preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Thus, we can conclude that for any problem solution or idea generation these four stages of creative process must be followed.

The actual practical creative process is little different from the theories given by the different experts. In advertising, the creative idea requires maximum attention and support. And the whole process through which the idea is generated has been divided into two groups. This is based on our survey and supported by the analysis of our case studies namely group thinking and individual thinking.

Group Thinking

The agency consists of number of people engaged in client service, copy writing, art, research, production strategy & planning and so on. At very first moment, when any agency gets the account of any advertiser the administrative department allots the account to the client servicing team which generally includes five people in a team. This team interacts with the clients whenever required and understands their problem to be solved through advertising. The clients briefed the strategy to them as to what they actually want from the product and agency. This way a complete communication bridge is established between advertiser and client servicing team. In the words of Ravi Gupta, Managing Director, Trikaya Grey, 'brief 'has a great importance. "If you give a proper brief, you're halfway there as far as creativity is concerned. If you give a bad brief to a good creative team, you get bad work, but *if you give good brief, you get very good work.*" (Personal interview) And, if required, client-servicing team also includes one or two persons from strategic and planning department, who help in developing further strategy for the product.

Once the briefing session between the clients and agency people is over the main task for the client servicing people is to get acquainted with the product thoroughly by their own means excluding the brief. This step sometimes demands the qualitative and quantitative research regarding the product, awareness, buying perception and so on. The main players in this stage are the strategy and planning people. They conduct the survey (research) either by the in - house research wing or by hiring professional

advertising and marketing research group like MARG, IMRS, etc.

Once the report on the particular product is finalized it is handed over to the creative team for the idea generation.

Creative Team

Similar to the setting up of a client servicing team, the administrative department finalizes a creative team. This includes mainly one person from the copy and one from the art side. It may vary from two to seven persons team headed by one of the members for the particular ad or product/ brand. The joint efforts are made involving a specific advertising problem. All the members are free to come up with an idea. It's not necessary that copywriter should suggest the guide lines for the headline, slogan, or copy because some times it is the person from art side suggests the concept or idea for an advertisement to the team. Onida TV, Timex watch, Red Eveready Batteries, Polo, all these are the results of creative team efforts. We can't distinguish, excludes any person of the team from the idea generation. As Ravi Gupta, Managing Director, Trikaya Grey comments: "Let's say there are six people in a team. A creative person is part of that team, but he's there not as a creative person, but as a mind. I've always found that a small idea may come from anyone. It's not from whom the idea is ignited that is important, but how the thought was developed in an advertising strategy. So, on the one hand you need a team to throw up ideas and on the other hand, you need a brilliant individual, who can pick up the one or two highly relevant thoughts from the hundred and develop them. (Personal interview)

In view of the foregoing observation, the need of including people from different fields is a must. Osborn proposed that the process of idea generation by the creative team as, "members of such a team each work separately, then together, then separately and so on, to ensure maximum creativity". He also warns it is the creative pitfall of stagnation which can result if each team member comes to rely upon the others for the idea.

Our survey also focuses on the revealing fact that each & every creative person is not in favour of the creative team or part of it. Out of 100 respondents only 38% agreed that to be regarded as a good team member is important to them. Where as 53% are fully disagreed with it and rest 9% respondents were in between or don't know.

Thus, we can conclude here that the lack of freeness and compulsion to work within the guidelines sometimes restricts the creative efforts.

Brainstorming

The Indian advertising as well as complete advertising world admired the brainstorming session as the perfect technique of creativity (idea generation). Alex Osborn developed this method. It can be used in any field where ideas are needed but largely developed in advertising. This technique was first used in an advertising agency by Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn in 1939.

The procedure involves a chairman working with a group of five to ten person (later on numbers were increased). He describes the problem and the group generates as many ideas as possible in a free wheeling discussion that may last from minutes to hours.

These idea-producing conferences operate under the following rules:
1. Criticism is ruled out: Adverse judgment of ideas must be withheld until later.
2. "Free wheeling" is welcomed: The wilder the idea, the better; it is easier to tame down than to think up.
3. Quantity is wanted: The greater the number of ideas the more the likelihood of winners.

An addition was made through Osborn theory:
4. Combination and improvement are sought: In addition to contributing ideas of their own, participants should suggest how ideas of others can be turned into better ideas: or how two or more ideas can be

joined into still another idea.

The chairman maintains some semblance of order, keeps would be humorists under control and suggests a fresh direction when the group seems to run out of gas, and cut offs the session when fatigue occurs.

However, Armstrong criticizes this approach. He suggested the major flaws in brainstorming are:

1. It is wasteful because having no basis in logic, it cannot repeat itself methodically; it discourages penetrating thought and actually inhibits creative thinking.

2. It is destructive of personality because, in giving a person's ideas to others to tinker and toy with before they are even fully developed; it robs the creative man of both material reward and the richest reward in the world of creativity: the immense personal satisfaction of successfully solving a problem.

3. It promotes conformity of thought and destroys the independence of judgment that is the hallmark of the creative thinker.

But the former draw back suggested by Armstrong can be overcome by recording who thought of what; and later developed by allowing an incubation period as an aftermath of the session. If the participants adhere to continue thinking at their own pace about the problem after the formal session is over, they can let their ideas incubate at their own convenience. These little modifications made brainstorming more acceptable among creative people.

In reality, through brain storming sessions several creative ideas are generated.In our survey of creative people, we find that 51% of the respondents were agreed on, "When brain storming in a group, I am able to think up more ideas more rapidly than can most others". On the other hand 34% voted in favor of In-Between or don't know. Rest 15% disagreed with the concept of brainstorming.

Thus, we can conclude here that there are those who believe in brainstorming and those who do not. The decision ultimately must rest with the individual.

Individual Thinking

Mostly, the medium class advertising agencies follow the creation route of individual thinking. The big advertising agencies however rely upon individual thinking.. Here,by individual thinking we mean to say that only one person thinks over the problem and its solution. No matter, how he generated the idea, or took the help of any other source the credit only goes to that individual. As Osborn in his final analysis suggested, ideation is the product of the individual. In his words,

"Despite the advance in organized research, the creative power of the individual still counts most..." To the far-flung research staffs of Du Pont, the late Doctor Earnest Benger has spelled out this philosophy. "No idea has been generated except in a single human mind.... No matter how this thought is tossed around or how you add to it by consideration of the effect of getting people into a co-ordinate organization, the fact still remains that every idea is the product of a single brain".

If we correlated individual thinking with reference to Indian advertising, we find all the established creative persons adopted this method. And with the help of this they reached to the top position in a very short period. Sometimes ad agencies did not disclose the name of the creative person. Even though the idea was the result of the thinking of a single man, it would be treated as an effort of the creative team. Inspite of that nobody can replace the individual brilliance especially in the field of creative advertising. Sil Jam, Surf Ultra, Ariel, Bajaj Scooters and Cadbury all these campaigns are the result of individual thinking and the creative personalities responsible for the campaigns are Elsi Nangi, Rajeev Himani, Tanaz Kalyaniwala, Adi Poocha and Piyush Pandey respectively.

Our survey of creative people also focusses on these aspects:

Question	Agreed	Don't know	Disagreed
I prefer to work with others in a team effort rather than solo	19%	6%	75%
I concentrate harder on what ever interests me than do most people	79%	14%	7%
It is more important for me to do what I believe to be right than to try to win the approval of others	83%	12%	5%
During my adolescence, I frequently had a desire to be alone and to pursue my own interest and thoughts	62%	23%	15%

On the basis of above finding we can conclude that:

- About 75% of the creative person prefer to work solo not with the team.

- About 79% of the creative persons concentrate only on whatever interests them than what interests most people.

- About 83% of the creative persons do whatever they think right.

- About 62% of the creative persons had a desire to be alone during their adolescence and to purse their own interest & thoughts.

Thus, these facts reveal the individual thinking is well accepted and established the process of idea generation (creativity).

The process of individual thinking is further divided into different steps through which creative people generate ideas.

1. **Day Dreaming :** In other words it is like releasing your body and mind. Let's go off the conscious preoccupation with a problem and to help solve the most difficult of enigmas. Quietitude reverie, walking, soft music, relaxing all seems to help with daydreaming. And sometimes just plain sleeping on a problem will help to jog loose a creative insight. This fact was supported by 88% of the respondents.
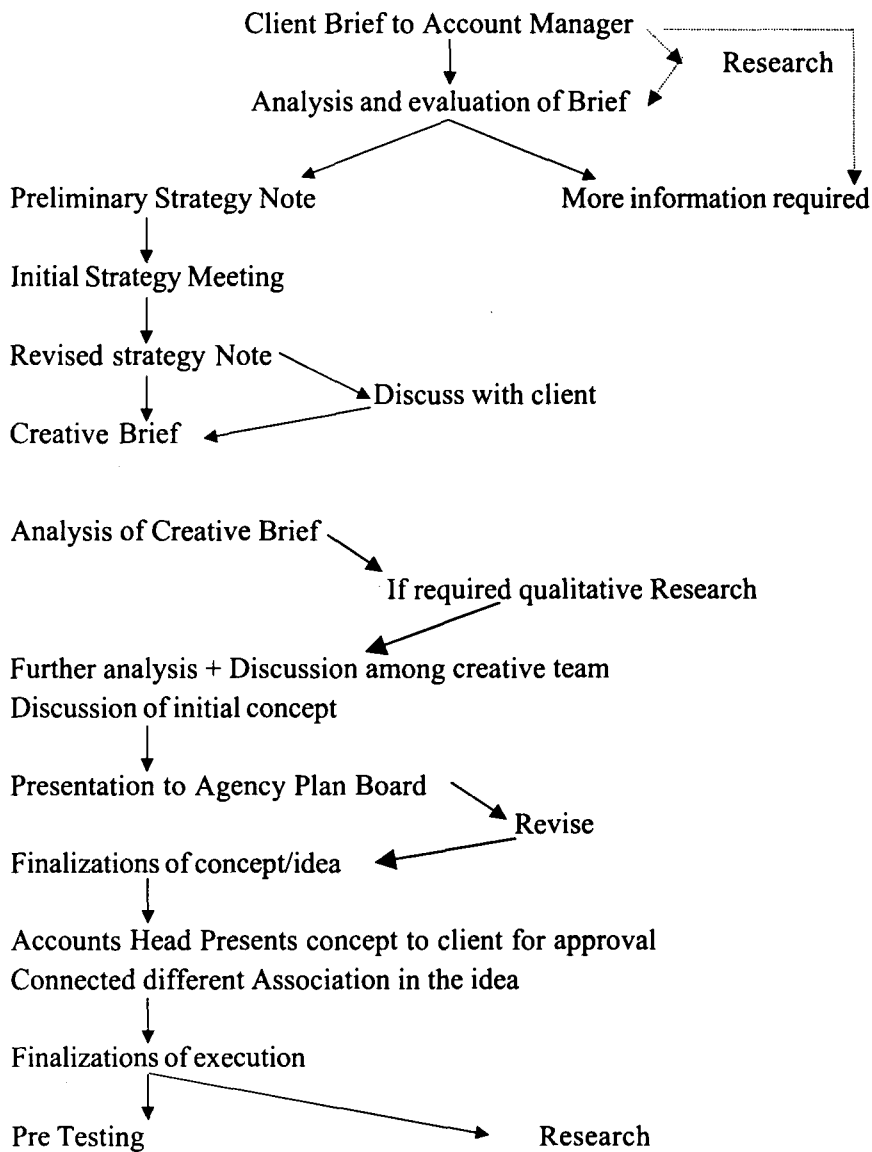
2. **Busying the left-brain :** It uses the approach of giving to the left-brain something repetitive to do while freeing the subconscious, creative powers of thought. The most valued ideas come about while one is involved in a whole series of mundane, repetitive tasks. The fact was supported by 62% of the respondents that they often get their best idea when doing nothing in particular.

3. **Brain Writing :** An excursion session is usually held after people have been working on a problem using more traditional approaches like brainstorming and brain writing. In these techniques, problem solvers are told to put the problem aside and go through a word association exercise. A word that has a lot of visual appeal is then chosen and people spend sometime constructing factors that are based on the word.

4. **Questioning Attitude :** This involves self-questioning. The possibilities of generating alternatives are almost endless. Through probing and questioning, alternatives are generated and the possibility of discovering creative solutions is enhanced. A questioning attitude is a useful technique for expanding ones creativity, and all one needs to do is to develop a questioning attitude through asking questions.

5. **Use of Analogy :** Using personal analogies to more information stored in the sub-conscious to a conscious level and thereby making it available for problem solving is an effective technique for promoting creativity.

All these different processes of creativity (individual thinking) have only one motive to solve the problem i.e. idea generation. No one bothers as to how they reached or created the concept, only thing is it must be creative.

Once the idea/theme of the advertisement was generated, the creative people connect it with the ADNORMS to see essence of creative idea in it. Then only they look forward to connect separate realities to create new realities like feature, selling point & benefit or problem solutions to the audience's needs or wants. These connections made the idea creative not

for the sake of creativity but for the sake of purposeful communication, also. In keeping with the above findings, the creative process is illustrated in figure 1.

FIGURE 1 : Creative Process/Mix

Client Brief to Account Manager

Research

Analysis and evaluation of Brief

Preliminary Strategy Note

More information required

Initial Strategy Meeting

Revised strategy Note

Discuss with client

Creative Brief

Analysis of Creative Brief

If required qualitative Research

Further analysis + Discussion among creative team
Discussion of initial concept

Presentation to Agency Plan Board

Revise

Finalizations of concept/idea

Accounts Head Presents concept to client for approval
Connected different Association in the idea

Finalizations of execution

Pre Testing

Research

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