

## The Entrepreneurs As Artists. Re-Thinking Cultural Entrepreneurship

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of artists-entrepreneurs in the contemporary society, using a survey-based empirical analysis. The most part of cultural industries are represented by profit-oriented enterprises engaged in the creation, production and distribution of art, cultural, and creative goods and services. This article inspects the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capacity, firm performance, competitive advantage, R&D and creativity/organizational culture in the cultural industries context. Scholars examining the cultural industries have largely concentrated on the characteristics of individual cultural entrepreneurs or the macroeconomic benefits of creative clusters, but have not investigated potential antecedents to firm-level performance. In the context of the cultural industries, entrepreneurial orientation defines the entrepreneurial approaches, strategies and actions adopted by managers, while innovation capacity describes the organizational environment that supports the development and maintenance of the enterprises innovative capabilities.*

**KEYWORDS** –cultural entrepreneurship, cultural entrepreneurs, artists, arts, innovation

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, our society tries to enlarge all its levels, there is a continuous competition and a wish of development, thus, the businesses need people with a lot of entrepreneurial talent, a lot of energy and ambition. The environments are dynamic, turbulent and sometimes really “tricky”, so in order to obtain impressive results and rates of growth some special characteristics, behaviors and techniques should be studied, learned and applied. This paper tries to create a framework to identify the profile of artists-entrepreneurs and to describe some new trends in the field of cultural entrepreneurship. As Thompson stated since 2003: “...the entrepreneurial styles, competencies, values, theories and practices, are vastly reoriented in this part of the world” this article seeks to bring into evidence: the impact of teaching cultural management and entrepreneurship skills, the characteristics of the career models who are ready to risk everything and to still go on even if they fail sometimes, and not in the last which are the intellectual stimulations which drive to important values and events in the cultural sector” (Thompson, [1]). Kidd in 2012 mentioned that there is an increasing recognition—mostly from the cultural sector—that the role of the “artist” in contemporary society is changing. The artist was seen as a genius, often “being” or “being put” by others in isolation (Kidd, [2]), but now for him it is apparently given at least, a more important role in the public life. Mulcahy in 2003 [3] defined the entrepreneur as a contractual intermediary and that the cultural manager has a clear role, that is an advocate of culture. Rentschler (2002, 2001, [4,5]) also treated the managerial qualities of the entrepreneur as a contractual intermediary (or creative manager), some of them being the following: “to speak to groups outside the cultural milieu; to schedule selected events and exhibit for maximum communal participation in celebratory events; to develop programs to encourage visitors to become members/subscribers and eventually donors/patrons; to contract major philanthropists, community leaders and political decision makers and to be active in the cultural tourism, community and regional development and civic affairs.” (Marinova & Borza, [6])

### II. RE-THINKING CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The major reason for research in this specific area has traditionally been connected to the growing discussions regarding the entrepreneurial orientation of professional artists and their chance to employability. The people who start new businesses are very different, regarding their entrepreneurial talent, temperament or abilities they possess. So, what signifies the re- of this re-thinking? Küpers et. al in 2017 mentioned that literarily *re-thinking* means *to think about something again*, in particular *with a view to changing one's opinions, understandings and doing* etc. However, there are many other levels of meaning which give profoundness to *re-thinking* (Küpers et. al., [7]). The entrepreneurship has been examined from different perspectives but it still has a

lot of unsolved situations. Shumpeter's (1934,[8]) pointed out the fact that entrepreneurship is focused around innovation regardless of whether it is associated with production of goods or services, market sources of supply, or organisational structures, and brings about new but more relevant combinations.(Marinova&Borza, [9])

The general notion of entrepreneurship itself has been an arena for social innovation, and it continues to be developed, enhanced, redefined and submitted to the widely perceived contrary conceptions of establishing both economic and social value (Lisetchi&Brancu, [10]). According to Lundmark and Westelius (2014,[11]) , the traditional conceptions of entrepreneurship have involved: "1) high growth ventures, 2) innovative ventures, 3) recognition and exploitation of opportunities, and 4) creation of new organizations (Lundmark&Westelius, [11)]". Over the last few years these traditional concepts have been largely extended by remarking more social and cultural dimensions of the entrepreneurial core, actions and activities with considerable discordance and divergent assessments of progress across the various guises of entrepreneurship (e.g., Katz, [12]; Klein, et. al., [13]; Hervieux et. al., [14]). (Cheek, [15])

The term of "cultural entrepreneurship" has been more and more used during the last few decades, reflecting the rapid increasing importance of the "quaternary sector of the economy", of course this including knowledge-based industries(Albinsson, [16]).It is important to mention that at the beginning of 21st century there is a growing value of culture in the socio-economic development. Klimczuk in 2014 [17] established that the cultural industries identify the area that is the main source of economic growth. Similarly in other enterprises from different sectors, the cultural industries has as a target more profits, "analyze market opportunities, assume risk, and confront the uncertainties of the market and the users' request"(HKU, [18]). Garnham in 2005 [19] stated that a better information and the knowledge economy represent an important moment in the development of capitalism at the same level with the industrial revolution;it generates major social and cultural transitions that explain the term "information society", which has various interpretations. Or, distinctly the author also sustained that: "information society is an emphasis on the increasing importance of symbolic or cultural production, now dubbed "information" or "knowledge", within capitalist economies". (Garnham, [19]; Marinova&Borza,[6]; HKU, [18])

The entrepreneurship is conditioned by how fast innovations or creativity can be incorporated into the company's activities with different profiles (Marinova&Borza,[6]).Janáková in 2012 underlined that "creativity means the constantly aspiration at the process of innovation and progress". Moreover, creativity and innovation management are significant keys to any effort for being prosper in a business world (Janáková, [20]). In other words, the efforts of creativity in companies or in the entrepreneurship should be capable to supply innovation and contribute to solutions for different problems. The generation of new ideas is often, the main activity of creative management and the vision, strategy, goals or beliefs are all considered "tools" of creativity. (Marinova&Borza,[6])

In essence, the 're-' is re-lating to entrepreneurship and its concepts, issues and practices otherwise, rendering different relationships and create a distinction(Küpers et. al.,[7]).The terms entrepreneurship, cultural entrepreneurship and arts entrepreneurship have never been distinctly defined, and the endeavors to characterize what entrepreneurs do and how they behave are similar to the attempts to describe what managers do(Sternal, [21]). Gary Beckman presented a short overview of the ideas on entrepreneurship both in the economic and beyond the economic understanding, evocative of the opinion of Peter F. Drucker who emphasized that "entrepreneurship is by no means limited to the economic sphere", and that the "entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity". Drucker also affirmed that entrepreneurship is linked to creativity as the source of inspiration and innovation(Sternal, [21]).

Linda Essig described that between the current ideas of cultural entrepreneurship two aspects dominate: "entrepreneurship as new venture creation and entrepreneurship as behavior characterized by opportunity recognition and innovation." She also extended that: "the latter seems to translate in the artistic sphere into individual artist self-management and self-actualization." (Beckman &Essig, [22]) Trying to define the domain as a field of inquiry and practice, Essig affirmed that entrepreneurship in artistic/cultural field is in the same time a social science because it "involves the social interaction of artist and audience or market", a humanities discipline – as it is "a universal form of human action" and a creative attempt – as it involves "making". (Sternal, [21])

Bissonnette andArcand in 2018 remarked that "as with the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, effectuation theory challenges many of the ideas behind the main entrepreneurial theories that focus on the existence of business opportunities and the efficient use of resources; and that rely on the possibility to predict the market" [23].Saravathy (2001,[24]) attributed to these theories a causal logic. Contrarily, effectual logic is founded on the idea that reality is unknown and uncertain and that it cannot be anticipated. In agreement with the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, effectuation theory expects "that entrepreneurs mostly act without being certain about the existence of a demand, market or potential revenues for what is offered."(Saravathy, [24])

The concept of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has derived from its ability to describe “performance heterogeneity across multiple contexts” (Anderson, et. al., [25]; Covin&Slevin, [26]; Lee, et. al.,[27]; Lumpkin &Dess, [28]).Originally elaborated by Miller (1983,[29]), EO measures and analyses the extent to which firm managers are innovative, proactive and risk-taking in their strategic decision-making. (Marinova&Borza, [6]).Innovativeness signifies a tendency to support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes, through- departing from settled traditional practices and technologies (Walter, et. al., [30]; Lumpkin &Dess, [28]).The cultural industries represent a rich framework for exploring and analyzing potential relationships between entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capacity (IC), firm performance, competitive advantage, R&D and creativity/organizational culture because companies in the cultural industries compete largely on their ability to cultivate their innovative, creative, artistic and aesthetic competencies while directing the competencies towards the best marketplace opportunities. Miller and Friesen (1982) stressed the fact that the risk-taking is associated with a willingness and capacity to achieve resources to projects where results are not clearly evident and the costs of failure may be unpredictable(Parkman, et. al., [31]).

According to Cunliffe (2003, [32]), re-thinking is about problematizing existing assumptions, reasons and rational values, rules, routines that conduct not only knowledge production but also all the activities in practice.

The field of cultural (arts) entrepreneurship, a rather challenging hybrid, transcending discipline, encompassing various points of view and methods, seems to be abstract, not clearly delineate, and – for some – necessarily associated and attached to artistic education. Although it is not yet recognized as an academic prestigious discipline, but simply as a practical activity, it has been an important part of the artistic and cultural life for a long time. Therefore, it is indeed suitable to propose cultural entrepreneurship a subject of scientific continuous inquiry and discussion(Sternal, [21]). Innovative thinkers and visionaries arranged into a structure the cultural, financial, social and human capital, generating revenue from a cultural activity and/or creatively retain the intrinsic value of cultural artifacts, practices, habits and traditions. The last impact of such thinking and practice are the sustainable cultural enterprises which increase livelihoods and create cultural value and wealth for both creative producers and aesthetic consumers of cultural services and goods.

### **III. THE ENTREPRENEURS AS ARTISTS**

The world of contemporary art is marked by a rising number of artists who have embarked on an entrepreneurial venture. Particularly in the field of performing arts, this has been experienced both as a necessary and a voluntary solution to the great deficit of funds touching the world of public institutions. Therefore a new actor appeared, represented by the artist-entrepreneur “who lives a hybridization of roles and competences” (Caplin, [33]). So, who are the artists-entrepreneurs? And how do they tolerate the possible tensions and confrontations emerging from the encounter of worlds that have been regarded as completely different for so long? (Calcagno &Balzariu, [34])

The work in the art sector is defined by expensive and long-term education, low, minimally regulated career paths, pitched competition, extremely severe market selection and high risk (Menger,[35], Haak, [36] , MontagStiftungBildendeKunst Bonn et al. [37], Schelepa et al.,[38]). Bauer et. al. in 2011 [39] stressed the fact that, constrained by these factors, many artists continue their careers part-time or have multiple professional occupations. However, the artists are assumed to ensure the ‘core value’ of art – as contrary to institutions and corporations, which provide only logistic elements such as distribution channels, licensing and booking – so, the artists are often motivated to think and act economically. Contemporary conditions in the cultural and art field lead to this mindset. Menger (2001,[40]) underlined that profit-monopolising players, inequality-enhancing mechanisms, low entry barriers and the constant overproduction on the labourmarket indicate intense competitive pressure, while a reduction of the government sponsorship eliminates one source of permanent backing.

The linguistic history of “entrepreneur” uncovers a number of shifting significances over the last two centuries. The French economist Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) used the term “entrepreneur”, from the French verb “entreprendre,” which means “to undertake,” in his Treatise on the Political Economy (1803) (Bonin-Rodriguez,[41]). The word was used to defined individuals who made different changes to a business practice or product in order to obtain profits and wealth.Further, Say’s ideas about the entrepreneur’s approach extended, he said in 1823, that “the entrepreneur, whether in agriculture, manufacturing or commerce, is the one who at his own risk and peril undertakes to supply society with what it needs.” (Palmer,[42]; Drucker, [43]).Eventually, at the turn of the twentieth century, adjusted into the English language, the definition of “entrepreneur” included also the arts(Bonin-Rodriguez, [41]).The Oxford English Dictionary offers three definitions, the entrepreneur as: (1) a director of a musical institution; (2) a person who initiates or controls a business or enterprises and endures the risk of profit or loss; and finally: (3) an undertaker who acts as an intermediary (Mulcahy,[3]; Marinova&Borza, [9]).The entrepreneur is an exceptional actor with a very significant role in the history of the economy. The notion of entrepreneur is extended, “including the concept of ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ and

demonstrates how they can be integrated into the new modern economic vision of ‘culture’ as agents who change the beliefs of others”. (Marinova&Borza, [9]; Mokyr,[44])

There has never been a unique norm or definition of “artist” (Markusen, [45]), but the term has been adapted in various ways to inform different aspects of public policy discourse connecting with arts and culture over the past years. A main approach of the research on artists has been discipline-based employment (Jackson et al., [46]; Menger, [35]), used to monitor employment trends and to “counter misperceptions about artists not contributing to economic welfare” (Iyengar, [47]). There is an increasing recognition within the arts and cultural field that the public roles and work of the artists are shifting. Within the domain, the artists are more and more appreciated for their work as entrepreneurs and are often called agents for social change (Novak-Leonard & Skaggs, [48]).

Bonin-Rodriguez [41] mentioned in 2012 that it could be noticed the evolution of “entrepreneur” term in favor of a special, portmanteau definition for an artist - entrepreneur. The process is continuous, as dreaming, learning or rising, but the set of values, goals and ideas demand that the talent to be “cultivated” and to arrive at good results, to fulfill them. Thus, an artist must wake up early, work hard and produce (Bonin-Rodriguez, [41]). Today, the role of “artist” is not particularly linked to any required job, processor place (Lena & Lindemann, [49]; Markusen, [50]; Markusen et. al., [51]; Menger, [35]), so the occupational bordering of “the artist” does not fully content the needs of the policymakers and researchers in the cultural domain (Novak-Leonard&Skaggs, [48]).

The musicians and dancers could begin the preparation for their professional vocation since the primary school, while visual artists and actors decide when would be the moment to start to develop their professional education. In other words, almost all the artists have to face different perceptions of a ‘real life’, various challenges which appear in different periods of their education/life. The fear and the eventual disappointments stemming from the obstacles in finding a satisfactory and well paid job, can be a crucial factor in remodeling one’s professional career (Sternal, [21]). Absolutely, every artist who wants to make a living from her or his artistic work must face economic or management problems (Menger, [35]; Eikhof&Haunschild, [52], Røyseng et al.,[53], Bank & Hesmondhalgh, [54]). Without the security of long-lasting employment, in a changing world, the artists choose self-employment (Menger,[35];BMW, [55]). Furthermore, the individual work trajectories involve progressively, elements of both professional and entrepreneurial careers (Menger, [40]), so the artists necessitate entrepreneurial and management skills to survive and evaluate (Bauer et al., [39]; Menger,[40] , Moussetis&Ernst,[56]; Weaver & Bowman [41], BMW, [55]).

#### **IV. METHODS AND RESULTS**

The central research question is- how entrepreneurial orientation and a firm’s innovative capacity affect firm's performance in the cultural industries. Thus, we used the framework of Day and Wensley’s (1988, [58]) for our empirical investigation, because as Im&Workman [58] also stated in 2004, it has a broad applicability and we considered it as appropriate for examining the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capacity, and firm performance, competitive advantage, creativity and organizational culture. For research we also used questions and items taken and adapted from Parkman, I.D., Holloway, S.S., & Sebastiao, H. (2012, [31]) and their article “Creative industries: aligning entrepreneurial orientation and innovation capacity.”

Studying cultural entrepreneurship was and still is a great challenge for us. The idea from which we started this research is that the artists or people who know how to play an instrument, dance, paint, etc. also possess entrepreneurial and managerial skills. So, firstly we have designed a questionnaire with six main sections: Entrepreneurial orientation (EO), Innovation capacity (IC), Success of products and services/ Performance, Competitive advantage, Research and Development (R&D) and Creativity/ Organizational culture/ Employees. After the six sections have been exposed, we also added a section related to the respondents and his/her organization. Below we present two hypotheses, established at the beginning of the empirical investigation:

*H1: Entrepreneurial orientation is positively associated with innovation capacity in the cultural industries.*

*H2: Innovation capacity is positively associated with competitive advantage in the cultural industries.*

The questionnaire was completed by a total of 52 respondents from Romania and Bulgaria, with the mention that most of the respondents are from Cluj-Napoca, one of the most populous city in Romania, the unofficial capital of Transylvania and a great university center (59%).

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to study the internal consistency of items in a questionnaire or can also be used as a way of reducing items. Following the empirical investigation, the Cronbach coefficient of the present data is 0.959, a coefficient which proves that there is an almost perfect consistency in the data. The target group of the research was entrepreneurs and managers in the cultural industries. It is worth to mention that, to the question “Please specify which function best suits your profile in the organization”, 33% of

respondents answered “cultural manager”, 27% - “artist”, 17% - “cultural entrepreneur”, 12% - “cultural worker” and 11% - “a trader of cultural goods and services”. Thus we see that 27% of respondents identify themselves as artists, although they have management positions or are self-employed. Both hypotheses are supported: a statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation capacity is represented by Positive Strong Correlation ( $x \geq .70$ ), Pearson Correlation 0.702\*\* and a significant relationship between innovation capacity and competitive advantage is represented by Positive Medium Correlation ( $.30 < x < .70$ ), Pearson Correlation 0.671\*\*.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This article indicates the fact that implementing an entrepreneurial orientation in accordance with the purposeful development firm innovation capabilities may generate powerful results. Our thesis should stimulate managers within the cultural industries to invest in abilities that will help them direct their firm’s creative and artistic competencies toward commercially feasible offerings. The concepts such as entrepreneurial orientation, proactiveness, innovativeness, R&D, competitive advantage and risk taking are focused on the success of cultural industry’s institutions and should be adopted by managers and entrepreneurs. In our opinion it was necessary this kind of empirical investigation because this field is still in extending and this literature review will propose the main directions for further researches. In this context it is clear that investment in creativity and innovation should also be associated to investments in people, education and cultural work environments and new technologies. Indeed, the cultural entrepreneurship contains researches, “ideas generation”, business and aesthetic knowledge and passion for arts and culture. But the essential idea of “entrepreneurship with a small ‘e’ is how to run a business and Entrepreneurship with a big ‘E’ is how to live your life” (Sternal,[21]; Beckman, [60]).

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