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Track: Identity

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO INDIVIDUAL MEANING, KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION
AND RESEARCH IDENTITIES OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SCHOLARS TO MAP THEIR ACADEMIC CAREERS IN UNCERTAIN TIME.**

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Introduction

The creative industries are an attractive phenomenon for policy makers (DCMS, 2001), and various scholars in the field of entrepreneurship (Carey, 2015; Henry 2007; Penaluna and Penaluna, 2008), and organizational studies (Nathan, Pratt, & Rincon-Azner, 2015; Jones, Svejenova, Strandgaard Pedersen and Townley, 2016). They are considered the engine for growth (DCMS, 2001; 2016; 2017) and they play an essential role in the twenty-first-century developed countries (Nathan et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2016) as promoters of innovation (Giles and O'Dwyer, 2016), creators of aesthetic values for customers (Peltoniemi, 2014), symbolic meaning (Jones et al., 2016) and independent are to traditional models of growth (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999).

One of the key characteristics of these industries is the innovation generated by a supply of novelty from different types of creators (Storr, 1985) and their 'effort to break open an avant-garde frontier' (Caves, 2000, p. 204); driven by demand from consumers for new experiences (Lampel et al., 2000) and creative expression (Martindale, 1990). Therefore, innovation in these industries denotes 'those creative efforts that strike the market as unusually distinctive, satisfying, and/or productive in opening new ground (Caves, 2000, p. 202). There is not a unique way to generate innovation within the creative industries. However, the starting point is the human creation into the process as the essential key source of creativity. Individuals create novelty and novel meaning (Zanoni et al, 2017) or produce organizational creativity in a collective engagement (Woodman et al, 1993) via interactions (Harrington, 1990). Consequently, it is possible to identify different types of actors: consumers, producers, and agents.

Although entrepreneurship research (Carey, 2015; Henry, 2007; Penaluna and Penaluna, 2008), organizational research (Nathan et al., 2015; Jones et al, 2016) and policies makers (DCMS, 2001; 2016;2017) have demonstrated an increasing interest in analyzing the contribution of creative industries to the economy, limited research has been conducted into investigating the use of innovative research methodologies used by researchers (Carey, and Romano, 2017) and their research identities in producing academic endeavor related to the field of creative industries entrepreneurship.

In a fast changing HE landscape, research is linked to various academic co-dependent relationships: institutions, groups, metrics and managerial practices that might encourage or de-motivate researchers to pursue their research identities. For instance, Clark et al. (2012) highlighted the change of academic identities due to transformation of managerialist practices of audit, league tables, and other metrics to measure academic performance.

This paper investigates the stories of the researchers in the creative industries entrepreneurship field to map their research identities and understand academic performances in uncertain times. Stories are essential to narrate the organizational symbols by verbal expression or written language (Marti et al, 1983; Mitroff and Kilmann, 1976; Trice and Beyer, 1993). Generally, stories have three basic elements: 'a narrative subject in search of an object, a destinator (an extratextual force, the source of the subjects' ideology), and a set of forces that either help or hinder the subject in acquiring the desired object' (Fiol, 1989: 279). Following this pattern, the paper is structured as follow. We start by reviewing relevant literature in the field of identity and creative industries research and then discuss the plan for the research methodology and the findings.

Individual Research Identity and Creative Industries Identity: a collaborative dialogue for improving efficiency during uncertainty.

According to Deci and Ryan (1987) behaviors are originated either via self-determined choice or due to external demands (Unsworth, 2001). Individuals can experience 'themselves as initiators of their own behavior' (Deci & Ryan, 1987: 1025). For example, a wish to be a successful academic or a desire to achieve academic recognition into the academic world. However, a person might engage in a behavior due to the perceived beneficial outcome from a situation. An academic should be able to publish as a requirement of his/her job. Corlett et al. (2017) in '*Exploring the Registers of Identity Research*' present

a review of identity scholarship and explores the relationship among various levels of identity – individual, group, professional, organisational and societal and review.

Suddaby (2010) explains that a clarity about constructs of identity provides ‘richer and deeper understanding in the field’ (p. 274). Corlett et al. (2017) developed a holistic framework to interpret the identity enabling new scholars to create a dialogue with existing identity research scholars. It also helps experienced identity researchers to expand their research outlook. Additionally, Knights and Clarke (2017: 341) argue that ‘identities only exist when they are interacting such that the relationship between conceptions of a seemingly discrete ‘self’ and wider ‘society’ is rather an unrelenting, inter and intra-dependent, constituting phenomenon (Barad, 2007). Institutional theoretical approaches have provided scholarly improvement in displaying actions of individuals to generate, keep and disrupt institutional domains (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Zilber, 2009); identity research has highlighted the need for understanding the self in relation to interactions within the social world (Howard-Grenville et al, 2013; Petriglieri et al, 2018; Pratt et al., 2006). Furthermore, the institutional logic perspective has approached the connection between individual and institutional actors as a tool by which actors can operate agentially (Thornton et al., 2012). Finally, Lok et al, (2017) propose an approach that shifts beyond an individual focus to assess institutional micro-foundations ‘as intersubjective, as residing in transpersonal exchanges that are double embedded in systems of relationships and in institutionalized systems of meaning (p. 46).

The research project analyses what and how interactions among different types of researchers in the field of creative industries entrepreneurship have

1. increased individual meaning for researchers,
2. produced and disseminated knowledge via academic publications and
3. promoted successful academic careers.

It also investigates the process of interactions and meaning-making among different scholars (Corlett, McInnes, Coupland and Sheep, 2017).

Research Methodology, Context and Sample

This study plans to investigate the academic publication journeys of researchers in the field of creative industries and identify how researchers employ their sense of self to create ‘meaning of their experience’ (Bennett and Hennekam, 2018: 1454). We want to ask respondents to tell us the story of their academic publication journey based on the work of Ibarra (2003), Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) and Bennett and Hennekam (2018). By using a story-telling approach we will be able to create meaning of various and contradictory experiences (Hoyer and Steyart, 2015).

The study will be conducted in the United Kingdom and it will be organized into three stages:

1. A survey questionnaire will be sent to all the members of the Special Interest Group of the Creative Industries Entrepreneurship Researchers at the Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Once ethical approvals will be received from the respective universities, creative industries entrepreneurship researchers in the UK will be invited to respond to a survey (Bennett et al, 2014) that will be distributed electronically. Three survey questions will be significant to this research project:
 - a. Thinking back in time, what are the most formative events in your publishing career? (adapted from Bennett et al, 2018)
 - b. How has your research identity evolved (Corlett, McInnes, Coupland, and Sheep, 2017) throughout that period to getting published?
 - c. Why have you engaged in the publication process? (adapted from Unsworth, 2001)
2. The second stage of the project is to collect data from a focus group of participants who will attend a research developmental workshop in writing for publication organized in September in the U.K. 2019.

3. The final stage of the project is to conduct skype and face to face interviews to investigate in more details the stories of the researchers and their narratives related to their research identities

Plan of the Findings

The three stages will provide sufficient data to use for publications. Initially, the first paper will highlight the academic journeys of researchers in the field of creative industries entrepreneurship to map their research identities and how these have evolved. An initial conference paper will be drafted to report key findings from the questionnaire. It will be submitted and presented at the BAM annual conference in 2020 with the aim to receive constructive feedback.

Secondly, data from the focus group and skype interviews will be assessed to write a final paper for publication to narrate the research identities and their evolution in the field of creative industries entrepreneurship research.

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