



## CREATIVITY ENHANCEMENT IN LITHUANIAN FURNITURE MANUFACTURING BUSINESS ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes Lithuanian furniture manufacturing business perceptions towards creativity, and creativity enhancement behavior according to its international development. Firstly article focuses on international business development, substantiate need of creativity for international business development, outline creativity influencing factors which operate at individual, team and organizational levels and recommendations how to enhance creativity in methodical way. Secondly, article describes a problem of empirical research, methodology of used methods and instruments, and presents results of survey research.

**Keywords:** international business development, creativity, factors influencing creativity, creativity enhancement, furniture manufacturing industry.

### Introduction

Nowadays the geographical boundary between countries becomes irrelevant. As a result, international development of business is now an issue that is becoming relevant to the majority of businesses, despite their size or industry sector. Lithuanian furniture manufacturing industry is not an exception. When furniture manufacturing industry business develops internationally it faces continually changing conditions and ability to respond to those challenges creatively is more important than ever before. Organizations need to take full advantage of their professionals' creative potential and perceive the development of conditions that enhance professionals' creativity in order to respond to international market challenges.

The aim of this article is to identify whether international business development impacts perceptions towards the need of professionals' creativity, enhancement behavior and to prepare recommendations how to improve professionals' creativity enhancement in Lithuanian furniture manufacturing business.

### International business development and importance of creativity

Johnson and Scholes (2002) define business development as the management of growth and competitiveness of an economic enterprise. Author claims that it is related to strategic choice concerned with directions and methods in which businesses could further develop. Specific directions that

are available for business development are numerous, but could be broadly explored based on three major factors: markets, products, and competences (Johnson, Scholes 2002). In this article business development will be analyzed in relation to markets. Mainly it is concerned with choices of the business to stay within their current markets or to enter the new markets. As a result, international business development is a strategic choice of a business to become integrated into foreign market.

When business develops in international market the competition increases and it faces challenges at all stages of involvement. As markets open up and become more integrated, the pace of change accelerates, technology shrinks distances between markets and reduces the scale advantages of large firms, new sources of competition emerge, and competitive pressures mount (Craig, Douglas 1996). Environmental opportunities and unprecedented challenges in international market require new approaches and it is hoped that these are more creative than those expressed by competitors (Rego *et al.* 2007). Creativity in the organization can be defined as the production of novel and useful ideas or solutions (Amabile 1997; Zhou, George 2003). Novelty or originality is required for an idea to be judged creative, but ideas must also be useful to be considered creative.

A plethora of literature emphasizes the need for creativity in business. Creativity is often the starting point for innovation and a critical resource for organizational

success (Rego *et al.* 2007), directly and positively linked to organizational effectiveness and to improvements in quality and productivity, helps organizations respond to challenges, demands, and opportunities for change (Denhardt *et al.* 2013). To survive and prosper, organizations need to take full advantage of their employee creative potential, so that innovation, change, learning, growth, competitiveness, long-term survival and development of organizations could be achieved (Woodman *et al.* 1993). Indeed, Oldman and Cummings (1996) note that numerous commentators have argued that enhancing the creative performance of employees is a necessary step if organizations are able to achieve competitive advantage.

### Factors influencing creativity

The examination of contextual factors that enhance or stifle employees' creative performance is a new but rapidly growing research area (Zhou, Shalley 2003). Early research has primarily focused on explaining factors that facilitate and hinder creative performance at the individual level. Subsequently, the scope has enlarged to group/team or social-level and, finally, to the organizational level. More recent theories integrate the individual, team and organizational level and propose a multilevel model of creativity that takes into account the fact that creativity occurs simultaneously at these different levels (Drazin *et al.* 1999; Taggar 2001; Woodman *et al.* 1993; Mumford, Hunter 2005).

Vast number of studies have been carried out on the individual characteristics that result greater creative performance. Personality attributes, domain-relevant skills, cognitive abilities, motivational factors and multicultural experience are among the variables that have been most examined by the literature on individual creativity.

Creativity not only occurs as individuals work alone but also happens as members interact with each other, as they share, build upon, and critique ideas together (Pirola-Merlo, Mann 2004). Although individual creativity is the source of team creativity, team creativity is not the simple aggregate of all members' creativity (Woodman *et al.* 1993). For members to solve problems together and provide valid responses, individuals should expand the source of knowledge and information and improve social facilitation to other group members. As members interact with each other, share, build upon and critique ideas together, such interactions may stimulate creative ideas among the individuals and allow ideas to be reliable and practicable (Ya-Ching Yeh 2012). Team structure and climate are among the factors that have been most examined by the literature on team creativity.

Although individual and team creativity represent the different levels of creativity, both group and individual outcomes may be affected by organizational level. Organizational culture, structure and systems of an organization, organizational climate, resources and skills are among the factors that have been mostly examined by the literature on organizational creativity. The factors provided above create conditions that enhance creativity both at the team and individual levels.

### Enhancing creativity

For creativity to occur in organizations, managers need to support and promote it, as they are the individuals who are most knowledgeable about which employee work outcomes should be creative and they have considerable influence over the context within which creativity can occur (Shalley, Gilson 2004). According Walton (2003) managers name creativity as one of the most important elements in corporate success, however just few of them actually put this emphasis into practice. If only a few managers know how to enhance the level of creativity in their organization in a methodical way, it suggests that there is a gap between creativity conceptualization and efficient, effective practical creativity enhancement. As a result, this article outlines recommendations how to enhance employees' creativity in methodological way. Recommendations are outlined in the Figure 1 and explained below.

*Hire employees which have creative personality attributes.* While hiring employees, managers can use personality assessment instruments which help to identify highly creative individuals. To name a few instruments: Adjective Checklist, Temperament and Character Inventory, Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. In job interviews managers also can ask their own questions and according to the answers evaluate if person has attributes that are related to creative performance, for example openness to experience, self-confidence, inventiveness, enthusiasm, hard-working, tolerance for ambiguity, broad interests, attraction to complexity, independence of judgment, ability to accommodate opposites, a firm sense of self as creative, curiosity, energy, intellectual honesty, optimism, responsibility, direction to their goals, ability to utilize resources, tolerance, empathy.

*Provide employees with creativity training programs.* Creativity of employees can be enhanced, at least partially, through training. Recently, training programs and creativity sessions have become an increasingly popular mechanism for creativity improvement because they produce tangible results (such as patents, new project or product proposals and other opportunities and improvements) in a relatively short period of time (Dubina 2006).

Organizational Team Individual	Organizational Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow to take a risk and make mistakes associated with creativity</li> <li>• Ensure that knowledge is widely shared among employees</li> <li>• Demonstrate strong orientation towards creativity</li> <li>• Encourage employees to use tools and techniques that stimulate creative thinking</li> <li>• Know employees and be capable to easily form high-performing teams and networks</li> <li>• Support creative efforts</li> <li>• Articulate vision and goals for employees</li> </ul>
	Organizational Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually challenge employees</li> <li>• Give freedom to employees</li> <li>• Support communications that are based on trust and openness</li> <li>• Ensure dynamism and liveliness in organization</li> <li>• Create playful atmosphere where good-natured jokes are welcome</li> <li>• Encourage debates between employees</li> <li>• Manage conflicts between employees</li> <li>• Draw the line for acceptable risk and mistakes</li> </ul>
	Resources and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be flexible with time given for employees to come up with creative ideas</li> <li>• Set time limits for the projects and tasks</li> <li>• Provide employees with financial resources at optimal levels</li> <li>• Provide employees with informational resources</li> <li>• Allocate employees for right assignments</li> </ul>
	Structure and Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement organic organizational structure</li> <li>• Implement reward and recognition system for creative employees</li> </ul>
	Team Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compose teams of employees which have diverse knowledge, experience, professional orientation or disciplinary background</li> <li>• Compose teams of employees from 5 to 10 members</li> </ul>
	Team Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create participative safe team climate</li> <li>• Make sure that teams are task oriented</li> </ul>
	Personality Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire employees which have creative personality attributes</li> <li>• Provide employees with creativity training programs</li> </ul>
	Domain-relevant Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire people which have approximately ten years experience and knowledge in domain-relevant field</li> <li>• Provide employees with education and training in domain-relevant field</li> </ul>
	Cognitive Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach employees how to use techniques that stimulate divergent thinking</li> <li>• Encourage employees to engage in activities that improve cognitive flexibility</li> </ul>
	Motivational Factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use informational and enabling extrinsic motivators</li> <li>• Use intrinsic motivators</li> </ul>
	Multicultural Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire people with multicultural experience</li> <li>• Send employees to work on probation in organization's branch in other country</li> </ul>

Fig. 1. Recommendations how to enhance employees' creativity according to multi level factors

Creativity training program teaches participants how to engage in the process of creativity, gain confidence in their creativity, and develop creativity literacy (Dubina 2006).

*Hire employees which have approximately ten years experience and knowledge in domain-relevant field.* Domain-relevant skills can be acquired from experience. Managers can seek hire employees which already have domain-relevant knowledge. Gardner (1994) claims that ten years is the approximate time required to build the domain knowledge and expertise needed to spur creative successes.

*Provide employees with education and training in domain-relevant field.* Amabile and Pillemer (2012) claims that domain-relevant skills can be partially affected by formal and informal education, training and experience afforded by the social environment. As a result, managers can provide education and training for employees in domain-relevant field, encourage employees to share experiences.

*Encourage employees to engage in activities that improve cognitive flexibility.* Cognitive abilities which are important for individual creativity can be improved engaging in activities that improve cognitive flexibility. Managers should encourage employees to engage in lifelong learning, playing chess or cognitive training games, learning new languages, engaging in challenging activities (Scarmeas,

Stern 2003), living healthy lifestyle including good nutrition, physical exercising or dancing, stress management, and sleep (Kramer *et al.* 2006).

*Teach employees how to use techniques that stimulate divergent thinking.* What is more, cognitive abilities can be improved by stimulating divergent thinking. Managers should teach techniques that stimulate divergent thinking of employees, for example: Brainstorming, Mind Mapping, Six Thinking Hats.

*Use informational and enabling extrinsic motivators.* Informational or enabling extrinsic motivators support creativity. Informational extrinsic motivators include reward, recognition, and feedback which confirm competence or provide important information on how to improve performance. Enabling extrinsic motivators include reward, recognition, and feedback that directly increase employees' involvement in the work itself (Amabile 1997).

*Use intrinsic motivators.* Managers should use intrinsic motivators which involves tasks and jobs that are interesting, involving, personally challenging, or satisfying. However, it is heavily influenced by employees' interests, values, preferences, knowledge, skills and personal attributes (Denhardt *et al.* 2013), as a result managers should closely know their employees before motivating.

*Hire people with multicultural experience.* Recent studies have shown that multicultural experience is linked to creativity (e.g. Maddux, Galinsky 2009). Managers cannot change multicultural experience of their employees, however they can hire people with multicultural experience, who have lived abroad, are first or second generation immigrants.

*Send employees to work on probation in organization's branch in foreign country.* International organizations that have branches in other countries also can send their employee to work there for a while. When employees will come back to native country they will be able to integrate indigenous cultural exemplars from diverse cultures and come up with creative ideas.

*Compose teams of employees which have diverse knowledge, experience, professional orientation or disciplinary background.* Managers should select team members who have a diverse range of knowledge, experience, professional orientation or disciplinary background because according to West (2002) creativity requires deep-level diversity because the integration of diverse perspectives creates the potential for combinations of ideas from different domains, creates flexibility, constructive controversy, which in turns enhances creativity. What is more, team members approach the same task from different points of view and are more likely to have task-related conflicts, which is supposed to evoke a more thorough and complete consideration of all aspects, which in return should ensure more creative solutions (De Dreu *et al.* 2006).

*Compose teams from 5 to 10 members.* Regarding to team size very small teams lack the diversity in vision and perspective that is crucial for creative performance, whereas very large teams are too robust to effectively and actively exchange information and team members may feel less accountable for their individual performance (Currell *et al.* 2001; West, Anderson 1996). Taggar (2001) claims that creative synergies could be maintained in teams of five and six individual, Coutu and Beschloss (2009) suggest not more than nine people, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) suggest less than 10 members. As a result, managers should compose teams from 5 to 10 members.

*Create participative safe team climate.* Participative safety refers to the extent to which the climate of the team is psychologically safe and subsequently through this safety encourages the participation of each member of the team (Morris 2004). In order to create participative safe team climate managers should listen to employees attentively, be positive about team members' suggestions, do not strongly reject or punish someone for sharing an idea, give feedback, encourage employees to make suggestions, share

information among team members, ask for help, talk about errors and experimenting.

*Make sure that team is task oriented.* Task orientation is concerned with the extent to which the team strives for excellence in completing its tasks and targets (Morris 2004). When the team is committed to achieving its goals to the highest possible standards, it is likely to constantly review and appraise the ways in which it is working, through constructively critical discourse and result in improvements and modifications in the ways in which the team works (Burch 2006).

*Allow to take a risk and make mistakes associated with creativity.* Creativity is often related to risk and employees usually try to avoid risks. When risk is tolerated in an organization, the decisions are made smoother and more opportunities are given the possibility to be examined (Ekvall 1996). If managers shall allow to take risk and make mistakes, individuals and teams will feel psychological support, will be more willing to take risk and try something new. Employees will understand creativity as a value in the organization.

*Ensure that knowledge is widely shared throughout organization.* It is very important that knowledge is widely gathered (both from within and outside the organization), easily available, rapidly transmitted, and honestly communicated throughout the organization. This enables employees to find out about the best practice within their own or a linked specialty area and use this for new idea generation. Managers can establish social networks to share heterogeneous information and perspectives, which in turn increases creativity.

*Demonstrate strong orientation towards creativity.* Organizations must demonstrate a strong orientation toward creativity and innovation, which is clearly communicated and enacted, from the highest levels of management, throughout the organization (Amabile 1997). Managers should make clear statements that innovation and creativity is highly desired in certain specific areas that are strategically or operationally important for organization. This gives to employees permission to be creative.

*Encourage employees to use tools and techniques that stimulate creative thinking.* Managers should encourage employees use tools and techniques that stimulate creative thinking (e.g. Checklists, Analogies, Metaphorical thinking, Lateral Thinking ). It should be done not too restrictive to inhibit creativity, but not too open as to leave innovation entirely up to the native abilities of individuals and teams.

*Know your employees in order to form high-performing teams and networks easily.* Managers should know their employees to easily form high-performing teams and net-

works of intrinsically motivated individuals with a good mix of skills and styles, who quickly accept, respect and trust each other, display honest and open communication.

*Support creative employees' efforts.* Employees who feel support from their co-workers and organizations are more likely to be creative (Herman *et al.* 2009). If an employee comes up with an interesting and original idea but no one listens or considers it, then the idea probably will not go anywhere (Denhardt *et al.* 2013). Managers can be supportive by demonstrating concern for employees' feelings, encouraging employees to voice their concerns and needs (Deci, Ryan 1987).

*Continually challenge employees.* Creative people are driven by exciting work and need to express themselves through their work, find joy and meaningfulness in their work. As a result, managers should design interesting and challenging tasks for creative employees. It will increase emotional involvement of the members of the organization in its operations and goals (Ekvall 1996), excitement and willingness to invest themselves in their work in the absence of external controls and constraints (Oldham, Cummings 1996). However, too challenging tasks can make the person lose control.

*Give employees freedom.* Managers should allow employees, to the extent that is possible, to have a choice in the types of activities in which they participate. This enables employees to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy. Employees who perceive that they have freedom or flexibility in how they perform their jobs are also likely to feel free to be creative (Herman *et al.* 2009). This increases variance and decreases predictability and leads to greater creative potential but also to greater risk. Managers need carefully decide what freedom is allowed for each and every task to achieve high creativity and innovation while still everybody works towards one aim.

*Support communications that are based on trust and openness.* Employees that feel trust and appreciation are often showing a great degree of creativity. Managers should ensure communications in organization are based on trust and openness, because when there is a high degree of trust, employees can be genuinely open and sincere with one another, express professional and personal support, respect for one another (Isaksen *et al.* 2000). Trust is related to emotional safety that employees have to experience in order to fully express themselves.

*Ensure dynamism and liveliness in organization.* Managers should create an atmosphere where something new is going on within the organization. It can be done by organizing various events. Dynamic and live atmosphere provides a sense of urgency and speed, eventfulness and

excitement (Ekvall 1996). In a highly dynamic situations, new things occur often and alternations between ways of thinking about and handling issues often occur (Richards 2002).

*Create playful work atmosphere where humor is welcome.* Managers should create professional, but relaxed atmosphere where good-natured jokes and laughter often occur. Ekvall (1996) claims that relaxed atmosphere with jokes and laughter is the dominant atmosphere of a creative climate. Humor created by persons promote their working relationships and stimulate motivation and intelligence associated with the goals of work (Holmes 2007).

*Encourage debates between employees.* Managers should encourage debating because it creates situation where many voices are heard, diversity of perspectives are shared and employees are keen on putting forward their ideas for consideration and review. Encounters and disagreements between viewpoints, ideas, different experiences and knowledge enhance creativity (Isaksen *et al.* 2000).

*Manage conflicts between employees.* Conflicting leaves negative influence on the level of creativity since it extracts organization members' attention from the work (Amabile 1998). However, conflict and minority dissent encourage debate and consideration of alternative interpretations of information available and lead to integrated and creative solutions (West, Sacramento 2012). As a result, managers should encourage employees to have task related conflicts that promote discussions, but do not let conflicts to enlarge by encouraging employees to listen to each other, keep calm, be respectful and reasonable with each other, make compromises, move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger.

*Draw the line for acceptable risk and mistakes.* There is a certain level of uncertainty associated with creative projects and activities which the organization should not avoid, but instead manage (Sternberg *et al.* 1997). Managers should create a climate where it is accepted to fail in order to become more creative, but also draw the line for acceptable risk. It must be made clear that mistakes are acceptable if they are based on solid thinking, enhance learning of what will not work, and are caught early before damage is severe.

*Be flexible with time given for employees to come up with creative ideas.* Initial ideas need discussion and further suggestions from others, which in turn require time besides the planned routine schedule (Ekvall 1996). Managers should be flexible with scheduling because creativity and innovative employees need to get away from the four walls to come up with new ideas, explore new avenues and alternatives.

*Set time limits for projects and tasks.* Creative people are not the best time managers thus managers should set perimeters from the beginning of the project. Some degree of time pressure or urgency can have a positive influence, particularly when it arises out of the nature of the problem itself. Thus, here should be a balance between time limits and slack times to both encourage a sense of challenge, motivation and allow the exploration of new ideas (Amabile 1998).

*Provide employee with financial resources at optimal levels.* Managers should provide employees with sufficient financial resources. When funds are tight, the creativity of employees is directed towards finding more financial resources instead of exploring novel useful ideas (Amabile 1998). However, this does not mean that the greater resources employees get, the more creative the organization will become. Therefore, managers should provide financial resources at optimal level.

*Provide employee with relevant informational resources.* Managers should provide employees with sufficient information by helping them get the information they need to be creative, insightful and appropriately informed. Information fuels creativity by triggering the imagination and providing the foundations of innovation (Denhardt *et al.* 2013).

*Allocate employees for right assignments.* The right assignments of jobs to creative people are crucial to success. In order to properly allocate employees, managers should closely know employees, their skills, knowledge, experience and work preferences.

*Implement organic organizational structure.* Managers should implement organic structure which is characterized by freedom of strict rules, flexibility, non-hierarchical structure, participative and informal environment, discussions of many views, close interpersonal contact, face to face communication, downward as well as upward information sharing, inter-disciplinary teams, cross-departmental collaboration, broadly defined job descriptions, emphasis on creative interaction and aims, willingness to take on external ideas (Ahmed 1998).

*Implement reward and recognition system for creative employees.* Good reward and recognition system can contribute to people's satisfaction and their willingness and desire to learn and improve their skills and can lead to greater creativity. Managers should make an effort to get to know their employees, and then to tie the rewards and recognition to what they know the employee will appreciate and value. Intrinsic reward and recognition should be used in accordance with enabling and informational extrinsic rewards and recognition that was clarified earlier.

## **Problem of the research and used methods**

In this article Lithuanian furniture manufacturing sector have been chosen to analyze in order to gain a broad appreciation of professionals creativity enhancement according international business development. Furniture manufacturing industry business have been chosen as a typical manufacturing industry in typical country – Lithuania. Production of goods and services is no longer organized in vertically integrated companies focused on home locations (Zysman, Breznitz 2013). Manufacturing in emerging economies is growing and continues to play to its strength of price competitiveness. In advanced economies manufacturing is becoming more productive (CIMA 2010). The shift away from the basic manufacturing towards technology based and value added production has encouraged manufacturers to reconsider how they operate and what they offer to customers. Lithuanian furniture manufacturing companies that compete in global market have to respond to international market challenges and offer somehow differentiated products. Lithuanian furniture manufacturing companies that compete in local market, but want to develop internationally in the future, also have to prepare to respond to international market challenges. Creativity can be the best sustainable competitive advantage of Lithuanian furniture manufacturing companies in international market and may help in their international development. Research focused only on professionals whose primary responsibilities include innovating, designing and problem solving. In furniture manufacturing sector these occupations include computer, design, management, business and financial operation, legal, technical, high-end sales and sales management occupations.

Quantitative, Internet-based survey research method have been used to determine Lithuanian furniture manufacturing companies' perceptions and attitudes towards professionals' creativity, and creativity enhancement behavior according to their international development. Used methods of data analysis included: frequencies, statistics of central tendency, measures of variation, One-way ANOVA, The Mann-Whitney test, Kruskal-Wallis test, Chi-square statistical test, Values of Phi, Cramer's V, Contingency Coefficient and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In all these tests a significance level was considered significant if it was less than 0.05. A small p-value ( $p < 0.05$ ) was considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant. Values of Phi, Cramer's V, Contingency Coefficient higher than 0.5 showed high association, from 0.3 to 0.5 moderate association, from 0.1 to 0.3 low association and from 0 to 0.1 little if any association. Cronbach's alpha

interpretation:  $\alpha > 0.9$  excellent,  $\alpha > 0.8$  good,  $\alpha > 0.7$  acceptable,  $\alpha > 0.6$  questionable,  $\alpha > 0.5$  poor, and  $\alpha < 0.5$  unacceptable reliability.

## Results of the research

Target population of this survey was all organizations that belong to Lithuanian furniture manufacturing industry. According to Statistics Lithuania, at the beginning of the year 2013 there were 743 number of operating economic entities in this industry. 699 surveys were sent out and 281 returned. After coding and editing processes 273 company fully answered survey responses have been used for further data analysis. Out of 273 companies, 52 companies (19 percent) engage in at least one of these international activities: export, licensing, franchising, turnkey projects, wholly owned subsidiary, joint venture, strategic alliance, 222 (81 percent) do not engage in international activities. Out of 222 companies, that do not engage in international activities, 150 companies are planning to internationalize in the future, 72 companies do not plan to internationalize. Out of 150 companies, that are planning to internationalize, 45 companies are planning to internationalize in 5 year period, 69 companies – from 6 to 10 years period, 35 companies – not decided when. Out of 72 companies that do not plan to internationalize 41 have claimed that they probably will not internationalize and 31 companies claimed that they definitely will not internationalize. Three groups of companies according to international development were characterized: 1) international, 2) planning to internationalize and 3) not planning to internationalize.

In order to find differences in perceptions about professionals' creativity importance for industry, international business and company, perception about creativity benefits and possibility to enhance professionals' creativity among companies classified according to international business development first of all, internal consistency reliability analysis was performed. It was necessary because Likert-type scale questions have been used in this research. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability have been used to provide an overall reliability coefficient for a set of questions. Cronbach's alpha score of 0.98 ( $>0.9$ ) indicated a very high level of internal consistency with this specific sample, as a result scale was accepted as reliable and none of the question have been removed. Second step was to perform Kruskal–Wallis test that indicated that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) among international development categories. Mann–Whitney tests indicated that all three groups were significantly different from each other ( $p$  scores were  $0.000 < 0.05$ ,

$0.011 < 0.05$  and  $0.001 p < 0.05$ ). Mann–Whitney tests have also revealed that international development category influence perception about professionals' creativity importance for industry, international business and company, perception about creativity benefits and possibility to enhance professionals' creativity.

According to survey results, 64 percent of responded furniture manufacturing companies evaluated their professionals' creativity as average, 15.8 percent – below average, 15.4 percent – above average, 4.4 percent – poor and none of the companies evaluated professionals' creativity excellent. Kruskal–Wallis test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference among international development categories and professionals' creativity level in organizations ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Mann–Whitney tests indicated that all three groups were significantly different from each other ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), and stated opinion about their professionals' creativity level was higher in the international companies.

According to survey results, 44 (16 percent) furniture manufacturing companies enhance professionals' creativity in their organizations, 229 (84 percent) do not enhance professionals' creativity. Out of 229 companies that do not enhance professionals' creativity, 25 companies were international, 136 were planning to internationalize and 68 were not planning to internationalize (see Fig. 2).

It should be noted that there was a tendency that the international companies enhanced creativity more than local ones (51 percent of international, 9 percent of planning to internationalize, 3 percent of not planning to internationalize enhanced creativity). Chi-square statistical test revealed that there was a statistically significant association between international development and professionals' creativity enhancement ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Even though a Chi-square test showed statistical significance between international development and professionals' creativity enhancement, the relationship may not be substantively important. Phi, Cramer's V, Contingency Coefficient have been used to evaluate the relative strength of a statistically significant relationship. According to the Phi, Cramer's V Contingency, Coefficient values showed that strength of association was moderate (values were from interval 0.3–0.5).

According to survey results, most of responded furniture manufacturing companies do not use any or use very few methods in order to enhance professionals' creativity. Number of used methods varied from 0 to 15. International companies used more methods and that number varied more than in local ones. Three most popular methods were similar in all international development groups: setting time

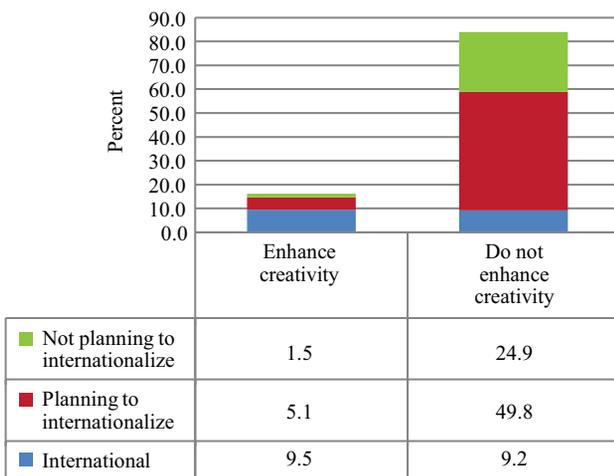


Fig. 2. Professionals' creativity enhancement according to international business development

limits for the projects and tasks, seeking to hire professionals that have approximately ten years experience and knowledge in domain-relevant field and allocating professionals for right assignments. It can be stated that even if companies claim that they enhance creativity, they do not use many methods, possibly do not know how to effectively enhance professionals' creativity in methodological way. One-way ANOVA analysis did not indicate that there was a statistically significant difference among international development categories and used methods in order to enhance professionals' creativity ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). One-way ANOVA analysis does not indicated which specific groups were significantly different from each other. It is possible to find this out using of post-hoc tests. The Tukey post-hoc test indicated that there was a significant difference between international companies and companies that are planning to internationalize ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), as well as between international companies and companies that do not plan to internationalize ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). However, there were no differences between the companies that are planning to internationalize and companies that do not plan to internationalize ( $p = 0.088 > 0.05$ ). These results suggest that local companies use the same amount of methods to enhance employees' creativity and international companies use more methods.

## Conclusions

International business development is a strategic choice of a business to become integrated into foreign market. When business develops in international market it faces unprecedented challenges and high competition which require creativity. Creativity is often the starting point for innovation, a critical resource for organizational success, change,

learning, growth, competitiveness, long-term survival and development of organization, directly and positively linked to organizational effectiveness and improvements in quality and productivity. Organizations need to take full advantage of an employee creative potential and efficient commercialization of creative ideas.

Recent theories integrate the individual, team and organizational level in multilevel model of creativity. Personality attributes, domain-relevant skills, cognitive abilities, motivational factors and multicultural experience are among the variables that have been most examined by the literature on individual creativity. Team structure and climate are among the factors that have been most examined by the literature on team creativity. Organizational culture, structure and systems of an organization, organizational climate, resources and skills and are among the factors that have been mostly examined by the literature on organizational creativity.

Organizations can directly or indirectly influence those factors at all levels and this article outlined detailed recommendations how to enhance professionals' creativity. Most of them do not require much financial recourses, but can open many opportunities for business and help to solve unprecedented problems. Enhancing methods comes with synergy affect when combined, as a result companies should use more than few methods, because solely used a method becomes useless or even may hinder creativity.

Lithuanian furniture manufacturing sector have been chosen to analyze in order to gain a broad appreciation of professionals creativity enhancement according international business development. Quantitative survey research method have been used to determine Lithuanian furniture manufacturing companies' perceptions and attitudes towards professionals' creativity, and creativity enhancement behavior according to their international development. Quantitative data analysis have been used in this article includes: frequencies, statistics of central tendency, measures of variation, One-way ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann-Whitney test, Chi-squared test, Values of Phi, Cramer's V, Contingency Coefficient, Cronbach's alpha.

Survey results revealed that most of the responded companies do not engage in international activities, but plan to internationalize in from 6 to 10 year period. Survey results also revealed that furniture manufacturing companies classified according to international business development have different opinion about importance of professionals' creativity for furniture manufacturing industry, international business and company, as well as have different opinion about possibility to enhance professionals' creativity, benefits, professionals' creativity level in their organizations. Survey results also re-

vealed that majority of responded companies do not enhance professionals' creativity in their organizations. There was a tendency that international companies enhanced creativity more than local ones. What is more, survey results revealed that there was a statistically significant association between international development and professionals' creativity enhancement. Most of responded furniture manufacturing companies did not use any or used very few methods in order to enhance professionals' creativity. International companies used more methods and that number varied more than in local ones. Survey results revealed that local companies usually used same amount of methods to enhance employees' creativity and international use more. Three most popular methods were similar in all international development: setting time limits for the projects and tasks, seeking to hire professionals that have approximately ten years experience and knowledge in domain-relevant field and allocating professionals for right assignments. It can be stated that even if companies claim that they enhance creativity, they do not use many methods, possibly do not know how to effectively enhance professionals' creativity in methodological way. As a result Lithuanian furniture manufacturing business should use recommendations outlined in this article to improve their professionals' creativity enhancement.

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## KŪRYBIŠKUMO SKATINIMAS LIETUVOS BALDŲ GAMYBOS PRAMONĖS VERSLE ATSIŽVELGIANT Į TARPTAUTINĮ VERSLO VYSTYMĄSI

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Santrauka

Analizuojama, kaip Lietuvos baldų gamybos įmonių tarptautinio verslo plėtotė lemia suvokimą apie specialistų kūrybiškumo skatinimo poreikį ir šio pobūdžio veiklą organizacijoje. Analizuojama tarptautinio verslo vystymasis, pagrindžiamas kūrybiškumo būtinumas tarptautiniam verslui plėtoti. Apibendrinami kūrybiškumą lemiantys veiksniai, veikiantys individualiu, komandiniu ir organizaciniu lygiu, pateikiama rekomendacijų, kaip metodologiškai skatinti kūrybiškumą. Be to, darbe aprašoma empirinio tyrimo problema, pasirinkto empirinio tyrimo metodologija, rezultatai, jais remiantis nustatyta vyraujanti pažiūra į specialistų kūrybiškumo skatinimo poreikį ir veiklą Lietuvos baldų gamybos įmonėse, atsižvelgiant į jų tarptautinę verslo plėtrą.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** tarptautinis verslo vystymas, kūrybiškumas, kūrybiškumą lemiantys veiksniai, kūrybiškumo skatinimas, baldų gamybos sektorius.