Identifying Creative Tasks in Project Management with a Gender Perspective

Tetiana Fesenko[a], Gennadii Golovko[b], Hryhorii Fesenko[c], Anatolii Yakunin[d] and Galyna Fesenko[d]

[a] *Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics, Nauky ave., 14, Kharkiv, 61166, Ukraine*
[b] *National University "Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic", Pershotravneva ave., 24, Poltava, 36011, Ukraine*
[c] *Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, Ioanna Pavla II str., 17, Kyiv, 01042, Ukraine*
[d] *O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv, Marshala Bazhanova str., 17, Kharkiv, 61002, Ukraine*

Abstract

The features of using project management tools and methods as a creative competence of the project manager are considered. It is noted that the creative competence of a project manager, regardless of gender identity, depends on the ability to apply the strengths of masculine and feminine ways of thinking and behaving. The specifics of creative activity in project teams are outlined. The peculiarities of feminine and masculine logical systems in the context of "creative behavior" (in accordance with the National Competence Baseline, NCB) are highlighted. It is found that the feminine, as "producing new and useful ideas, processes, and solutions", is equated in the NCB with "creativity".

The correlation method is used to determine the tools and methods of project management, which depend on the development and adoption of creative decisions. The model of creative tasks in project management processes (according to the Guide to the project management body of knowledge, PMBOK) is proposed. The dynamics of the application of creative work at different phases of the project life cycle are described using the model as an example of model "Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) Phases". The idea that the greatest need for creativity exists at the "Planning and Analysis" and "Design" stages is updated, and its specificity is manifested in business processes and is contained in "pockets of creativity".

The proposed gender focus of the project manager's creative competence makes it possible to apply feminine and masculine cognitive styles for effective teamwork at all project phases.

Project management terms are interpreted in the context of gender perspective: "Project Team", "Management Skills", "Stakeholder", "Voice of the Customer".

Keywords 1

Project management, IT-project, creative competence, creative task, gender approach

1. Introduction

In dynamic environments, projects must be executed by teams capable of "creatively" responding to uncertainties and known triple constraints (time, resources, and results) [1].

Accordingly, project managers must be able to properly incorporate creativity in the project team's work and the project system as a whole (for example, changing the format of project tasks and constraints, stakeholder configuration, etc.). However, strengthening the role of creativity in project management practices is not yet sufficiently articulated at the theoretical level and needs an expanded, interdisciplinary context. In particular, new epistemological possibilities open up if the gender theory

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EMAIL: tetiana.fesenko@nure.ua (Tetiana Fesenko); genvgolovko@ukr.net (Gennadii Golovko); fesenko1491@ukr.net (Hryhorii Fesenko); yava1957pens@gmail.com (Anatolii Yakunin); galyna.fesenko@kname.edu.ua (Galyna Fesenko)
ORCID: 0000-0001-9636-9598 (Tetiana Fesenko); 0000-0002-1745-1321 (Gennadii Golovko); 0000-0001-9749-8746 (Hryhorii Fesenko); 0000-0002-0635-1755 (Anatolii Yakunin); 0000-0001-7133-484X (Galyna Fesenko)

of the organization is involved in the “body of knowledge” of project management [2]. In this regard, the problem of conceptually delineating the parameters of creativity in the work of a project manager through a “gender prism” becomes relevant.

2. Literature review and problem statement

Generally, the scientific and practical development of approaches and models of creative project management is characterized by a global perspective. It is developed by practicing scientists in order to find effective management strategies and requirements are outlined for the behavioral competencies of a project manager as a “personal attitude” [3–4]. It is noted that the success of the project manager largely depends on his behavioral competencies [5]. The authors [6] identify the basic qualities of a creative person that are relevant for a project manager (flexibility in choosing ways to solve problems; willingness to take risks; privileging uncertainty over uniform orderliness).

The interdependence of the development of creative potential and the efficiency of the enterprise is presented in [7]. The organization's maturity is analyzed in terms of development of creative competencies of staff (People Capability Maturity Model). It is also noted that the level of organizational creativity increases as the spheres of employee involvement in the continuous improvement processes of the organization expand [8]. Therefore, the authors propose the open system advanced training model that provides organizational conditions for the development of employees’ talented potential and organizational creativity. It is also assumed that the most important means of increasing the creativity of personnel is motivation. In particular, the authors proposed a motivational model of productive and unproductive creativity, the application of which will allow managing intra-organizational behavior in conditions of an unstable economic situation in [9]. The authors also proposed a modifying algorithm for distributing team workload for IT projects. It provides a full workload, considering the individual availability of each team member. In addition, the impact of the customer on the project work priority is analyzed.

There are studies devoted to finding solutions (modeling) of creative competence taking into account the project's context. There are studies devoted to finding solutions (modeling) of creative competence taking into account the project's context. In particular, a method of generation and decision-making in non-standard conditions (in conditions of a high degree of uncertainty) is proposed in [10]. The development of the creative potential of the developer and stakeholders is based on the example of building a hotel complex in a recreation area. The proposed solution for integrating project scope assessment by beneficiaries based on project management methodology. In [11], the authors expand the basic parameters of the manager's competencies and go beyond the traditional project values– time, cost, and quality (“design constraint triangle”). The competencies required for a client-oriented system are developed in the parameters of processes, methods, and tools of construction project management. The possible interrelations between the creative customer management system and the formation of the context of architectural and planning decisions of construction projects is demonstrated in [10, 11].

Gender aspects of project management are investigated in the context of the search for “best human functioning” in complex projects [12, 13]. It is emphasized that project managers, regardless of gender, should use the strengths of masculine and feminine ways of thinking and behaving in order to adequately respond to the challenges of the project environment [14]. Although, the development of gender-sensitive methods and tools of project management, which allow to ensure the appropriate level of creativity [15, 16], is still a new research task for theoreticians and practitioners in the field of organizational development. The technological ability of the digital city in providing gender equal access to various online services is highlighted and investigated in [15]. It is a proposed approach based on an assessment of the gender mainstreaming level in the municipal management system by analyzing the context of the official website. In [16], the gender issues presented in the context of Managing Sustainable Development Programs as a structural part of all Sustainable Development Goals. The authors propose to integrate the gender context into all stages of management: formulation of the mission, strategic initiatives, measures (project actions), expected results, and values (final results).

3. The purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is determining of the parameters of the project manager's creative competence based on the concepts of gender theory.

In order to achieve this research goal, the following tasks were formulated:

- to highlight the features of feminine and masculine management styles from the point of view of the behavioral competence of the project manager, defined in the NCB as "4.2.07. Creativity";
- to describe the dynamics of the application of creative work in different project stages;
- to identify creative tasks in project management processes, "creative" content of tools and methods for implementing project management processes;
- to offer a gender vision of the creative competence of a project manager through the balance of feminine and masculine cognitive systems.

4. Creative competence of the project manager: from masculinity to femininity

The practicing project managers [13] found that both feminine and masculine logic systems are crucial for the thinking and behavior of successful project managers. "Feminine sense-making" involves "reconfiguration to connections with others". Such a logical system values the exchange of information and energy, participatory decision-making [12, p. 435]. "Masculine" is manifested in the ability to analytically and impersonally solve problems and the tendency to value actions due to hierarchical power [12, p. 434]. Masculine reflection and activity are more amenable to codification, with a clear correspondence to the normative standards defined at the beginning of the project, regardless of the specifics of specific situations arising as a result of the project life cycle. Feminist view of the realities of the project requires immediate detection and response to the dynamic signals of the environment that unfold as the project progresses. Feminine in essence, is "the production of new and useful ideas, processes and solutions" [17], which is identified in the NCB with "creativity" (NCB, 4.2.07). From the point of view of the gender approach, the model of behavior that ensures creativity ("adequate behavior") [3, p. 98], can be defined as feminine, while "behavior that requires correction" is identified as "masculine" (Table 1).

Table 1

Feminine and masculine creative behavior styles (NCB®)

4.2.07. Creativity	
Adequate behavior / *Feminine behavior style*	Behavior requiring correction / *Masculine behavior style*
It shows creativity, accepts objections, and is open to new ideas.	It adheres only to known and tested solutions, and perceives the unknown with anxiety.
Optimistic about implementing new ideas	Rejects new ideas as unrealizable without even evaluating them
Overcomes differences by incorporating a new idea; demonstrates respect for diversity of viewpoints	Can't combine different ideas. Chooses one of the points of view that leads to conflict in the team
Searches for solutions using new concepts	Does not see the point in applying new concepts and tools to overcome complex problems
Encourages employees to come up with new ideas, organizes a reasonable process of finding creative solutions	Always looking for confirmed/proven solutions; infuriating uncertainty; cannot adequately manage the search for a creative solution
Actively manages the scope of work and changes	Rejects everything that goes beyond the initial scope of work

Uses intuition in problem-solving and maintaining interpersonal relationships Uses non-traditional approaches to the project's benefit; makes creative decisions with the aim of minimizing risks	Perceives only what can be rationally modeled; does not use intuition Always accepts the status quo, even if the project is at risk. It is reluctant to take risks

It is important for project managers to understand which processes and tasks are creative, and to apply a feminine logical system of thinking and actions to their implementation. For this purpose, this research proposes a model for the identification of creative tasks in project management processes (Table 2). *A creative task is a subdivision of a work plan or work breakdown structure in which a creative thinking process takes place and in which several people work* (for example, a project manager as well as team members). Management of creative project tasks related to the joint definition of goals and objectives; their constant revision, construction of common content and their communications; transformation of vision into action.

Table 2
Creative tasks in project management processes (activities)

Tools and methods	Characteristics of the potential for creativity, invention in projects [18, 19]	Project management processes (activities)
Methods of organizing group work	Moderators use group work methods (brainstorming, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and meeting management) to reveal the creative potential of the project team during individual operations.	Develop Project Charter; Develop Project Management Plan.
Meetings	Meetings are held to discuss and resolve topical issues within the framework of project management. There are three types of meetings: exchange of information; brainstorming, option evaluation or design; decision making, as well as “meetings for stakeholder groups” and “review meetings”, “lessons learned (experience gained) review meetings”, and “project closeout meeting”. Meetings are held to find, develop, and discuss issues related to the development of a project management plan. The communication control process requires discussions and dialogue with the project team in order to determine the most optimal way of updating and transmitting information about the project implementation, as well as responding to information requests of interested parties. Separate meetings can be dedicated to the development of high-level action plans for risk management, issues of risk audit, and difficulties in responding to risks. It is necessary to hold additional meetings with potential tender participants to exchange information and form a procurement strategy. Profile analysis meetings are used to process information about project stakeholders.	Direct and Manage Project Work; Monitor and Control Project Work; Close Project or Phase; Plan Scope Management; Monitor Communications; Plan Risk Management; Implement Risk Responses; Plan Procurement Management; Identify Stakeholders; Plan Stakeholder Engagement.

Analytical methods	Analytical methods (regression analysis, grouping methods, causal analysis) are used to predict potential results based on possible project options or environmental variables and their interaction with other variables. Analytical methods (regression analysis, trend analysis) are used to evaluate the acquired project results, as well as to forecast potential results in future projects.	Monitor and Control Project Work; Close Project or Phase.
Change control tools	The needs of the project stakeholders should be guided by the choice of tools for managing change requests. “According to stakeholder needs” is a call for unconventional/creative approaches.	Perform Integrated Change Control
Interview	Interviews can include an informal (creative) approach to eliciting information from stakeholders. Interviewing experienced project participants, sponsors, and other management representatives, as well as subject area experts will help in identifying the characteristics/functions of the project's final results/products. Interviewing methods allow for obtaining experience and historical data on quantitative analysis of the probability and impact of risks on project goals.	Collect Requirements; Perform Quantitative Risk Analysis
Focus groups	Facilitators guide interactive discussion in focus groups (stakeholders and experts in subject areas) to identify expectations and attitudes towards the product, services, or result. The creative potential of a focus group is significantly greater compared to an interview.	Collect Requirements
Facilitated workshops	Facilitated workshops are focused on discussion, bringing together key stakeholders to determine product requirements. They are used as the main method that allows you to quickly determine cross-functional requirements and settle differences between stakeholder requirements. The format of group work involves a well-coordinated discussion and promotes the development of trust, and the establishment of communications between participants, which allows for the coordination of stakeholders' interests. Participation in the meeting of key parties who have different expectations and specialize in different areas helps to achieve a cross-functional and joint understanding of the project's goals and boundaries.	Collect Requirements; Define Scope

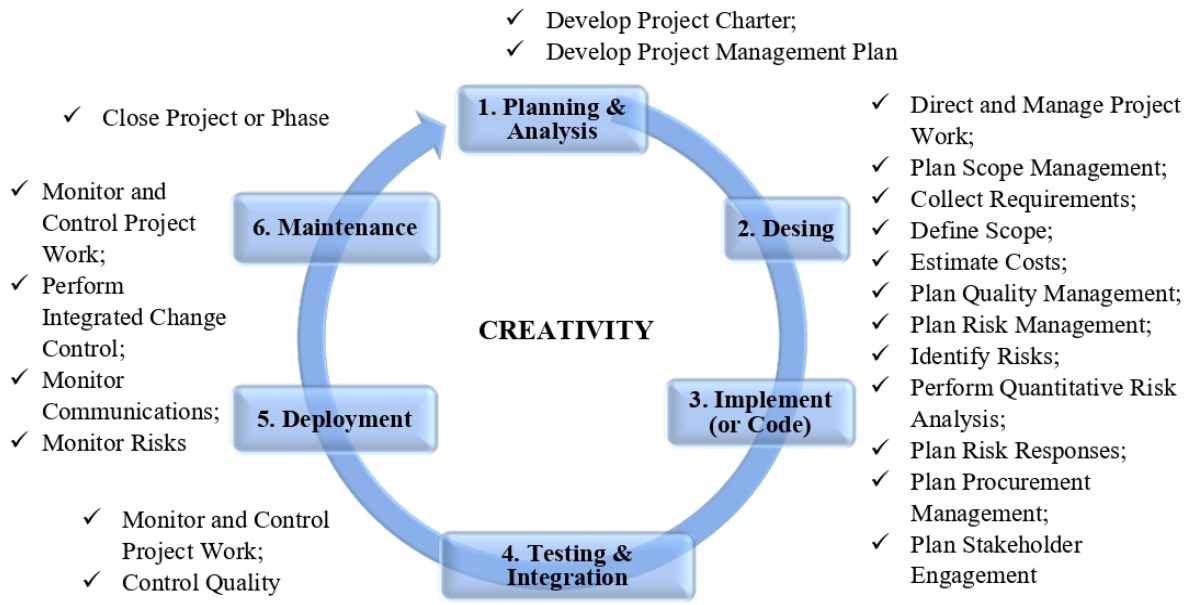
Group creativity methods	Group creativity methods are used to identify requirements for the project and product: brainstorming; nominal group method; construction of associative maps, and similarity diagrams; decision analysis based on many criteria. These tools can also be used to determine quality requirements and plan operations for the purpose of effective quality management. The following information gathering methods can be used to identify risks: “brainstorming”, Delphi method.	Collect Requirements; Plan Quality Management; Identify Risks
Group decision making methods	Group decision-making methods s the process of evaluating various alternatives in relation to the expected results of future actions. Group decision-making (unanimity, majority, relative majority, dictatorship) can be applied within the framework of group creativity methods for collecting requirements. Group methods (brainstorming, the Delphi method, and the method of nominal groups) make it possible to increase the accuracy of cost estimates.	Collect Requirements; Estimate Costs
Prototyping	Prototyping is a method of obtaining preliminary feedback on requirements by providing a working model of the expected product. Prototypes support the concept of sequential refinement in iterative cycles of creating experimental models, conducting experiments by the user, forming feedback, and reviewing the prototype.	Collect Requirements
Benchmarking	Benchmarking is a comparison of the practices (processes, operations) that are used with the practices of other organizations to identify best practices, generate ideas for improvement, and provide a basis for measuring efficiency and effectiveness.	Collect Requirements; Plan Quality Management
Context diagrams	Contextual diagrams visually reflect the content of the product, the business system, and how people and other systems (actors) interact with it.	Collect Requirements
Product analysis	Product analysis includes methods, the application of which requires a creative approach, in particular: hierarchical decomposition of the product; system analysis; requirements analysis; systems engineering; functional-cost analysis and value analysis.	Define Scope
Forming alternatives	Forming alternatives involves the application of a number of methods of general management (brainstorming, lateral thinking, analysis of alternatives, etc.).	Define Scope; Plan Risk Responses

	In order to respond to risks, it is necessary to develop several alternative response strategies, in particular: to negative risks ("evasion", "transfer", "reduction" and "acceptance"), to positive risks ("use", "increase", "separation", "acceptance"), for possible losses.	
Diagram of cause-and-effect relationships ("fishbone")	The description of the problem is placed in the "head of the fish" and used as a starting point for tracing the source of the problem to the root causes. The search for the causes of the problem is carried out by formulating answers to the question "why" until the root cause is identified. Developing a cause-and-effect diagram involves creative teamwork. The diagram of cause-and-effect relationships is also used to identify risks.	Plan Quality Management; Identify Risks
Oriented relationship graphs	Oriented relationship graphs are a process of problem-solving solving in moderately complex scenarios characterized by intertwined logical connections (there can be up to 50 related elements).	Manage Quality

It should also be noted that the level of creativity required varies between phases of the project [19]. Usually, the most creative phase is the initial ("Planning & Analysis"), when unstructured information turns into ideas and chaotic thinking into creativity. In the implementation phase, the need for creativity exists to a greater extent at the beginning ("Design"), and then steadily decreases. Project implementation is divided into intermediate phases, such as preparation for implementation, implementation, and completion [20, p. 8]. These phases occur either in a uniform sequence or in iterations, depending on the project setting, and with ups and downs depending on the overall work plan. The use of creativity is more effective in the conceptual stages of implementation than in the implementation stages. The final phase is purely administrative, so creative activity is not foreseen. The specificity of the manifestation of creativity in business processes is also noted when creative tasks arise in the so-called "pockets of creativity" [21] (sub-processes in which a high level of creativity is required), which are distributed over the general life cycle of the project, alternating with administrative tasks (Figure).

The gender approach in project management should be applied at different levels of the project, taking into account the required level of creativity. It is important to consider that the process of creative thinking consists of several steps of varying imaginative and analytical granularity, and, as a rule, is carried out in iterations.

It should also be noted the need to delineate the limits of increasing creativity because when there are too many manifestations of creativity, they become counterproductive. For example, in a situation where too many creative ideas appear and develop, they can prevent the timely implementation of already-developed ideas. Projects always contain a complex of creative and administrative tasks. Successful innovation cannot be achieved solely by imagining new things; it must be transformed into reality and verified by decisions. Therefore, the corresponding design tasks must be performed in planned styles. A consensus must be reached between the two gender orientations. According to gender principles, a successful manager, regardless of gender, must acquire "sophisticated skills of balancing masculine and feminine cognitive styles" [12, p. 552]. Such a manager is more effective than those with a hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine leadership style.



a: Processes that require creativity (creative tasks) in the project life cycle

Tools and methods of creativity in the project life cycle	Software Development Life Cycle					
	1. Planning & Analysis	2. Design	3. Implement (or Code)	4. Testing & Integration	5. Deployment	6. Maintenance
Methods of organizing group work	X					
Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X
Analytical methods				X	X	X
Change control tools		X	X	X		
Interview	X	X			X	
Focus groups	X				X	
Facilitated workshops	X	X	X		X	
Group creativity methods	X	X				
Group decision making methods	X	X				
Prototyping		X				
Benchmarking	X	X	X	X		
Context diagrams	X					
Product analysis	X	X				
Forming alternatives		X	X			
Diagram of cause-and-effect relationships ("fishbone")		X	X			
Oriented relationship graphs		X	X	X		

b: Tools and methods of creativity in the project life cycle

Figure 1: Tools and methods that require creativity from the Project Manager to implement project management processes in the life cycle projection

The gender leadership style is characterized by the following characteristics [22]:

- the use of *paradoxical methods* in collective work – consistently rigid and emotional, flexible and orderly, competitive and partnership;
- the ability to "*build*" teams through the promotion of interactive leadership; implementation of strategies for people's unity;
- *holistic thinking – seeing "beyond" the obvious and the ability to "connect the dots between important problems"*;
- the ability to build an atmosphere of trust – a key element in creating a productive and creative business culture;
- *relational intelligence* – "sensitivity to the project context".

The identification of gender sensitivity in project management allows to improvement in the interpretation of the terminological and conceptual apparatus, in particular:

- Project Team – a gender-balanced group of individuals that supports the project manager in the performance of project work to achieve the gender-just goals of the project;
- Management Skills – the ability to plan, organize, direct, and control individuals or groups taking into account the gender factor in order to achieve the project's gender-just goals;
- Stakeholder – person, gender group (including gender+), an organization that can influence or be influenced by the final results of the project;
- Voice of the Customer – a planning method used to create products, services, and results that reflect the user's gender requirements.

5. Conclusion

Feminine and masculine features of the creative competence of the project manager are highlighted. The masculine reflection and activity were found to be more amenable to codification, with a clear correspondence to the normative standards identified at the beginning of the project. It is aimed at action, regardless of the specifics of specific situations arising as a result of the project life cycle. A feminist perspective on project realities requires immediate detection and response to the dynamic signals of the environment that unfold as the project progresses.

The "creative tasks (management processes)" and methods of implementation of project management processes in the knowledge system of PMBOK were identified. The presentation of creative tasks and tools in the projection of the life cycle proves that the greatest need for creativity exists in the "Planning & Analysis" and "Design" phases.

The proposed gender focus of the project manager's creative competence makes it possible to use "feminine and masculine cognitive styles" for effective teamwork at all phases of the project. The project management office [23] is responsible for fostering talent and capabilities within project teams and across the organization to take into account the gender factor in order to achieve the project's gender-just goals.

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