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Ideas and Implementation: The Effective Implementation of Novel Marketing Programmes in Small- to Medium-Sized Greek Firms

Leonidas A. Zampetakis, Melissa L. Gruys and Todd Dewett

The purpose of the present study is to identify the potential contribution that a firm's climate supporting creativity can make towards understanding the effective implementation of novel marketing programmes. Specifically, a conceptual model is developed and empirically tested with Bayesian path analysis, using data obtained from managers of 87 Greek firms. Results suggest that a firm's climate that supports creativity has an indirect effect on marketing programme implementation effectiveness through marketing programme novelty. Additionally, climate for creativity moderates the relationship between marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness such that the indirect effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness was found significant for levels of climate moderate to low, but not when the level of climate for creativity was high. Recommendations for further research are discussed.

Introduction

Creativity is critical to the management of all organizations. For example, for an organization to market its products or services effectively to its customers, it must implement creative marketing programmes. Such marketing programmes are considered key for the differentiation of established products in order to better meet customers' needs and market trends over time (Andrews & Smith, 1996; Menon et al., 1999; Im & Workman, 2004; Slater, Hult & Olson, 2010). The current study explores creativity in organizations by examining the implementation of novel marketing programmes across small- and medium-sized Greek firms.

Creativity is generally agreed upon to be multifaceted (Amabile, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1996). In looking at marketing programmes, for example, the creativity, or novelty, and originality of the programme can be considered as well as the appropriateness, value or usefulness of the programme. Specifically, in the context of marketing programmes, appropriateness implies that the programme is relevant to the goals of the firm and consistent with its strategy (i.e., useful) so that the firm can reasonably expect to extract some value from it. Nevertheless, studies that examine the conditions that determine when creative marketing programmes are implemented or used are relatively rare.

From a management and creativity standpoint, the mechanisms through which firms effectively implement creative marketing programmes are important. Current work does argue that the effective implementation of creative marketing programmes is an area of particular weakness in many firms (Slater, Hult & Olson, 2010) and issues of poor implementation are often responsible for marketing programme failures (Cespedes & Piercy, 1996; Noble & Mokwa, 1999). At present, though, relatively little research exists on this topic area. Existing studies have broadly focused on the general marketing strategy formulation–implementation link, examining isolated factors or highlighting rather complex frameworks (Prange & Schlegelmilch, 2009).

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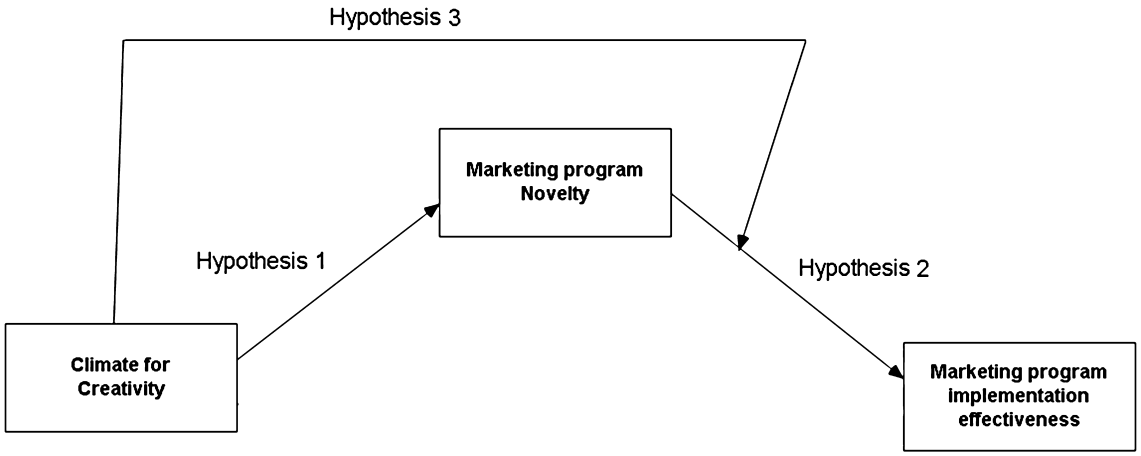

Figure 1. Representation of the Theoretical Model and the Hypothesized Relationships

In this study, we draw on the conceptual framework related to 'culture and marketing' originally developed by Deshpandé and Webster (1989). According to this framework, a firm's organizational culture is an important element in the management of the marketing function. The paper investigates the potential role of a work climate (a surface manifestation of culture), that is conducive to creativity, on the production of creative marketing programmes and their implementation. Specifically, we investigate a model (Figure 1) suggesting that a climate conducive to creativity has an indirect effect on marketing programme implementation effectiveness. Additionally, our model further proposes that a potential moderator for the degree to which creative marketing programmes mediate the climate implementation relationship is climate for creativity itself.

Before embarking on the theoretical underpinnings of the study, let us first define the main concepts utilized in the context of this research. We define a firm's *climate* as a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices and procedures that a firm rewards, supports and expects (Deshpandé & Webster, 1989). Stated differently, climate refers to the ways firms operationalize the themes that pervade everyday behaviour (i.e., how things are done). In line with contemporary research, we consider climate to be a surface level manifestation of a firm's culture (Schein, 2004). Furthermore, we refer to mean firm climate ratings as *climate level*. We consider *innovation* as a series of events, encompassing two basic stages: the generation and development of new ideas and their implementation (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Amabile, 1996). *Creativity* thus refers to the first stage of the innovation process, that is, idea generation and development, and can therefore be seen as a subprocess of innovation; innovation encompasses both idea generation and implementation. We define a *climate conductive to creativity* (or climate for creativity) as the work environment perceptions that can influence idea generation and development (Amabile et al., 1996; West & Richter, 2008). *Marketing programme novelty* refers to the degree to which elements in the firm's products, such as packaging, pricing, promotion, distribution channels, etc., are perceived as representing unique differences from competitors' relevant elements (i.e., they are creative and useful). Finally, *effective implementation* refers to the degree to which a marketing programme is consistent with: (a) consumer needs, preferences and perceptions and (b) with firm's strategy and the co-ordination of the marketing efforts with other functional areas of the organization (e.g., sales) (Chimhanzia & Morgan, 2005). Effective implementation of marketing programmes provides value for the firm (Slater, Hult & Olson, 2010).

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, by reviewing the previous literature, we present the conceptual model in Figure 1 and set out the hypotheses of the study. Then, a description of the sample and the methodology used in the empirical research is provided. The last section will discuss the study results and their implications and limitations.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Climate for Creativity and Innovation in Organizations

Both the management and marketing literature regards creativity as an antecedent of

innovation and an engine of productivity (Andrews & Smith, 1996; Smith & Yang, 2004). According to this view, creativity is one of the factors that contribute to innovation. More specifically, creativity becomes the first step towards innovation, which is the successful application of what creativity produces in organizations (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Amabile et al., 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996).

In order to better understand the close link between creativity and innovation in organizations, research recommends the study of work climate conditions and social and contextual influences (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Amabile, 1996; Ekval, 1996). For instance, Mohamed and Rickards (1996) emphasized and empirically tested the importance of creativity-supporting climate, among other factors, on the innovativeness of manufacturing firms. The authors concluded that innovative firms were found to have, among other elements, more creative climates when compared to the less innovative ones. Similarly, Bharadwaj and Menon (2000) carried out a study in which they examined the specific kinds of creativity found in organizations and their impact on innovation. They broke creativity down into two specific areas, individual creativity mechanisms (i.e., the activities individual employees pursued on their own to develop personal creativity) and organizational creativity mechanisms (i.e., the practices and formal procedures adopted by organizations to promote creative behaviour). These researchers then compared the amount of innovation reported across organizations. Bharadwaj and Menon's findings showed that the highest levels of innovation, as reported by employees, were found among those organizations that were identified as having high amounts of both individual and organizational creativity mechanisms.

The aforementioned empirical studies are in line with the majority of the contemporary theoretical models discussing the link between climate for creativity and innovation (e.g., Amabile, 1996). These models draw attention to the importance of work environment characteristics for the stimulation of creativity. The work environment has effects on employees and groups. As such, the establishment of the stimulating work environment plays a crucial role first for stimulating creativity and subsequently for fostering innovation (West & Richter, 2008).

Chuang (2007) tested the applicability of Amabile's model with some of the most innovative companies in Taiwan. According to the researcher, the analysis revealed, as predicted in Amabile's model, that individual factors, such as employee creativity and mindset, were directly related to organizational innovation. Additionally, Chuang found that the inclusion of organizational (i.e., organizational resources and structure) and environmental factors (i.e., customers, technology, competitors, etc.) strengthened Amabile's model. Recent research, however, suggests that the physical environment has a weaker influence on creativity than the social and organizational factors (e.g., Dul, Ceylon & Jaspers, 2011).

Several elements of the organizational work environment have been found in previous empirical studies to enhance creativity. A work environment that supports creativity is characterized as: challenging enough to keep the motivation of employees high to accomplish a task (e.g., Oldham & Cummings, 1996), offering a certain degree of freedom to choose a task to work on (Ohly, Sonnentag & Pluntke, 2006), encouraging a healthy level of risk-taking (Amabile et al., 1996), supporting generation of ideas (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003), and allowing some free time to try new things and explore unused ways to accomplish tasks rather than overloading employees with predefined work (Andrews & Smith, 1996).

Conceptually, firms with work environments that support creativity are those that appropriately use rewards and tolerate failure (which will inevitably happen at times even in the most creative environment), and in which members share values such as openness to new ideas, change, continuous learning, autonomy, collaboration, flexibility and informal communication (Amabile et al., 1996).

Based on our previous discussion, it is plausible that a working climate that supports creativity promotes the production of novel marketing programmes. Therefore, we put forward the following hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis 1: A positive correlation exists between a climate that supports creativity and the production of creative marketing programmes.*

Creative Marketing Programmes and their Implementation

The production of novel marketing programmes is useless unless they are used (i.e., implemented). The implementation of creative marketing programmes suggests that the programme is consistent with the firm's strategy and that the programme is appropriate and useful for the firm.

Previous research has documented that the production of ideas is a positive predictor of idea implementation (e.g., Axtell et al., 2000). Slater, Hult and Olson (2010), for instance, in

their empirical study concerning the factors influencing the relative importance of marketing strategy creativity and marketing strategy implementation effectiveness, found that the two constructs were positively correlated. In their study concerning quality and novelty of creative ideas, Dean et al. (2006) found a small positive correlation between novelty and value. In his study about the role of individual creativity on entrepreneurship as a potential career path, Zampetakis (2008) found that creativity of ideas and implementation were positively correlated.

West and Richter (2008) suggest that firms with a climate supportive of creativity are places where 'employees perceive and share an appealing vision of what the organization is trying to achieve' (p. 230). This implies that in firms with a creative climate, all the members of the firm are aligned to a certain goal and some standardized work practices, control, monitoring and co-ordination are used for achieving that goal (Gilson et al., 2005). Thus, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2: A positive correlation exists between firms' novel marketing programmes and their effective implementation.

Nevertheless, the production of creative marketing programmes is far more prevalent than their effective implementation. Many ideas generated by creativity are not commercially feasible or cannot be developed by the firms who generate them (Koslow, Sasser & Riordan, 2003). In other words, not all creative marketing programmes are going to be effectively implemented. The reason for this rather loose relationship between marketing programme creativity and marketing programme implementation may be found largely in the novelty dimension of the concept of creativity.

Too much focus on novelty, for example, with little or no emphasis on constraints (e.g., cost) may result in original ways of commercializing products that are in fact too expensive for the firm to implement successfully. In contrast, overemphasis on the constraints and efficient implementation (value) can thwart the exploration required for marketing programme creativity. This implies an inherent tension and disequilibrium in the innovation process within the firm (DeFillippi, Grabher & Jones, 2007).

Most creative marketing programmes propose departures or extensions of existing ways of doing things; thus uncertainty is a dominant characteristic of creative marketing programmes. Along similar lines, Holbek (1988) argues that for firms to innovate it is necessary to adopt contrasting structures and climates as they move from the initiation to the implementation stages of innovation. According to Axtell and colleagues (2000), the implementation of novel ideas is more strongly predicted by organizational characteristics (such as supportive management, employee participation in decision making and team support for innovation).

Evidence suggests that a climate that supports creativity will provide the necessary boundary conditions for creativity to exist. According to Andriopoulos (2003), firms that support creativity tend to: (a) support employees' passions, but achieve financial goals, (b) challenge employees, but build their confidence, (c) encourage personal initiative, but maintain a shared vision, (d) encourage diversity, but build cohesive work teams, and (e) take incremental risks, but break new grounds. Therefore, climates that support creativity foster the use of creativity as circumstances warrant, but not to the detriment of established work standards. For example, Gilson and her colleagues (2005) found that the effects of creative work environments are most pronounced when they occur in collaboration with standardized work practices (i.e., procedures and guidelines for how work is to be performed). In addition, Koslow, Sasser and Riordan (2003) reported that in the advertising business, advertisers felt their work to be more challenging if it was guided by a tight strategy. In the same vein, Miron-Spektor, Erez and Naveh (2011) empirically demonstrated that for firms to effectively implement creativity, some amount of conformism is needed in the sense that the firms' members should perform within given constraints.

Overall, then, it is likely that climate for creativity may act as a boundary condition on the relationship between marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness. More specifically, we expect that the indirect effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness may be conditioned on the values of climate for creativity itself (conditional indirect effect; Preacher, Rucker & Hayes, 2007). On the basis of this reasoning, we offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The extent to which firm's climate for creativity affects the implementation of the marketing programme (via marketing programme novelty) depends on the levels of the climate for creativity itself.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Our basic research approach is a cross-sectional survey of respondents from a sample

from the databases of membership lists of the Hellenic Management Association. Members of this society are managing directors, marketing, sales, human resource managers, account managers, etc. We focused primarily on small- to medium-sized companies because the assessment of organizational climate becomes more difficult as the number of employees increases and only smaller companies are characterized by a unitary climate. According to recommendations provided by European Commission, the category of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million (European Commission, 2003). In order to address the potential for common method bias in the measures used, we adopted the following procedure to collect the data.

Firstly, we identified 586 managing directors for which there was full contact information. In February 2008, personalized e-mail messages were sent to the managers asking for their co-operation and explaining the purpose of the survey. The e-mail was accompanied by a short questionnaire requesting the assessment of the firm's marketing programme's creativity and implementation effectiveness. Furthermore, we asked the managing director to provide us with information about the managers that were responsible for several specific functions of the firm, providing as much a representative cross-section of the company's management as possible. There was no monetary incentive to complete the study, but a summary of the study findings was offered to participants as an incentive to participate.

We obtained complete and usable data from 95 managing directors (response rate = 16.2%). The average age of the firms in the sample was 45.42 years (SD = 21.84 years) (range: 12–64). On average, the firms had 226 employees (range: 120–316) with average sales of EUR 23 million. The majority of the respondents (82%) were managing directors or owners of small- or medium-sized firms (i.e., firms with fewer than 250 employees). Of the responding firms, 66 were located in central Greece, 15 in northern Greece, and the rest in other parts of the country. Within our sample, 95 different organizations are represented, from different industries. The most frequently indicated industries were property and business services (19%), finance and insurance (16%), health and community services (13%), construction (9%), and food production (7%). The response rate in the present study (16.2%), is within an acceptable range for managing directors (e.g., Cycyota & Harrison, 2006), and is also considered an acceptable response rate for an e-mail survey (Sheehan, 2006). For instance, Isaksen and Akkermans (2011) reported an 18.45% response rate in their e-mail survey study concerning the role of the creative climate in the relationship between leadership behaviour and innovation productivity of firms.

In the second stage, in March 2008, an e-mail was sent to the managers responsible for the functions of firms that initially responded in the first stage through their managing directors. Each manager received a questionnaire assessing the firm's climate for creativity and marketing programme creativity. Eight managers did not return a complete questionnaire, and since we did not have complete responses from their firms, these cases were excluded from further analyses. Respondents in our study represent a diverse set of managers occupying a wide variety of positions (e.g., plant director, director of human resources, director of sales, etc.) in a variety of departments (e.g., production, marketing, sales, finance, human resources). On average, we obtained data from four managers per firm (range: 3–8). The sample of participating managers was 73% male, with a mean age of 36.61 years (range: 36–59 years, SD = 7.2), and average organization tenure of 6.82 years (SD = 8.1). In the sample, 73% of the respondents had a university degree.

Our relatively low response rate may raise concerns about whether the sample is representative of the population of interest. Although data from senior-level management are difficult to collect (Cycyota & Harrison, 2006), we believe that concerns about a potentially biased sample are eased by the fact that our sample is diverse and does not appear to oversample firms in any one industry. According to Blair and Zinkhan (2006), measures of relationships, are resistant to sample bias as long as the sample is diverse. Additionally, although in our sample the majority of the firms (almost 70%) come from central Greece, this is to be expected as this region is the most populated and has the largest economic activity in the country (including the city of Athens, the capital of Greece). Finally, we believe that the rigorous sampling procedure employed in the present research provides more benefits than the typical convenience sample, and outweighs the potential costs of a low response rate, as a low response rate does not necessarily indicate non-response bias (Blair & Zinkhan, 2006).

We focused on firms' management team in order to collect information on climate, marketing programme novelty and implementation of firms because we consider a firm's

management as a valid resource for the assessment. The management team receives information on a wide variety of departments and people. In addition, the management team has an important role to play in shaping the firm's climate and general procedures encompassing the kinds of behaviours that are expected and supported. We chose the firm as the unit of analysis (in total 87 firms). To justify the aggregation of managers' responses to create firm-level measures of climate for creativity, marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation, we used indices of inter-rater agreement and inter-rater reliability (LeBreton & Senter, 2008).

Measurement of Constructs

All the constructs included in analysis were based on multi-item scales whose psychometric properties are well established. Because participants were Greek-speaking, all the scales used were first translated into Greek by two translators, who compared their versions until agreeing on the most correct translation, and then back-translated into English by a bilingual, native English-speaking translator, following the procedure recommended by Brislin (1980). The few discrepancies between the original English version and the back-translated version resulted in adjustment in the Greek translation based on direct discussion between the translators. The specific measures used in the analysis, along with sample items of the relevant constructs, are outlined.

Climate for Creativity

Based on Amabile's (1996) conceptual framework, we used the KEYS – *Assessing the climate for creativity* instrument (Amabile et al., 1996), to assess the work environment supportive of creativity. KEYS is a 78-item questionnaire which measures participant perceptions of the characteristics of a work environment. Of the 78 items, 66 form the eight work environment scales (six stimulants to creativity and two obstacles to creativity), while 12 form the two criterion scales (creativity and productivity in the work). In our study, we have chosen to use only the six sub-scales from KEYS that assess the work environment supportive of creativity, in order to reduce the number of questions.

Existing evidence suggests KEYS to be a quality research tool with adequate evidence of its predictive validity and good basic psychometric properties (Mathisen & Einarsen, 2004). Responses to all items in the six sub-scales were made on a four-point Likert-type scale to rate the degree to which certain characteristics described in the questionnaire corresponds to their perception of their own work environment (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always). The specific scales used were:

(a) Organizational encouragement (15 items) – reflects the extent to which the firm encourages creativity through the fair, constructive judgement of ideas, reward and recognition for creative work, mechanisms for developing new ideas, an active flow of ideas, and a shared vision of what the firm is trying to do. Sample item: 'People are encouraged to solve problems creatively in this organization'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for organizational encouragement was 0.86.
(b) Supervisory encouragement (11 items) – reflects the extent to which supervisors serve as good work models, set goals appropriately, support the work group, value individual contributions, and show confidence. Sample item: 'My supervisor serves as a good work model'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for supervisory encouragement was 0.72.
(c) Work-group supports (8 items) – reflects the extent to which work groups are diversely skilled in which people communicate well, are open to new ideas, constructively challenge each other's work, trust and help each other, and feel committed to the work they are doing. Sample item: 'There is free and open communication within my group'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for work-group supports was 0.84.
(d) Sufficient resources (6 items) – reflects the extent to which appropriate resources, including funds, materials, facilities and information are provided to employees. Sample item: 'Generally, I can get the resources I need for my work'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for sufficient resources was 0.73.
(e) Challenging work (5 items) – the extent to which there is a sense of having to work hard on challenging tasks and important projects. Sample item: 'I feel challenged by the work I am currently doing'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for challenging work was 0.85.
(f) Freedom (4 items) – the extent to which employees have the ability to decide what work to do or how to do it. Sample item: 'I have the freedom to decide how I am going to carry out my projects'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for freedom was 0.64.

The six dimensions were combined into a single measure of climate for creativity because we were interested in the overall

climate score rather than the individual dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.78.

Marketing Programme Novelty (MPN)

We adopted four items from the scale of Andrews and Smith (1996). The items used were: MPN1 – 'Compared to our competitors, the marketing programmes in this firm are dull', MPN2 – 'Compared to our competitors, the marketing programmes in this firm are conventional', MPN3 – 'Compared to our competitors, the marketing programmes in this firm are usual', MPN4 – 'Compared to our competitors, the marketing programmes in this firm are commonplace'. All items were reverse coded and the mean ratings of these four items were used as the marketing programme creativity measure so that the higher the score, the more creative the marketing programme. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.89.

Marketing Programme Implementation Effectiveness (MPIE)

We used two items from the scale originally developed by Noble and Mokwa (1999): MPEI1 – 'Generally, the marketing programmes in this firm are effectively implemented', MPIE2 – 'The implementation of our marketing programme is generally considered to be a success'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.92.

Control Variables

Two control variables were entered when we tested the hypothesized relationships. The first control was *firm size*, which was measured by the total number of employees. The second control was *years of operation*. Previous research suggests that both firm size and age are attributes that significantly impacts firms' outcomes (e.g., Tang et al., 2008).

Analytical Strategy

Prior to testing the proposed model and the associated hypotheses, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to demonstrate the construct validity of variables. We used Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS, version 7.0) software (Arbuckle, 2006), taking a Bayesian approach to estimate CFA measurement models along with Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) for model fit. Bayesian modelling does not rely on asymptotic theory, making it particularly useful when the sample size is small and thus classical estimation methods (such as maximum likelihood) are not robust. Gelman and his colleagues (2004) provide a comprehensive treatment of Bayesian methodology.

The adequacy of a Bayesian model can be assessed using posterior predictive model checking (Gelman, Meng & Stern, 1996). Posterior predictive *p*-value (PP *p*-value) is the probability that the replicated data (i.e., the posterior predictive distributions) could be more extreme than the observed data. As suggested in Gelman et al. (2004, pp. 175–6), posterior predictive *p*-value should be near 0.5 for a correct model, with values toward the extremes of 0 or 1 indicating that a model is not plausible. This statistic has been applied to Bayesian analyses (e.g., Lee, 2007, pp. 128–9; Zampetakis, Vekini & Moustakis, 2011) and has produced dependable results for assessing goodness-of-fit of the posited model. Furthermore, the deviance information criterion (DIC) (Spiegelhalter et al., 2002) was used as a method of choosing among competing Bayesian models. The model with the smallest DIC is selected to be the best model.

To justify the aggregation of respondents' ratings to create firm-level measures, we used indices of inter-rater agreement and inter-rater reliability. Specifically, the *rwg*(*j*) index was used to measure inter-rater agreement and a 0.70 criterion has been used to justify aggregation (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). The *rwg*(*j*) values are commonly based upon the expected variance from a uniform distribution (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). In addition, intraclass correlation coefficients [*ICC*(1) and *ICC*(2)] were used to calculate inter-rater reliability.

In order to test the moderating effect of climate for creativity (independent variable) on the relationship between marketing programme novelty and marketing implementation effectiveness, we used the approach described by Preacher and colleagues (2007) (Model 1), where the independent variable is also the moderator. This model has been previously described by Judd and Kenny (1981), while James and Brett (1984) presented this model as one example of moderated mediation. Recently, Wiedemann et al. (2009) used this model in the context of health behaviours to demonstrate that intentions influence behaviour through action planning processes and that the strength of the planning–behaviour association depends on the level of intentions (moderation).

Moreover, we used the moderator centring approach discussed in Preacher, Rucker and Hayes (2007). Specifically, first we mean centred the variables marketing programme

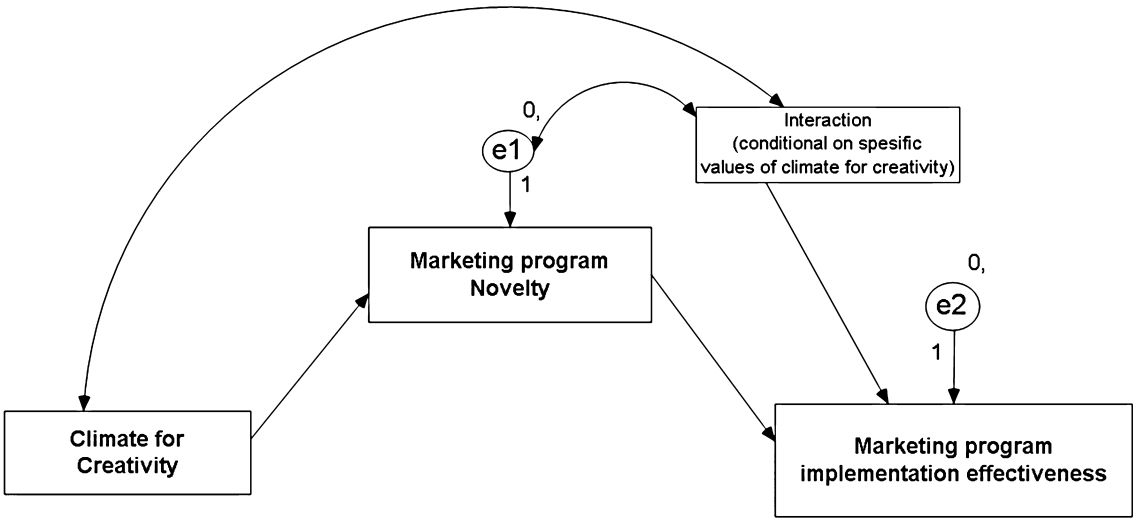

Figure 2. Path Model for Testing the Interaction Marketing Programme Novelty × Climate for Creativity on Marketing Programme Implementation Effectiveness

novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness to estimate the interaction effect. Then we centred the moderator (i.e., climate for creativity) at conditional variables of interest. For each conditional value of the moderator, we constructed an interaction effect. Then, we estimated the conditional indirect effect of climate for creativity on implementation effectiveness, with the path model in Figure 2.

The small sample size used in the present study (87 firms) raises concerns about the statistical power of the model's parameter estimates (McQuity, 2004). Statistical power is defined as one minus the probability of Type II error. The cut-off most frequently used to define acceptable power is 0.80, that is 80% likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis. We performed a Monte Carlo simulation study in order to determine power (Muthén & Muthén, 2002). The Mplus (version 5.2) software (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2008) was used due to its extensive Monte Carlo simulation facilities.

Results

Preliminary Analyses: Assessment of Measurement Models

The first measurement model tested the climate for creativity construct, postulating that each item would load significantly onto its corresponding factor. Model fitting was accomplished using the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm. The initial 10,000 MCMC scans were discarded as burn-in. The posterior summaries were based on a posterior sample of 20,000 scans. The MCMC chain mixed well and standard diagnostics suggest that the sample is approximated to the stationary distribution. Based on the standards for Bayesian modelling, the model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit (PP p-value = 0.47). All indicators' estimated pattern coefficient on the underlying factors was statistically significant.

The second measurement model tested the hypothesized eight-factor measurement model (i.e., climate for creativity, marketing programme novelty, and marketing programme implementation effectiveness), with a one-factor model (Harman's one-factor test) in which all of the items were set to load on a single underlying factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The basic assumption of Harman's one-factor test is that if a substantial amount of common method variance exists in the data, either a single factor will emerge or one general factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the variables. Again, model fitting was accomplished using the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm, with the initial 1,000 MCMC scans discarded as burn-in. The posterior summaries were based on a posterior sample of 39,000 scans and the hypothesized eight-factor measurement model fit the data better (PP p-value = 0.19; DIC = 1115.35) than the alternative one-factor model, both in terms of PP p-value and when directly contrasted with a change in DIC (PP p-value = 0.0; DIC = 1189.66). These results support the discriminant validity of the study variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Total Sample

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Firm's climate for creativity	3.06	0.27	–				
2. Marketing programme novelty (MPN)	3.24	0.62	0.35**	–			
3. Marketing programme implementation effectiveness (MPIE)	3.93	0.58	0.37**	0.69**	–		
4. Years of operation	45.42	21.84	0.03	0.10	-0.06	–	
5. Total number of employees	226	153	0.27*	0.52**	0.26*	0.18*	–

Note: $N = 87$
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; (two-tailed tests)

Justification for Aggregation

The measures used in this study refer to the organization as a whole rather than to individual behaviours and attitudes. Moreover, the *rwg*(*j*) mean values exceed 0.70, suggesting strong agreement among managers within each firm on the measures of climate for creativity and effectiveness. *ICC*(1) for the study variables ranged from 15 to 27, for marketing programme novelty, marketing programme implementation and climate for creativity, respectively. These are large effects, suggesting that responses were influenced by the firm membership. *ICC*(2) was 0.76, 0.78 and 0.73, indicating that the firm means were reliable and differentiated from one another. Additionally, all ICCs values were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These statistical procedures provided evidence that individual managers' responses can be aggregated to the firm level and represent statistically reliable firm attributes.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations of the variables. Climate for creativity was significantly related to marketing programme novelty ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) and marketing programme implementation effectiveness ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). It is notable that marketing programme novelty was significantly related to marketing programme implementation effectiveness ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.05$), which mirrors the positive relationship between these constructs found in previous research (e.g., Slater, Hult & Olson, 2010). Our results also suggest that the total number of employees was positively related to climate for creativity ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), marketing programme novelty ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) and marketing programme implementation effectiveness ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$). It is plausible that the number of employees may be a surrogate measure of several dimensions associated with creativity and innovation, such as resources and economies of scale.

Assessment of the Mediational Model: Hypotheses Testing

We used Bayesian path analysis to estimate the mediational model. Model fitting was accomplished using the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm. The initial 10,000 MCMC scans were discarded as burn-in. The posterior summaries were based on a posterior sample of 20,000 scans. The MCMC chain mixed well and standard diagnostics suggest that the sample is approximated to the stationary distribution. Based on the standards for Bayesian modelling, the complete mediation model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit (PP p-value = 0.49, DIC = 17.79). However, the path from climate for creativity to marketing programme implementation effectiveness was not statistical significant ($\beta = 0.11$, 95% CI: –0.03–0.25). Thus our data provide support for the complete mediation model.

Specifically, the complete mediation model postulated that the effects of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness were completely mediated by the firms' marketing programme novelty. The standardized direct effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme novelty was significant ($\beta = 0.34$, 95% CI: 0.15–0.52). This provides support for our first hypothesis: a positive correlation exists between a climate that supports creativity and the production of creative marketing programmes (i.e., original or new).

The standardized direct effect of marketing programme novelty on marketing programme implementation effectiveness was significant ($\beta = 0.71$, 95% CI: 0.66–0.82), providing support for our second hypothesis. The standardized indirect effect of climate for creativity

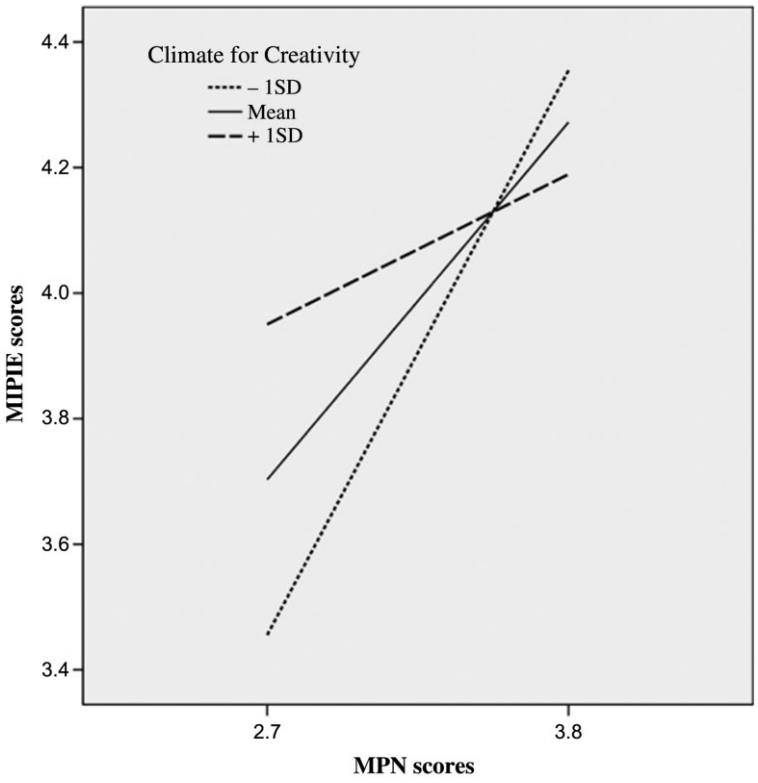

Figure 3. Marketing Programme Implementation Effectiveness (MPIE) Predicted by Marketing Programme Novelty (MPN) and Moderated by Climate for Creativity
+1 SD = one standard deviation above the mean; –1 SD = one standard deviation below the mean.

on marketing programme implementation effectiveness was significant ($\beta = 0.27$, 95% CI: 0.12–0.42). The standardized effects of the control variables on marketing programme implementation effectiveness were not statistically significant (firm size, $\beta = -0.14$, 90% CI: –0.34–0.09; years of operation, $\beta = -0.10$, 90% CI: –0.31–0.09).

Results of power analysis suggests that a $N = 87$ has sufficient power to reject a false null hypothesis in regard to the path coefficients, as statistical power was 91% for the path between marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness and 88% for the path between climate for creativity and marketing programme novelty.

We estimated the moderated mediation using the path model in Figure 2. Model fitting was accomplished using the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm. The initial 10,000 MCMC scans were discarded as burn-in. The posterior summaries were based on a posterior sample of 20,000 scans. The MCMC chain mixed well and standard diagnostics suggest that the sample is approximated to the stationary distribution. The moderated mediation model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit (PP p-value = 0.29, DIC = 33.39). Results indicated that the cross-product term between climate for creativity and marketing programme novelty scores on marketing programme implementation effectiveness was significant ($\beta = -0.34$, 95% CI: –0.48––0.20).

We applied conventional procedures for plotting simple slopes (see Figure 3) at one standard deviation above and below the mean of climate for creativity. Consistent with our expectations, the slope of the relationship between marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness was relatively strong (and positive) when climate for creativity decreases (simple slope = 0.76, $t = 13.075$, $p < 0.001$), whereas the slope was weak when climate for creativity increases (simple slope = 0.20, $t = 1.59$, non-significant).

In addition, we examined the conditional indirect effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness (through marketing programme novelty) at three values of climate for creativity: the mean (3.06), one standard deviation above the mean (3.33), and one standard deviation below the mean (2.79) (see Figure 4).

Bayesian path analysis with the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm indicated two of the three conditional indirect effects (based on moderator values at the mean and at ± one standard

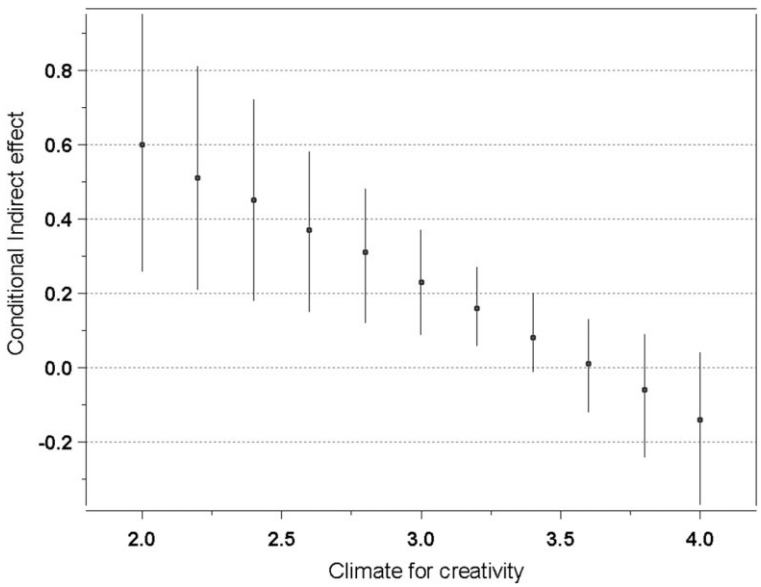

Figure 4. A Plot of the Conditional Indirect Effect (Standardized Estimates) of Climate of Creativity Level on Marketing Programme Implementation Effectiveness through Marketing Programme Novelty vs. the Moderator (Climate for Creativity) with 95% Bayesian Credible (Confidence) Intervals (Vertical Lines)

deviation) were negative and significantly different from zero. Specifically, the standardized conditional indirect effect at values of climate for creativity: one standard deviation below the mean was ($\beta = 0.30$, 95% CI: 0.12–0.47), for the mean was ($\beta = 0.21$, 95% CI: 0.09–0.24) and for one standard deviation above the mean was ($\beta = 0.11$, 95% CI: –0.03–0.47). Thus, we have found that the indirect effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness through marketing programme novelty was observed for levels of climate moderate to low, but not when the level of climate for creativity was high. Thus, there is support for Hypothesis 3.

Discussion and Limitations

An organizational climate that supports creativity has become increasingly important in organizations (e.g., Andriopoulos, 2003; Isaksen & Ekvall, 2010) and the present study extends an emerging body of research of the role of a climate for creativity in firms' marketing programme novelty (MPN) and marketing programme implementation effectiveness (MPIE). Although the importance of MPN and MPIE has been emphasized in previous research (e.g., Noble & Mokwa, 1999; Im & Workman, 2004; Slater, Hult & Olson, 2010), the present study is the first that explicitly emphasizes the effect of climate for creativity on these constructs.

Specifically, we introduced and empirically tested a conceptual model (Figure 1) to examine the mediating role of MPN in the relationship between firm's climate for creativity and MPIE. The results show a climate supportive towards creativity is positively related to the production and implementation of novel marketing programmes. A climate that supports creativity enhances individual creativity and thus the production of original and unusual ideas for marketing programmes. Furthermore a climate that is conducive to creativity seems to facilitate the cross-functional integration across different departments of the firm and encourages the implementation of novel marketing programmes. Our model specifically implies that a climate that supports creativity indirectly influences firms' marketing programme implementation effectiveness.

Furthermore, our proposed moderated mediation model allows for a better description of the causal mechanisms by which climate for creativity influences implementation; climate for creativity affects implementation via two pathways: (a) the indirect path and (b) the moderator path. Previous research empirically supported the positive direct effect of working climate on innovation. Although some previous research suggests that climate has a direct effect on innovation (e.g., Abbey & Dickson, 1983; Scott & Bruce, 1994), several other studies reported inconsistent findings. For example, in a study conducted in a sample

of 110 manufacturing firms in China, Wei and Morgan (2004) could not identify a direct relationship between supportiveness of climate and new product performance. Our results are among the first to demonstrate the moderating role of the climate for creativity as representing more of a context within which the management team and the employees operate. Moreover, our results are in line with previous research recognizing that innovation encompasses creativity and idea implementation as two different activities (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Amabile, 1996; Ekval, 1996).

The practical utility of this study lies in that managers should place an emphasis on policies that support climate for creativity, in order to make their firms' marketing programmes more original and extract commercial value. Contemporary research indicates that managerial behaviour does have considerable potential to affect climates (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Furthermore, leaders may serve as interpretive filters of relevant organizational processes and practices for all group members, thus contributing to common climate perceptions (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989).

However, how creative should a working environment be? Is there a limit to the level of creativity that is helpful in an organization? Our results suggest that the indirect effect of climate for creativity on marketing programme implementation effectiveness was significant for moderate to low levels of climate support, but not when the level of climate support for creativity was high. This is in line with the notion that too much creativity might be harmful to the business (Levitt, 2002). Our results point to the fact that too much creativity may be detrimental to the effective implementation of novel marketing programmes, because implementation requires keeping to time and budget constraints rather than spending time and resources on trying out new ideas. The management team should also pay serious attention in working out the details and implementing the firm's novel marketing programmes. Towards this end, the present study is among the first to empirically demonstrate that climate for creativity may successfully overcome the inherent tension and disequilibrium in the innovation process within the firm (Andriopoulos, 2003).

Furthermore, in terms of innovation best practice, the findings of this study suggest that owners of SMEs would be ill-advised in their marketing decisions should they use a linear-only creativity model. Some scholars have recently documented a 'too much of a good thing effect' (TMGT) in management (Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). The TMGT effect occurs when ordinarily beneficial antecedents (i.e., climate for creativity in our case) reach inflection points after which their relations with desired outcomes (i.e., marketing programme implementation effectiveness) cease to be linear and positive. It is useful for owners to know whether or not there is a context-specific inflection point in which increasing creativity goes from being beneficial to detrimental (Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). If the firm's goal is to increase the effectiveness of its marketing programme implementation effectiveness, not all forms of creativity oversupply will be beneficial. For example, employees receiving excess opportunities for challenging or specialized work may not necessarily translate into increased effectiveness in implementation.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge and address the limitations of this study. First, we have adopted an aggregate approach to the assessment of climate for creativity. That is, we created a composite scale for our analysis. The problems with this approach are that it neglects the individual influence of each dimension and assumes a universal and uniform influence by each dimension. Furthermore, we have assessed only the stimulants for creativity and not the impediments (i.e., organizational impediments and workload pressure). However, this study represents a first attempt to understand the total influences of climate for creativity on firms' effectiveness. Further research is needed to understand how different climate for creativity dimensions might influence marketing strategy implementation to provide a stronger theoretical base.

Our cross-sectional design prevents us from studying causal relationships among our variables. It is difficult to determine whether the climate for creativity leads to novel marketing programmes and effective implementation or whether it the other way around, such that effective implementation of novel marketing programmes in firms leads respondents to report on the level of climate for creativity. Although a comparison of plausible alternative models suggests that the model in Figure 1 is the most parsimonious interpretation of the data, a longitudinal study is needed to establish causality, and this clearly seems to be an important avenue for further research.

It might be argued that judgements of marketing programme novelty and effective implementation should be performed by independent sources such as customers rather than firms' managers. Future research could benefit from collecting climate for creativity perceptions from employees and for marketing programme novelty and implementation from independent sources.

The current study also did not have access to financial data for the firms in the study, and thus could not assess the effectiveness of the marketing programmes from the standpoint of the performance of the firm. Future research addressing the effectiveness of the marketing programme within firms on firm performance is suggested.

The low response rate of the present study (13.8%) may raise concerns about whether the sample is representative of the population of interest and limits the generalizability and certainty of the findings. Also, our study concentrated on firms in Greece, so caution should therefore be exercised in generalizing these findings to non-comparable populations. Consequently, future studies might want to consider the implications of our work for different populations.

These limitations represent, in any case, opportunities to advance in our efforts to better understand the relation between climate for creativity and marketing programme implementation.

Conclusion

Prior research has demonstrated conclusively that climate for creativity matters. The present study tested a model to identify the potential contribution that a firm's climate-supporting creativity can make towards understanding the implementation of novel marketing programmes. Results suggest that a firm's climate that supports creativity has an indirect effect on marketing programme implementation effectiveness through marketing programme novelty. Additionally, climate for creativity moderates the relationship between marketing programme novelty and marketing programme implementation effectiveness. The study suggests that a firm's climate for creativity has much to offer to the investigation of both novelty and implementation of marketing programmes.

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