

# A Comparative Study on the Creativity of Organizations in Office Management and Secretarial Work and the Assessment of Creativity among Students Training in This Field

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**Abstract**—Today, the working areas put forward the administration of change. In order to provide this; it is required from the organizations to be creative. Professional creativity in offices depends on an environment that enables the development of the organization only after the individual or collective exertions within the organization. By providing this environment, the organization will gain efficiency, productivity, and work pleasure.

In order to bring up the workforce appropriate to the related expectations, the professional creativity of the office management and secretarial profession candidates should be evaluated, education programs appropriate to this and related directly with the service quality should be prepared and the future of this profession should be directed.

The aim of this study is to ensure the attention to improve the prepared education program as well as the creative thoughts and their applications, when carrying out an office management and secretarial training. 144 students took place in this research and a questionnaire of 48 questions was carried out.

**Keywords**—Creativity, professional creativity, creativity evaluation, office management, secretarial.

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN our days, selling goods and services to national and international markets and securing a marketplace requires a workforce that can adapt to developments, understand, interpret, apply, and develop new technologies, and produce quality goods and services. Within this workforce, activities relating to office work and management can be found in various service fields including the public and private sectors. Even though these service fields have not changed themselves, the processing, analysis, and distribution of information in these fields have changed. This process means a greater need for information and progress in service fields at workplaces. While routine activities are significantly declining, office and secretarial duties are becoming more comprehensive, information-focused management activities. This in turn points to an increase in professional requirements and professional creativity capacities in the skilled workforce that has so far carried out only the tasks given to them.

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## II. CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY

The concept of creativity derives from the Latin word “creare”. This word means [1] innovating, innovation, originality, uncommon, unfamiliar, different, alternative, unusual, exotic, unexpected, not tried before, to create, bring to life, give birth. The very content of the word points to a mobile process and the fact that looking at things with creative eyes is a lifestyle [2], [3]. The concept of creativity is becoming more and more important in science, technology, and arts.

Scientists in societies with especially high synergy [4] have focused on the concept of creativity and carried out various studies. The results of studies on creativity in psychology have shown us new assessments. Nevertheless, creativity seems to be one of the most difficult concepts to define in the field of psychology [5]. This difficulty makes it necessary to observe creativity as a process in time and to consider personality traits and environmental factors as well.

Creative thinking is therefore a new way of behaving or process of thinking outside the realm of the known and applied; and there exist no known boundaries in this process which constantly pushes the limits of creativity [6]. Each individual exhibits different forms of creativity. Differences in individuals’ creativity depend on participation, the cultural environment, and education and training.

Today, creativity is considered not as a privilege of an elitist approach but as a behavior from which any individual in need can benefit. This must be complemented by the development of creativity in the human brain and the implementation of creative ideas. For this, it must be recognized that creativity is a learnable and teachable feature [5].

## III. CREATIVITY IN OFFICE AND SECRETARIAL WORK

The creativity of those working in office and secretarial fields is seen as an important characteristic that depends on their own personalities. Certain obstacles are known to hamper creativity in organizations [7], [8], [6]. These can be listed as follows:

- excessive bureaucracy, inappropriate rewarding systems, no cooperative environment
- no freedom in tackling a problem or function, or making a decision,
- unwillingness to perceive duty,
- inefficient project management,
- inadequate resources,
- favoring the status quo,
- no margin for errors in the process of development,
- resistance to risk-taking,
- overriding employees' discretion
- wandering around and going to different places,
- being lively, bringing out the child inside us,
- changing our perspective through transformation,
- relating, comparing, and contrasting,
- learning to perceive data,
- asking questions like "What's the bright side?" or "Couldn't we try this?"
- making thoughts richer or more compact through design,
- asking the question "What if the sequencing of the events had been different?"

Those working in office and secretarial fields need to observe the following in order to develop personal research strategies [9] and be creative [5]:

- In the office environment, the secretary's work-related curiosity must always be in the foreground, they must be interested in various topics and always ask how and why,
- Past and present discoveries as well as the processes leading up to them must be followed,
- In the event of a confusing problem, a relaxed environment must be created and imagination encouraged before tackling it,
- More people must be contacted,
- Physical and mental activities must be balanced,
- Various mental exercises must be done,
- At least one fine art must be adopted,
- Spontaneous developments must be seen as opportunities,
- Confidence must be built, and lessons must be learnt from past mistakes to ensure future success.

The secretary in the office must first and foremost believe that they can be more creative, think positively [10], and know that their creativity will make them more successful in their career.

They must then figure out and apply the various methods and techniques that can improve their creativity. For this, the following management model would be highly efficient [5]:

- using objects and concepts,
- risk-taking,

If office workers and secretaries have a work environment where they can improve their skills through "rationality, flexibility, originality, and variety" [11], they have taken the most important step towards creativity.

#### IV. CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION

An individual's creative thinking develops through their school education [12]. This requires certain principles in education, which can be listed as follows:

- assessing creative thinking,
- increasing sensitivity to external stimuli in the school environment,
- encouraging the skilled use of objects and thoughts,
- testing systematically the validity of each thought,
- tolerating new opinion,
- avoiding stereotypes,
- maintaining a creative climate in the school,
- teaching pupils the value of creative thinking,
- teaching the individual the skills to avoid oppression,
- providing information on the creative process,
- driving away the fear and awe felt towards overachievers,
- supporting and assessing self-initiated learning,
- producing original designs by creating a productive environment,
- bringing about the need for creative thinking,
- providing an efficient and calm period,
- creating opportunities to test thoughts,
- supporting the secondary results of testing thoughts,

- developing constructive criticism instead of just criticism,
- ensuring that pupils find out about various topics,
- training courageous educators willing to try new methods to improve creativity.

## V. CREATIVITY IN OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIAL TRAINING

Today's business world advances the management of change, which requires organizations to be creative. Work creativity in offices depends on an environment that favors the development of the organization through individual and collective efforts. In such an environment, the organization ensures efficacy, efficiency, and work satisfaction, and thus becomes more efficient in creative problem-solving. In the process of "Creative Problem-Solving", three different stages are observed [6]. The first involves the identification of the problem and preparation for a solution. Finding and improving ideas towards a solution forms the basis of the second stage. Finally, a solution is found at the stage of evaluation and selection. In order to train a workforce suitable to the expectations of the business world, the professional creativity of the candidates of the office management and secretarial profession must be evaluated and relevant curricula must be developed in line with the service quality.

## VI. OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study aims to assess the creativity of organizations in office and secretarial fields as well as students training in this field. The scope of the research is the total of the students studying at the Department of Office Management and Secretarial Training in the selected vocational school of Hacettepe University as at the end of Academic Year 2005-2006. The data collection tools are limited to the control group in question and those who have been reached [13].

### A. Methods and Tools of Data Collection

The study was carried out on 144 students studying at the Department of Office Management and Secretarial Training in the Vocational School of Social Sciences at Hacettepe University in Ankara. 62 of those (43.1%) were in their first year and 82 (56.9%) were in their second year. The survey was administered through questionnaires handed out by the

researcher. Of the 183 questionnaires handed out, 144 (78.7%) were returned, all of which were considered suitable for evaluation. The sample (n=144) was large enough to be representative of the research universe, in the calculation of which the following formula was used:

$$n = N \cdot t^2 \cdot p \cdot q / d^2 \cdot (N-1) + t^2 \cdot p \cdot q$$

The research data were collected through a survey designed by Prof. Dr Karl Venker, founder of the Creativity Workshop in Munich, Germany. The questionnaire designed by Venker consists of 48 items. Apart from the section on the demographics of the respondents, all questions prompt self-evaluation by the control group. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used for the reliability levels of the scale. The reliability of Venker's "Creativity Scale" was calculated as  $\alpha = 86$ . The alpha value of reliability proves the scale to be sufficiently reliable. In social sciences, an alpha factor above 0.60 is considered sufficient for the scale to be reliable [14].

### B. Analysis of the Data on the Research Sample

The research sample consists of the first-year and second-year, day-time and evening students studying for a foundation degree in Office Management and Secretarial Training in the Vocational School of Social Sciences at Hacettepe University. 62 first-year and 82 second-year students returned their questionnaires.

TABLE I FIGURES ON THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

Year	Frequency	Percentage
First-year	62	43,1
Second-year	82	56,9
Total	<b>144</b>	<b>100,0</b>

The majority of the participants were students in their second year (56.9%) with the rest in their first year (43.1%). The responses to the survey items and a comparison of first-year and second-year students' responses are shown in Table 2.

TABLE II CREATIVITY ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIAL TRAINING  
IN THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY  
TOTAL OF RESPONSES AND A COMPARISON OF FIRST-YEAR AND SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS' RESPONSES

Number	First-year						Second-year					
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	5	4	3	2	1	Total
1	20	26	9	3	4	62	17	42	10	7	6	82
2	30	19	4	6	2	61	46	28	3	3	1	81
3	13	22	15	6	6	62	14	32	25	4	6	81
4	17	20	12	9	4	62	24	28	16	9	4	81
5	27	23	5	5	2	62	34	28	12	6	2	82
6	12	5	18	17	9	61	15	25	17	12	12	81
7	38	14	6	2	2	62	54	21	5	1	1	82
8	14	29	13	6	0	62	14	39	23	4	2	82
9	18	20	13	4	7	62	27	24	15	10	6	82
10	22	21	9	9	1	62	25	45	8	3	1	82
11	21	22	10	7	2	62	31	35	9	7	0	82
12	21	19	8	10	4	62	29	29	11	7	6	82
13	11	35	7	6	3	62	17	48	11	4	2	82
14	19	22	9	6	5	61	24	45	8	3	2	82
15	9	26	14	9	4	62	10	36	28	6	2	82
16	22	26	7	4	3	62	36	37	6	2	1	82
17	22	23	6	6	4	61	31	36	7	6	2	82
18	38	17	4	0	3	62	56	17	5	1	2	81
19	12	26	16	5	3	62	10	40	23	7	1	81
20	14	24	10	10	3	61	20	37	16	8	0	81
21	18	26	8	5	5	62	30	38	11	2	1	82
22	15	9	10	17	10	61	14	22	15	17	14	82
23	19	22	12	5	4	62	20	37	17	6	2	82
24	14	16	14	11	5	60	15	37	18	9	2	81
25	23	20	10	6	1	60	30	29	13	8	1	81
26	18	23	9	9	1	60	22	30	19	6	4	81
27	12	32	11	4	1	60	16	46	14	4	1	81
28	5	13	10	21	11	60	5	12	20	28	16	81
29	7	14	11	18	10	60	10	14	22	19	16	81
30	31	21	4	2	2	60	42	32	1	2	2	79
31	28	18	7	5	2	60	46	26	5	2	2	81
32	18	26	10	4	2	60	26	37	13	4	1	81
33	14	17	15	7	7	60	18	42	15	3	3	81
34	3	10	10	28	9	60	5	10	22	27	17	81
35	5	16	21	13	5	60	5	33	26	12	5	81
36	20	26	11	2	1	60	26	47	4	1	3	81
37	16	17	9	10	8	60	28	27	9	12	5	81
38	8	27	20	3	2	60	12	48	17	3	1	81
39	20	26	7	4	3	60	32	37	11	1	1	82
40	19	25	8	6	2	60	27	40	10	2	2	81
41	16	18	14	7	5	60	14	45	15	5	3	82
42	17	17	15	7	4	60	26	33	12	5	6	82
43	14	19	21	5	1	60	17	41	18	4	1	81
44	16	25	12	6	1	60	19	49	9	3	2	82
45	7	31	15	6	1	60	8	36	24	9	5	82
46	13	17	12	14	4	60	18	30	18	11	5	82
47	6	10	10	22	12	60	10	15	18	21	18	82
48	23	20	11	4	2	60	27	46	7	0	2	82

The table reflecting the evaluation of the survey [15] shows first-year and second-year students separately. First-year and second-year students' responses to the 48 items of the survey were studied and the most frequent responses formed the basis of the analysis. The total of the columns in the tables reflects the total creativity ratio. Out of an average of 100, the higher this figure, the higher the creativity. The values in columns A-H reflect the creativity profile. The column with the highest value projects the prominent characteristic, which is one of the following:

- Type A: discovery-oriented,
- Type B: critical approach,
- Type C: strategist,
- Type D: analytical approach,
- Type E: hard-working,
- Type F: compromising,
- Type G: curious,
- Type H: pleasure-seeking.

Let us now analyze the data in Table 2 separately for first-year and second-year students.

*C. Creativity Assessment of First-Year Students in the Department of Office Management and Secretarial Training*

The creativity assessment of first-year students is shown in Table 3.

TABLE III ASSESSMENT OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIAL TRAINING

	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H
1.	4	2.	5	3.	4	4.	4	5.	5	6.	3	7.	5	8.	4
9.	4	10.	5	11.	4	12.	5	13.	4	14.	4	15.	4	16.	4
17.	4	18.	5	19.	4	20.	4	21.	4	22.	2	23.	4	24.	4
25.	5	26.	4	27.	4	28.	2	29.	2	30.	5	31.	5	32.	4
33.	4	34.	2	35.	3	36.	4	37.	4	38.	4	39.	4	40.	4
41.	4	42.	5	43.	3	44.	4	45.	4	46.	4	47.	2	48.	5
	25	+	26	+	22	+	23	+	23	+	22	+	24	+	25
<b>= 190</b>															

The table, with a total value of 190, shows that the prominent characteristic of first-year students is of Type B, which is indicative of a critical approach. First-year students, whose prominent characteristic is a critical approach, do not fear challenging the status quo.

*D. Creativity Assessment of Second-Year Students in the Department of Office Management and Secretarial Training*  
 The creativity assessment of second-year students is shown in Table 4.

TABLE IV ASSESSMENT OF SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIAL TRAINING

	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H
1.	4	2.	5	3.	4	4.	4	5.	5	6.	4	7.	5	8.	4
9.	5	10.	4	11.	4	12.	5	13.	4	14.	4	15.	4	16.	4
17.	4	18.	5	19.	4	20.	4	21.	4	22.	4	23.	4	24.	4
25.	5	26.	4	27.	4	28.	2	29.	3	30.	5	31.	5	32.	4
33.	4	34.	2	35.	4	36.	4	37.	5	38.	4	39.	4	40.	4
41.	4	42.	4	43.	4	44.	4	45.	4	46.	4	47.	2	48.	4
	26	+	24	+	24	+	23	+	25	+	25	+	24	+	24
<b>= 195</b>															

The table, with a total value of 195, shows that the prominent characteristic of second-year students is of Type A, which is indicative of an orientation towards discovery. Second-year students, whose prominent characteristic is discovery-oriented, reflect a leader's approach, going beyond personality limitations with confidence and taking new steps.

*E. Creativity Comparison of First and Second-Year Students in the Department of Office Management and Secretarial Training*

The creativity comparison of first and second-year students is shown in Table 5.

TABLE V CREATIVITY COMPARISON OF FIRST AND SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIAL TRAINING

Creativity Type	First Year	Second Year
A	25	26
B	26	24
C	22	24
D	23	23
E	23	25
F	22	25
G	24	24
H	25	24
TOPLAM	190	195

Table 5 discloses the total values as 190 in year one and 195 in year two. This increase reveals the development of first-year and second-year students in their approach to creativity

## VII. CONCLUSION

The business world, which has so far been content with a workforce equipped with the skills necessary to carry out the

tasks given, now prefers to employ office administrators and secretaries who have developed their professional creativity. As this study reveals, educational activities favoring the development of creativity bring about an improvement in professional candidates. Had this survey been administered to the same students before their first year and at the end of their second year, the results would undoubtedly be more noteworthy. It can then be argued that in Office Management and Secretarial Training, individuals' cognitive processes should also be taken into account [16]. In the development and application of curricula, the evaluation of the knowledge system [17] as well as the improvement of creative thinking and its application should be stressed. The resulting work satisfaction will bring along respectability, reliable contribution, and personal career output [18]. Furthermore, through their educational activities, teaching staff in this field would do well to create an environment conducive to the improvement of the following strategies and skills [1]:

- rationality; efforts must be made to come up with new ideas,
- flexibility; focus on developing ideas from different perspectives,
- variety; focus on details,
- originality; efforts must be made to be constantly original,
- changing the content; looking at things from different perspectives,
- merging facts / ideas; ideas should be merged,
- breaking existing boundaries; a flexible, comprehensive look,
- sense of humor; an amusing perspective must be adopted,
- rich perspective; an exciting environment beyond the commonplace must be provided
- emotions; focus on emotions,
- brainstorming; ideas must be merged to create synergy,
- macro-scale perspective; a look from a wider perspective,
- heading towards future; hindsight must be used.

In order to improve creativity, which is considered to be the most difficult learning skill, fostering a supportive organizational culture is deemed essential [19]. Encouraging office employees and secretaries to be creative and breaking resistance to change seem to be the most effective approach.

In this way, office employees and secretaries, like all others, will show more commitment to their own procedures.

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