Creativity and routines, a comparative study in the Dutch Advertising industry.

By
L.W.G. Roescher

1st supervisor: Dr. H. Snijders
2nd supervisor: Dr. T. L. J. Broekhuizen

University of Groningen
Faculty of Management and Organisation
MSc in Business Administration
Strategy and Innovation

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Preface

This master thesis is the written result of my research conducted in the field of creativity and routines in the advertising industry in the Netherlands. This research was conducted as the final assignment to receive the master’s degree in Strategy and Innovation at the University of Groningen.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank a number of people for their support during this research project. First of all, I would like to express my thanks to my leading supervisor Hendrik Snijders. Our different points of view resulted in interesting and valuable discussions, and his advice and feedback resulted in important contributions to my research. Furthermore, I would like to thank my second supervisor Thijs Broekhuizen for sharing his knowledge on creativity with me. I would also like to thank mister Klep, Droogsma, and Nelissen, for their willingness to cooperate in this research.

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Lenneke Roescher
Abstract

This paper sets out to study those aspects within advertising agencies that influence their level of organisational creativity. A comparison is made between a small top segment of advertising agencies upon which it is expected that the literature on organisational creativity is applicable and a large base segment where the level of organisational creativity is questionable. Based upon a review of related literature and an empirical study amongst advertising agencies, four important influencing factors have been identified. The approach towards creativity is an important aspect, as well as the presence or absence of organisational encouragement routines, supervisory routines and work group routines.

Keywords: Creativity, Organisational creativity, Organisational routines, creative industries, advertising industry
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1. INTRODUCTION

The organisational landscape in the 21st century is a complex and challenging environment for firms. In order to survive and stand out, organisations tend to focus on new sources of competitive advantage. Creativity and innovation are generally considered to be such a source. As Florida (2002:5) puts it: “Creativity... is now the decisive source of competitive advantage”. Although creativity and innovation are closely linked and often used interchangeably, these two terms do not comprise the same (Von Stamm, 2005). Von Stamm (2005) views creativity as a fundamental part of innovation and puts emphasises on the widely accepted definition of innovation as ‘equalling creativity plus (successful) implementation’ (p.1). Heye (2006) complies with this view and states that the difference between creativity and innovation lies in the transformation phase. Heye (2006) argues that creativity is the production of new ideas, or combining new ideas with old ideas, whereas innovation is focused on transforming these ideas into new products, services or processes. Only producing creative ideas thus does not have added value for a firm. A creative idea for instance a new advertisement campaign on television will never result in a commercial success if nothing is done with the idea. The translation of creativity into innovation is therefore fundamental for success. Creativity can thus be considered as a main driver for innovation, as Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby and Herron (1996: 1154) state: “Innovation begins with creative ideas...”.

When studying the topic of creativity, many viewpoints and definitions can be found in various streams of literature. An important distinction should however first be made between two types of creativity. On the one hand there is creativity that is focused on art, which is perhaps creativity in its purest form (Powell, 2008). The end product is not even the ultimate goal here; the process of being creative and self-expression of an individual artist are of importance. Creativity can here be considered as a state of mind in which the artist is performing skilled work and whereby the products are not created to meet peer or mass market consumer values. On the other hand, creativity can have a product-orientation, whereby the focus is on a specific goal. Creativity is used as a tool that is directly related to fulfil the needs of a specific market, client, or consumer (Powell, 2008). These differences can be compared to the philosophies of ‘art for art’s sake’ versus ‘art for business sake’. The main focus of this study will be on creativity of the second type, concentrating on creativity in an organisational setting. Nevertheless, also within an organisational business setting, art for art’s sake can be present. Unlike art for art’s sake, product-oriented creativity or business creativity focuses on formulating
novel as well as useful and appropriate ideas, processes, products, or services (Amabile et al., 1996). Organisations need creativity in order to cope with changing environments and increasing competition. Without creativity, things will be done the same way they have always been done and products will not change (Proctor, 1991). Survival of the fittest is the order of the day; companies need to stand out in order to survive. In recognising the importance of creativity for organisations, the importance of identifying factors that influence creativity, as well as methods to manage these factors, becomes luminous. Management has different tools at its disposal to manage certain factors within a company, of which the use of routines is one. Routines can be used as a mechanism to control certain factors as they are malleable by intentional managerial behaviour (Becker, Lazaric, Nelson & Winter, 2005). Routines have been selected as a tool to manage specific factors because of its continuation effect. When using routines, a certain continuation of those processes captured within that routine can be expected. When these processes are focused on stimulating creativity, a continuation of the creativity stimulating processes can be expected. Introducing the subject of routine into the realm of creativity might seem contradictory and out of place. Where creativity is mainly related to terms like creation (Amabile, 1997; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993), flexibility (Taylor & Callahan, 2005), originality (Albrechts, 2005), and newness (Vissers & Dankbaar, 2002), routines are in this context often seen as the complete opposite of creativity and referred to as standardised (Bresnen, Goussevskaia & Swan, 2005), stable (Becker, 2004), and efficient (Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Becker, 2004). Nonetheless, as stated by Brown (2007) ‘Creativity doesn’t strike out of the blue’. Without some sort of planning or structure, many creative ideas will probably not be or not effectively be implemented (van Woerkum, Aarts & de Grip, 2007). It is for this intriguing reason that my interest was drawn towards the factors that influence creativity and the role routines play here.

By emphasising the importance of certain routines for creativity, this study tries to increase the awareness within creative organisations in order to heighten their organisational creativity. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute and introduce new insights into the academic field of creative industries, creativity and innovation by researching the relationship between routines and creativity. Creative organisations, and more specifically Dutch advertising agencies, have been chosen as the target industry for this research. According to Till and Baack (2005: 47), advertising is “the only profession where the central figure in the business process is titled a ‘creative’, illustrating the focus placed on creativity in the advertising process.” This individual creativity is however not the focal point of this study, it merely indicates that creativity is of importance within this industry. Individual creativity should be stimulated by the overall organisation, referring to organisational creativity. Furthermore, a well known technique that is often used to enhance creative output, originated from
the advertising industry. In 1953, Alex Osborne introduced the book ‘Applied Imagination’ where he first described the technique ‘brainstorming’ (Barrett, 1978). Osborne invented this technique based on his work in the advertising industry. The main research question that is strived to be answered in this study is therefore formulated as followed:

*Which organisational aspects influence the level of creativity within Dutch Advertising agencies and what role do organisational routines play?*

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the possible connection between organisational creativity and the presence of certain routines within different segments of the advertising industry. Not every advertising agency is as creative as the next. By making a division within the studied advertising industry between a top and a lower segment, it is researched whether the theory on organisational creativity, which is present within the top segment, applies to the lower creative segment of the industry as well. Rather than solely studying factors that influence creativity within an organisational setting, this research focuses on possible routines related to these influencing factors. This study hypothesises that, although routines are often considered to be the complete opposite of creativity, they are also important in stimulating creativity. Within the lower creative segment of the advertising industry, it is therefore questionable whether creativity routines will be present. Based upon a study of the literature and interviews with creative people in the lower creative segment of the advertising industry, and secondary data on the top segment, this possible relationship between creativity and routines is examined.

### 1.2 Research design

This study researches the differences in approaches towards creativity within advertising agencies and studies the effects on the presence and influence of specific routines within creative processes. A review of the literature on different aspects of creativity and routines is conducted in order to develop a conceptual model that demonstrates the interactions between these two variables. Based upon the review of the literature, it is proposed that four different aspects influence the level of organisational creativity.
Chapter two starts out with a review of the literature on four determinants expected to influence creativity, namely the approach towards creativity, the organisational routines, the leadership routines, and the team routines. Subsequently, the theory on routines is discussed in chapter three. Chapter four then continuous with an overview of the advertising industry in the Netherlands, in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the industry in which this research is conducted. After discussing the theory on creativity as well as routines, and focusing on the advertising industry in the Netherlands, chapter five will present a conceptual model whereby the possible connections between these two subjects will be explored. Thereafter, the research methodology will be discussed in detail in chapter six, where after the results and interpretations of the research will be elaborated upon in chapter seven. The final chapter, chapter eight, will provide some conclusions that can be drawn from this research.
2. **ORGANISATIONAL CREATIVITY**

Over the years, the abundance of creativity literature has focused on attempting to explain why some persons, groups, or organisations are more creative than others. In various studies, creativity is mainly linked to personality characteristics and specific abilities of individuals (Barron & Harrington, 1981; Andriopoulos, 2003; Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999). Nevertheless, the relationships between individual abilities and creativity is not comprehensive. Creativity is studied more and more often from the organisational and social context, as it becomes an important source of competitive advantage within organisational settings and ‘creativity, in part, is a social process’ (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003:89). Although the personal characteristics of individuals are still considered to be an important input for organisational creativity, over the years other levels within the organisation, as well as other organisational factors have been identified as having an influence on creativity. The creative behaviour of individuals and teams within the interactionist model of organisational creativity (Woodman et al., 1993) for example, is complemented by contextual influences, such as the organisational culture, reward systems, and the larger environment outside the system. Andriopoulos (2001) also defines the personal characteristics as a key driver of organisational creativity. In her model ‘factors affecting organisational creativity’ other identified organisational factors are organisational climate, organisational culture, leadership style, and structure and systems.

Shalley, Gilson and Blum (2000) distinguish between proximal and distal factors as organisational factors related to creativity. Proximal factors are described as factors that are related to the daily experience, such as diversity within the work group, job design, managerial behaviours, and training. Intrinsic motivation, motivation without external incentives, plays an important role here. According to Amabile (1997), intrinsic motivation can reside in a person’s personality; however, the social environment can also have a significant effect on that person’s intrinsic motivation. Amabile emphasises that ‘complex and challenging jobs’ but also the satisfaction, enjoyment, and interest of the job itself, are more likely to encourage intrinsic motivation which, in turn, increases creativity. When intrinsically driven, employees are more focused on producing art for the sake of art, business motives are less important. Proximal factors are forces that influence creativity on a more individual level. Distal factors on the other hand are more remote, such as organisational climate, culture, and structure (Shalley et al., 2000). These factors set the overall context that influences the level of organisational
creativity possible. According to Shalley et al. (2000), these distal factors are needed to support the creative behaviour of employees.

Besides the focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as influencing factors on organisational creativity, whereby intrinsic motivation positively influences creativity whereas extrinsic motivation hampers creativity, Amabile et al. (1996) also researched influencing factors in the work environment. The research of Amabile and her colleagues resulted in a widely accepted tool called KEYS, a tool that can be used to assess the climate for creativity. According to this research and the accompanying tool, six indicators can be distinguished that stimulate creativity, as can be seen in figure 1. The total creativity within organisations is based upon the combination of these six interpretations.

*Figure 1. Factors influencing creativity, adopted from Amabile et al. 1996*

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Figure 1 will serve as a starting point for the review of the literature on organisational creativity as it is based on extensive research in this field.
2.1 Contextual factors positively influencing creativity

The first three areas in this model can be related to interorganisational encouragement of creativity, a dimension that has gained a lot of attention in creativity literature over the years. The encouragement to be creative can be found at three different levels within organisations, namely at an overall organisational level, at the level of supervisor (also referred to leader within this study) and encouragement from within a work group / team (Amabile et al., 1996).

Organisational encouragement

At an organisational level, several aspects can foster and encourage creativity. According to Amabile (1998) creativity can only truly be enhanced when it is supported by the entire organisation. Creating an organisational culture and climate which stimulates creative ways of addressing problems and finding solutions is the key challenge on an organisational level in encouraging creativity (Andriopoulos, 2001). This creative culture comprises amongst other things a focus on taking risk and generating unusual ideas (Woodman et al., 1993; Amabile, 1997; Lapierre & Giroux, 2003). Consequently, having an orientation that focuses on maintaining the status quo within a company or operating with an aversion towards risk is perceived as a barrier for creativity (Mostafa, 2004). Creative organisations often treasure risk taking because “... it stretches employees’ capabilities and consequently provides the basis upon which employees can develop new knowledge and skills to be used in other projects (Andriopoulos & Lowe, 2000: 737)”. For management it is then important to also evaluate the unusual ideas generated in a positive and supportive manner. This supportive management behaviour can have a positive effect on the intrinsic motivation of employees. Recognition of creativity and rewarding is the next step in organisational motivation. Rewards are often considered to be an extrinsic form of motivation, as the motivation to execute a certain task comes from outside the individual as it is driven by the financial gain at the end. However, when rewards are used as a means of praising one’s competences, creativity can be enhanced (Amabile et al., 1996). Van Woerkum et al. (2007) refer to this type of reward as social reward.

A creative culture is also characterised by a focus on stimulating open communication (Andriopoulos, 2001; Martins & Terblanche, 2003). According to Martins and Terblanche (2003), creativity is stimulated by what they call open-door communication, as personnel feels emotionally safe and trusted when open communication is used to teach them that disagreement and risk taking is acceptable. According to Kratzer, Gemünden, and Lettl (2008) stimulating informal communication is even considered to be one of the major factors in stimulating creativity within teams. It is therefore important that informal communication is facilitated on an organisational level. Grobman (2005)
shares this view and emphasises that encouraging, rather than banishing informal communication networks promotes creativity. Open, as well as informal communication between individuals, teams and departments is therefore necessary in order to create an organisational culture that supports creativity (Filipczak, 1999).

Supervisory encouragement
The second interorganisational factor stimulating creativity is on a supervisor / leadership level. The extent to which an individual or a team will produce creative ideas is strongly related to how people are lead (Amabile et al., 1996; Andriopoulos, 2001). In producing creative work, employees need more autonomy and are often driven by intrinsic motivation compared to projects where creativity is less important, because of the complex, demanding, and risky nature of creative work (Powell, 2008). This leads to believe that leading creative work demands a different approach in comparison with projects whereby creativity is not top priority in order to motivate and enhance creative output. According to Amabile et al. (1996), supervisory encouragement for creativity focuses on leadership whereby the supervisor or project manager supports and has confidence in the work group, values the contributions of individuals and sets appropriate goals for the work group. Styles of leadership that positively influence creativity, have in literature most often been referred to as participative and supportive (Kickul & Neuman, 2000), integrative (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002), transformational (Nemanich & Keller, 2007), and democratic and collaborative (Woodman et al., 1993). Although scholars refer to this type of creativity supporting leadership style using different terms, all have similar characteristics. Supervision that supports creativity within an organisation is concerned with the needs and feelings of employees’ (Amabile et al., 1996), empowers and motivates employees to develop autonomy (Politis, 2004), and evaluates the employees’ work and provides them with positive and reinforcing feedback (Powell, 2008). Evaluating each project and providing the employees with positive and reinforcing feedback is an important element of supervisory encouragement, as evaluation produces awareness and stimulates the learning process. These specific characteristics of creativity supportive supervision result in actions that promote the employees’ feelings of self-believe and persistence, which in turn increases their intrinsic motivation (Oldham & Cummings, 1996).

The transformational leadership style has gained the most attention over the last years as being able to enhance creativity substantially. This type of supervisory encouragement influences followers by “broadening and elevating followers’ goals and providing them with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit exchange agreement” (Dvir, Eden, Avolio &
In his review of the literature, Politis (2004) differentiates between transformational leadership and transactional leadership. The transformational leader is able to create a climate within a work group or team that focuses on creativity and goal clarity, thereby introducing the followers to new ways of thinking. It concentrates on establishing and clarifying goals, without demanding a certain approach or explaining how to achieve the goals, thereby stimulating new ways of thinking. In his book on the advertising industry in the Netherlands, van Dijk (2007) emphasises the importance of result focused leadership, instead of process focused leadership, in stimulating creativity within this industry. Transactional leadership on the other hand guides and motivates employees in the established direction by clarifying roles and tasks (Politis, 2004).

Work group encouragement

Collaboratively working on assignments can greatly enhance the level of creativity (Woodman et al., 1993), and can thus be considered as encouraging creativity. The diversity and structure of a team or work group is of importance when the goal is to encourage creativity. Related to team diversity, two types can be distinguished in literature. First, demographic, or surface level diversity can be observed in teams or groups. This type of diversity is related to visible distinctions of group members, such as gender, age, race, and ethnicity (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004; Pelled, 1996). The second type of diversity present in teams or groups is referred to as cognitive, or deep-level diversity. This diversity is related to characteristics such as education, values, beliefs, and functional background (Pelled, 1996; Milliken & Martins, 1996). On these two dimensions of diversity, groups can either be defined as highly diversified (heterogeneous), or lowly diversified (homogeneous). Heterogeneous groups, because of their diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and demographics, are able to produce more diverse and creative ideas (Horwitz, 2005). Because of the diversity in functional backgrounds, creative ideas are also likely to be more applicable, since the ideas will be approached and evaluated from different perspectives. Thereby, members of diverse teams are likely to approach assignments or problems from a different viewpoint, stimulating debate and possibly even promoting tasks conflict over methods and procedures. According to Kratzer, Leenders and Van Engelen (2006), conflicts within teams are in some situations able to positively influence creativity. Homogeneous groups on the other hand, are often considered to be more productive, but less creative, as their similar characteristics enable members in these teams to work effectively together, but produce similar ideas (Horwitz, 2005). In stimulating creativity, work groups should thus be supported to work in diversified teams. Another characteristic of work group encouragement focuses on the structure of teams and groups. Stewart and Barrick (2000) describe team structure as the roles that members of a team fulfil within a team, the allocation of tasks, and authority. Changing these factors related to team
structure can influence the level of creativity of that specific team. Changing the composition of a team for example usually hampers performance as it intercedes with the normal routines of teams but it actually stimulates creativity, as it diversifies the knowledge within the team and makes team members more focused when awareness exists about possible changes (Choi & Thompson, 2005). A negative result of changing team structure on a regular base is that collaboration is harder to establish (Gratton & Erickson, 2007). Collaboration and shared excitement over the goals of the team are however important factors in stimulating creativity. Initiatives to establish collaboration and trust within a group in an early stage are therefore important when creativity is at stake.

Three other factors that are of importance in stimulating creativity can also be identified, namely the presence of sufficient resources, challenging work and freedom.

Sufficient and suitable resources
Resources in an organisational setting can entail a lot. In order to be creative as an organisation, also a lot of resources are required. Organisations therefore have to make certain strategic choices that enable the people and teams within the organisation to engage in creative activities. An often mentioned resource for creativity is time. In their research, Amabile, Mueller, Simpson, Hadley, Kramer and Fleming (2002) studied the effects of time pressure on creativity in organisations. The study shows that sufficient time is an important resource for creativity and that too much time pressure hampers creativity. Nevertheless, working with deadlines can stimulate creativity, as it can intrinsically motivate the employees by keeping the work challenging (Amabile, 1998). Elsbach and Hargadon (2006) share this view and state that currently a lack of creative output within organisations exists which is due to the increasing work load and time pressure. Others (Woodman et al., 1993; Cummings & Teng, 2003; Baer & Oldham, 2006) also identify time as an important resource. They consider time constraints as an important contextual influence that influences creativity and focus on the importance of providing employees with ‘…slack time to work on new ideas...’ (Cummings and Teng, 2003: 49).

Besides sufficient time, the suitable and sufficient human resources are also of importance for creativity. Above, in the section on work group encouragement, it is discussed how human resources can be structured and composed in order to positively influence creativity. In his article ‘the weird rules of creativity’, Sutton (2001: 96) states that managing for creativity means ‘…taking most of what is known about management and standing it on its head…’. In relation to human resources this, according to Sutton (2001), means hiring the candidate you have a gut feeling against, hiring
candidates that are slow learners of the organisational code and people who might not even be needed. In Sutton’s view, this unconventional style of management will shake things up within the organisation which in turn will positively influence creativity. Next to time and human resources, access to other appropriate resources such as money and information are also crucial for creativity. External knowledge transfer can lead to an improved flow of ideas (Bijvoet, 2007). When members of the organisation meet with customers, suppliers or competitors for example, they are stimulated to think in more detail about their products or services, which might result in more creative ideas. Training and courses employees take can also spark creativity. Information can thus be considered as an important resource for creativity. Money is most often considered to be an extrinsic motivation, which lowers creativity (Amabile, 1997). Nevertheless, for a project money is considered to be a necessary resource. Without money creativity can be restrained, however, a larger budget does not mean that creativity also increases (Amabile, 1998).

**Challenging work**
Performing challenging work is the fifth factor identified by Amabile et al. (1996) as positively influencing creativity. This factor operates on an individual level and is again related to intrinsic motivation. Work that is complex and challenging provides the employees with room for development. The possibility to learn and grow because the work is challenging is considered to be an intrinsic motivation that stimulates the employees to continue with their creative approaches (Cummings & Oldham, 1997). Organisations can promote creativity by making work challenging through fostering anxiety, discomfort, and diversity (Grobman, 2005). This way, employees are stimulated to look for alternatives and thereupon learn and grow. Working on stereotyped projects which require the same solutions over and over again is therefore not considered to be challenging and seen as a factor that might thwart the creative potential of employees (Cummings & Oldham, 1997).

**Freedom**
Various researchers have emphasised the importance of freedom and autonomy for individuals and teams in enhancing creativity (Cummings & Oldham, 1997; Shalley et al., 2000; Amabile et al., 1996; Woodman et al., 1993; Lapiere & Giroux, 2003). Amabile et al. (1996) state that when employees have a choice in how to perform / schedule their tasks, they will produce more creative work. Also Collier and Esteban (1999) acknowledge the relationship between freedom and creativity, since they state that freedom and creativity are inextricably linked to one another. According to Collier and Esteban (1999: 182), creativity demands ‘an organisational climate of autonomy, immunity from interference, trust,
openness, encouragement of risk-taking, and tolerance of failure’. Cummings and Oldham (1997) share this view and conclude that employees are likely to be more creative when they have a relatively high sense of autonomy and freedom in their work. Routine work, in their view, can hamper the creative potential of employees. At the other end of the freedom and autonomy spectrum ‘routine work’ can thus be found, which is implicated to negatively influence creativity. Because of the automatic and repetitive nature of routines, the influence of routines on creativity can be detrimental (Kyriakopoulos & de Ruyter, 2004). Standardised and routinised work, whereby the freedom to make own choices is limited, can conflict with the intrinsic motivation of employees in professional organisations, because intrinsic motivation is encouraged by making own choices, and complex and challenging work (Amabile, 1997). Providing team members with the freedom to decide how to handle a situation is closely linked to the style of leadership within that team. When a certain amount of freedom is needed in order to stimulate creativity, the style of leadership within that team should be adapted to this goal, consequently the supervisor should empower the employees and stimulate risk-taking.
3. ORGANISATIONAL ROUTINES AS A CONTROL MECHANISM

Several factors influencing creativity within organisations have been identified in literature; creativity and routines have however in this context not been researched together up till this point. In seeking to test the theory that creativity in an organisational context can positively be influenced by organisational routines, the literature on routines will now be reviewed in order to provide a clear understanding of this organisational phenomenon.

3.1 Organisational routines

Organisational routines have been the unit of analysis in numerous studies, however up till this point ambiguity exists amongst scholars about the dynamics of such routines. The effects of organisational routines on organisational phenomena such as learning, change and adaptation are therefore just recently being addressed (D’Adderio, 2007). It could be for the same reason that also the relationship between organisational routines and organisational creativity is yet largely unexplored. Routinised behaviour can be found throughout different levels within an organisation (Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994). At a micro level for example, emphasis can be placed upon the actions and processes of human beings. Although individuals within organisations often complete tasks based upon routinised behaviour, scholars studying routines do not refer to this behaviour as an organisational routine, rather it is referred to as an ‘individual routine’ or a ‘habit’ (Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994; Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Becker, 2004; Becker & Zirpoli, 2008; Cohen et al, 1996). Routinised behaviour on a macro level however emphasises the collective nature of routines. Organisational routines are therefore described as routines that involve multiple actors (Becker & Zirpoli, 2008; Cohen et al, 1996; Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994; Bresnen et al, 2005; Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Feldman & Rafaeli, 2002).

Routines are not only surrounded with ambiguity because of the level of analysis. In literature two broad strains of thought can be identified about the effects of organisational routines. On one hand, organisational routines are considered to be a source of stability and playing a role in organisational inertia (Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Espedal, 2006, Becker et al., 2005; Nelson & Winter, 1982). On the
other hand however, routines are considered to be facilitators of change, because routines lead to action, action leads to experience and learning, and learning leads to change as is visualised in figure 2 (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Espedal, 2006; Feldman, 2000; Becker et al., 2005).

Figure 2. *Organisational routines stimulate learning, adopted from Espedal, 2006*

Organisational routines can thus be looked at from different perspectives. In literature also multiple definitions of organisational routines can be found, however some key characteristics of organisational routines can be identified in most definitions. Cohen and Bacdayan (1994) for example define organisational routines as “multi-actor, interlocking, reciprocally-triggered sequences of action” (p.554). Feldman and Rafaeli (2002: 311) define organisational routines as “recurring patterns of behaviour of multiple organisational members involved in performing organisational tasks”, whereas Feldman and Pentland (2003: 96) define organisational routines as “repetitive recognisable patterns of interdependent actions, involving multiple actors”. Although defined differently by various scholars, some key characteristics can be distilled from most definitions of organisational routines.

The first typical characteristic of an organisational routine that can be distinguished from the different definitions is already discussed above and is related to the fact that organisational routines involve **multiple actors**. The fact that multiple actors are involved in one routine leads to the conclusion that organisational routines can be distributed, which means that actors from different units within the organisation, or even actors from different locations can be involved in carrying out a specific routine (Cohendet & Llerena, 2003; Cohen et al, 1996; Becker, 2004; Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Bresnen et al., 2005). The fact that organisational routines can be distributed means that also the knowledge stored within these routines is dispersed. Specialist knowledge stored in one part of the routine by one actor might not have an overlap with the knowledge stored in the second part of the routine by another actor. When knowledge is dispersed within an organisation, it is almost impossible to get an overview
of the whole knowledge that is present in the organisation (Cohen et al, 1996). The second key characteristic of organisational routines is the central element of the concept of routine, namely a **pattern**. According to Pentland and Feldman (2005), patterns are formed by the actions of the multiple actors involved. These patterns of action can then be recognised as routines. This perspective gives more insight in the meaning of patterns, because patterns are described by Pentland and Feldman (2005) as actions. Cohen and Bacdayan (1994) however, link patterns to sequences of learned behaviour. Thus, whereas Pentland and Feldman (2005) associate patterns with action, Cohen and Bacdayan (1994) associate patterns with behaviour. The terms ‘action’ and ‘behaviour’ are related however. When the term ‘action’ is searched for in a dictionary (American heritage dictionary), it shows that action can be explained as behaviour. Behaviour, in this case, can be considered as a subset of action. This divergence of perspectives can be traced back to the earlier discussion on level of analysis, whereby behaviour is a characteristic of individuals and action is related to interaction between multiple actors. The discussion on patterns will nevertheless not be entered further in this paper in order to keep the focus on the effects of routines on creativity. The third characteristic that can be distinguished from definitions of organisational routines is that it contains some sort of **recurrence**. As with a pattern, this characteristic of organisational routine can be seen as the essence of routine, since a sequence of actions that happened just once is never referred to as a routine. In this paper, the widely adopted definition of organisational routines introduced by Feldman and Pentland (2003) will be used, namely organisational routines are “*repetitive recognisable patterns of interdependent actions, involving multiple actors*”. This definition captures the key characteristics of organisational routines neatly.

Another feature of organisational routines that is eminently important is the dependence of routines on a context or situation. Becker (2004) identified that organisational routines are context dependent, embedded, specific and path dependent. This means that for example even organisational routines which employees have been engaged in for many times need to be adapted to changing circumstances (contexts). When the context change, the most suitable organisational routine might not be suitable at all anymore. According to Feldman and Pentland (2003), a changing organisational context makes some actions easier and therefore more likely. The ‘best practice’ routine used normally can in this case not be suitable anymore. Instead of routines based on best practices, only local ‘best solutions’ can exist (Becker, 2004). It can thus be concluded that organisational routines are subject to changing contexts. This context-dependence also means that routines can be difficult to transfer, as for example productivity might decline when a routine is transferred to a different context (Becker, 2004).
3.2 The origin of organisational routines

In order to use and manage routines to positively influence creativity, it is of importance to understand where routines originate from and how the knowledge they contain is stored. Only then can they be controlled and used to a company’s best advantage. Because not all knowledge has the same nature of explicitness, different types of knowledge are stored in different routines. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) identify two types of knowledge, namely explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is rational and objective knowledge that can be captured in manuals, data, and formulas for example. In this light, Transfield, Young, Partington, Bessant and Sapsed (2002:32) state that organisational routines can originate from “codified aspects of organisational life”. Codified aspects of organisational life can result in formal routines, because these physical aspects are deliberately encoded. This means that employees are prescribed to accomplish their tasks following these encoded aspects, which can results in formalisation of organisational routines. This form of physical manifestation of routines is often referred to as artefacts (Pentland & Feldman, 2005; D’Adderio, 2007; Cohen et al., 1996). Artefacts are thus physical and codified aspects within organisations that enable organisational routines. According to Kern (2006), formal rules are an example of codified aspects of organisational life and thus the physical manifestation of formal routine, since rules are important contributors to the formalisation and routinisation of practices. Other scholars however (Pentland & Feldman, 2005; Becker & Zirpoli, 2008) point out that although rules influence actions which results in recurring action patterns, other causal factors within an organisation could also influence the origination of a routine. Conclusive evidence about the relationship between rules and routine is therefore lacking. It is nevertheless clear that rules can strongly influence actions within organisations, and it is for this reason that rules are considered as an artefact that can initiate a formal routine in this present study. Schulz (1998:847) defines an organisational rule as a ‘written organisational document that usually specifies who should do what, when, and under which conditions’. The concept of rules can thus be seen as a generic term which encompasses various other artefacts. In an organisational setting this means that for example standard operating procedures, work descriptions, forms, and checklists can also be considered as artefacts that manifest formal routine.

Explicit and codified information is however not the only type of knowledge that can be stored within organisational routines. People within organisations often posses a certain amount of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be defined as knowledge that is grounded in experience, that people are not aware of they posses, and whereby resistance exists to share or articulate this knowledge (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). It is thus subjective and hard to formalise. Because of the characteristics of tacit knowledge, this type of knowledge is difficult to store in formal routines as they originate from
experiences rather than codified instructions (Ford, 2002; Nonaka, 1994). Nevertheless, behaviour that is based upon tacit knowledge and previous experience can lead to a repetitive and recognisable pattern of interdependent actions, involving multiple actors (Becker & Zirpoli., 2008). These routines are therefore informal practices that are actually in use, without being codified (Lukka, 2007). According to Becker & zirpolini (2008), these informal routines are stored behavioural capacities or capabilities. Because of the informal and non-codified nature of these routines, it is difficult to control them.

3.3 Effects of organisational routines

The presence of organisational routines can have various effects on an organisation. Whether the routines are in place intentionally (formal routines) or grew into the organisation over time (informal routines), they influence the organisation one way or the other. Various theorists have described the effects of organisational routines from divergent views. Feldman (2003) and Cohen et al. (1996) for example emphasise the fact that organisational routines lead to stability whereas D’adderio (2007) and Becker et al. (2005) underline the importance of organisational routines in change. Regardless of whether the organisational routines are used for stability or change, one of the most important effects of routines is that they provide control and coordination (Cohen et al., 1996). As Becker et al. (2005:777) state: ‘organisational routines are malleable by deliberate managerial influence’. Organisational routines can therefore be used to make or keep situations or processes controllable and can be seen as a steering mechanism, as management can directly influence and mould them. Another important effect of organisational routines is that they facilitate learning. Since organisational capabilities and knowledge are encoded and stored in organisational routines, another effect of these routines is learning, as is visualised in paragraph 4.1 (Espedal, 2006).
4. THE DUTCH ADVERTISING INDUSTRY

Before commencing the literature review on creativity and routines, first the advertising industry will be looked at more closely in order to determine what advertising is, and how creative this industry is.

4.1 Classifying advertising

It is clear that many different actors are involved in producing advertising in the broadest sense of the word (on television and radio, in newspapers and brochures, via direct mail, product promotion, sponsoring, and many other forms of expression). Not only advertising agencies that come up with the ideas are of importance, but also photographers and companies that deliver the advertisements are for example part of the advertising industry. This paragraph will explore the advertising industry in the Netherlands in order to create an overview of the industry in which this research takes place.

The central bureau of statistics in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands) has made a statistic classification of the advertising industry in the Netherlands, where code 744 represents ‘advertising agencies and other related companies’. A further classification is made using the detail-codes 74401 which refers to ‘advertising-design- and -consultancy agencies’ and 74402 which refers to ‘all other advertising services’. Table 1 shows an overview of what these two categories comprise according to statistics Netherlands. From this classification it can be concluded that the branches under code 74401 are related to the creative centre, the conceptual creation within advertising agencies or by freelancers. Code 74402 on the other hand, is more related to the production, distribution, and retail of advertising. The advertising industry in the Netherlands can thus be divided in a creative centre and other companies related to advertising. Concluding that the whole advertising industry (code 74401 and 74402) can be labelled as a creative industry would therefore be an unfounded conclusion. In this research, the focus is on advertising agencies and freelancers represented by code 74401. Organisations under code 74402 are therefore not in the scope of this research. From this point on, when referred to the advertising industry, the creative centre under code 74401 is meant.
Table 1  Overview of the two advertising industry categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>74401</th>
<th>74402</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designing</td>
<td>(writing, drawing, painting etc.) all sorts of advertising and advertisements;</td>
<td>Negotiations for advertising and advertisements via all media;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>on advertising activities;</td>
<td>Negotiations for the allocation of outdoor advertising;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulating</td>
<td>advertising campaigns;</td>
<td>Advertisement colportage;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-round</td>
<td>advertising agencies;</td>
<td>Advertisement allocation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converters</td>
<td>for advertising (designing and having produced);</td>
<td>Working out and allocation of advertisement via advertisement-boards,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copywriters</td>
<td></td>
<td>billboards, neon signs, window-dresser activities, taking care of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>showrooms, and exhibition stands, placing advertisement on busses,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>etcetera;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Air advertisements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spreading or delivering advertisements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Offering advertisement space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Netherlands

In 2008, 12890 freelancers, teams and agencies are active within the advertising industry, as can be seen in table 2. The majority of the advertising agencies can be labelled small to medium sized. Only 10 advertising agencies can be referred to as large, as they employ over 100 employees. When looking at the employment figures in table 3, it shows that between 2004 and 2008 over 30% of the jobs within the advertising industry disappeared.

Table 2  Amount of companies within the advertising industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total amount of companies</th>
<th>1 employee</th>
<th>2 employees</th>
<th>3 – 5 employees</th>
<th>5 – 10 employees</th>
<th>10 – 20 employees</th>
<th>20 – 50 employees</th>
<th>50 – 100 employees</th>
<th>Over 100 employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12295</td>
<td>8475</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12890</td>
<td>9220</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Netherlands
Table 3  Employment in the advertising industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising agencies</td>
<td>22,405</td>
<td>30,345</td>
<td>20,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Netherlands

The development of the turnover of advertising agencies in figure 3 shows that the industry suffered a significant loss in the last quarter of 2008 compared to the preceding two quarters. The recession hit the Netherlands at that point, which shows in the figures. Over the last years, the turnover development was generally negative.

Figure 3  Turnover development

Source: Statistics Netherlands

4.2  The advertising process; where creativity takes place (or gets hindered)

Within advertising agencies, producing advertising is a process that repeats itself over and over again with every new assignment. In order to determine where creativity takes place and who is responsible in this process, the most important stages for this research will be discussed.

Briefing

Most often, a client provides the advertising agency with a briefing containing information about the market, the product, the problem and the budget. A fruitful briefing focuses mainly on the problem,
nevertheless sometimes clients tend to come up with solutions to their problems themselves. This ‘client-creativity’ might however hinder the creativity within the advertising agency as other options are blocked in an early stage.

**Strategy**

Using strategists within advertising agencies is a fairly new phenomenon and many small agencies do not have a specific employee solely focused on strategy. Most large advertising agencies in the Netherlands however employ one or more strategists who are responsible for determining the direction of a certain campaign. This fairly new role within some advertising agencies influences the creativity within the creative team responsible for the exploration phase. Although it provides the creative people with direction, it also hampers their creativity because it blocks other options in an early stage as the creatives are forced in a certain direction for a campaign on for hand. In this sense, strategists within an advertising agency can be referred to as gatekeepers. They are key individuals who are both linked to internal colleagues as well as external clients. These gatekeepers are responsible for gathering and understanding external knowledge from clients and transfer this into useful and workable information for the creation department (Ettlie & Elsenbach, 2007).

**Direction plan**

A direction plan is used to decrease the failure-rate of ideas within the creative process by including the client in the decision-making process, early on in the process. The client is involved in choosing a direction for the advertisement, where after the creative team starts working on the real exploration and idea generation. This way, the final idea for the advertisement does not come as a complete surprise to the client with the risk that it might not be approved. Nevertheless, also this phase can hinder creativity, as it neglects the creativity that could improve the idea during execution.

**Creation**

Within advertising agencies, a lot of creativity takes place within the creative teams. Most often, a creative team consists of two people, a copywriter and an art director. Their job is to generate ideas and execute them. Most often, a certain direction is already established by the strategy department and creative guidelines or paths have been put forward by the creative director. Time constraints due to execution work and work related to other organisational factors (policies, organisation, client, money, staff policy) might hinder creativity within creation as less and less time is available for being creative and generating new and useful ideas. The composition of a team contributes to the creativity of a team, ‘two comparable personalities will never make a good team’ (van Dijk, 2007:167).
Execution

Within advertising, execution takes an important place, as it can make or break an advertisement. An idea that works great in theory might not work in execution, whereas a shaky idea on paper might become really creative in execution. Creativity thus also takes place in this phase of the process.

Creative director

The creative director is responsible for the most important output of an advertising agency: the creative work in the form of advertisement. By creatively translating the communication strategy into directions or approaches for advertisements, the creative director is of importance for creativity. Furthermore, he or she oversees and stimulates the creative teams (copywriters, art directors) in order to further creativity. Because the creative director is not responsible for the development of the creative ideas, he or she is able to keep a certain distance and is able to successfully evaluate the work of a creative team. The creative director can also be referred to as a gatekeeper, as he or she is responsible for the evaluation of the work of the creative teams. More and more often there is not just one creative director, but a creative management team. Providing leadership is more difficult however in a team, as contradictory opinions can lead to confusion towards the creative teams. Nevertheless, this can also stimulate creativity as it often leads to more innovative approaches.

4.3 Advertising as a creative industry?

Within the different stages of the advertising process, creativity plays an important role. Can however the creative centre of the advertising industry even be labelled as a creative industry?

The transformation from an industrial society to a knowledge society gave rise to a new industry, the so called creative industry. This ‘new economy’ is a collective term for a large number of professions and disciplines which can be broadly classified in three categories, namely arts, media and entertainment, and the creative business services such as advertising agencies (Werkgroep creatieve industrie, 2005; Rutten, Manshanden, Muskens & Koops, 2004). The concept of creative industries originates from the British department of culture, media and sports, which developed a ‘Creative Mapping Document’ in 1998. Creative industries are here defined as:

‘those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (www.culture.gov.uk/creative/creative_industries.html).
The activities that are mapped into the creative industries by the British department of culture, media and sports are advertising, architecture, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, designer fashion, interactive leisure software, music, television and radio, performing arts, publishing, and software (Shorthose, 2004). What stands out in the definition of the British department of culture, media and sports, is the focus on the economic significance or potential achievements of the activities that are mapped under the creative industries. Creativity within the creative industries is within this definition thus not focused on creativity as a process of being creative as Powell (2008) describes it. Creativity is not only about being creative and a form of self-expression, it should have a product (commercial) orientation as well. Creativity within the creative industries is thus a tool that is used to reach a (potentially) commercial goal (Powell, 2008), or as Fillis (2006) refers to it: art for business sake. In the view of Florida (2002), the creative industry does not necessarily refer to artistic intentions. Florida (2002) refers to creativity in the broadest sense of the word; no clear distinction exists between creativity of artists and creativity of scientists, which results in a creative class where intellectual property is key. This view deviates from that of Caves, who characterises creativity according to seven economic properties in his book ‘Creative industries, contracts between art and commerce’. One of the properties he describes to characterise creative industries is called ‘art for art’s sake’. According to Caves (2000), workers in the creative industries produce their creative work anyway, even if they have to sacrifice income in doing so. The process of self-expression and the creative process are of importance here. When taken this property of Caves (2000) literally, none of the creative business services would be part of the creative industry, as these businesses offer creativity for hire to other businesses (Business-to-business). However, Caves (2000) also recognises the importance of business as complex creative products begin a commercial lifespan and have to be dispatched towards consumers. Creative services organisations thrive on the economic exploitation of creative ideas for other organisations and institutions (Hill & Johnson, 2003). When hired for a specific assignment, producing creative work for the sake of art without for example taking the preferences of the principal in account, or without taking the budget into account is not an option. When researching advertising agencies, evidence can be found that the art for art’s sake property by Caves does apply occasionally (Jacobs and Snijders, 2008). Within their research on innovation routines, Jacobs and Snijders (2008) found evidence that an advertising agency rejects large and profitable assignments which are not creative enough. In this specific case, not only the art for business sake, but also the art for art’s sake plays an important role. This leads to believe that within the advertising industry a dichotomy exists. A top segment can be distinguished, where Caves’ property art for art’s sake is valid. In this case, art is both for business as well as for art’s sake as non-creative assignments are rejected. Furthermore, a base segment exists where art is in the first place for business sake.
This view of a dichotomy within the advertising agencies is supported by figures of the ADCN foundation, a Dutch foundation which assigns creativity awards called ‘Lamps’ to advertising on a yearly base. As can be seen from table 4, the chance to win a Lamp is very small. Interesting is that only a small group of advertising agencies, namely 68 different agencies, have won one or more ADCN Lamps over the last 18 years. The vast majority of these agencies being medium to large sized agencies. Appendix 1 shows a complete overview of the advertising agencies who have won a Lamp over the last 18 years. The 35 awards assigned in 2008 are divided amongst only 18 different advertising agencies (www.adcn.nl).

Table 4  The ADCN Lamp awards over the years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributions</strong></td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>1163</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1256</td>
<td>1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nominations</strong></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awards</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award chance</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADCN

The statistics in table 2 showed that in 2008, 12,890 freelancers, teams (2-employees) and advertising agencies were active. When focusing on the agencies (1805 in 2008), just under 1% (0,99) has won one or more creativity awards in 2008.

It is clear that only a very small top segment of the advertising industry wins awards for their creative output. Advertising agencies that are able to repeat their creative success and win multiple creativity prices over several years have proven their creativity and can be labelled as being part of the creative industry by every definition. This does however not mean that winning creativity awards is a definition for top segment creativity. Over the years, various agencies have decided not to participate (anymore) in award shows. This decision was however often made after winning the award multiple times. Winning a creativity award is therefore not a pure definition of top segment, merely an indicator. This leaves however a large group of advertising agencies (the base segment) whereby the presence and level of creativity is not proven.
5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In the preceding three chapters the focus has been on the theory of organisational creativity, on the theory of routines, and on creativity within advertising agencies. This chapter sets out to link these subjects and theorises that within the advertising industry, a large base segment exists where specific routines which stimulate creativity are not present. This paragraph will discuss these different elements and focus on their interrelationships. Figure 3 depicts the conceptual model based upon the three main indicators of organisational creativity.

Figure 4 Conceptual model routines and creativity

Within the conceptual model, the three organisational levels where creativity takes place have been included. As the other influencing factors identified in the review of the literature in chapter three can also be ranged under these four influencing factors on creativity, they have not been specified here. In analysing the results, the influencing factors of challenging work, freedom, and resources, will be discussed as freedom can be ranged under leadership and challenging work, freedom, and resources can all be ranged under the approach towards creativity.

As can be deduced from the conceptual model, it is expected that the approach towards creativity indirectly influences the level of creativity. The business approach towards art and creativity directly influences the presence and importance of different creativity stimulating routines, which in turn
influences the level of organisational creativity. In the following paragraphs, the four hypotheses which are visualised in the conceptual model will be discussed.

5.1 The approach towards creativity

Two distinct approaches towards creativity can be distinguished, the process approach and the product approach. Within the creative business services such as advertising, creativity is a service product (Hill & Johnson, 2003). Nevertheless, evidence can be found that the art for art’s sake principle with a focus on being creative can also be found within advertising. Those advertising agencies focus on business as well as creativity. This has lead to the conclusion that a dichotomy is present within the advertising industry. This view is supported by the data on the distribution of creativity awards. Only an incredible small amount of advertising agencies win these creativity awards. As can be deduced from the conceptual model, it is expected that the approach towards creativity influences the presence or absence of specific creativity routines. A purely product (business) approach towards creativity is expected to have a negative influence on the presence of organisational creativity routines, which in turn negatively influences creativity. Since the majority of the advertising industry is expected to have a pure business focus on creativity, it is hypothesised that:

\[
\text{Hypothesis 1: The top segment of the advertising industry is creative and can be defined as being part of the ‘creative industries’, whereas organisational creativity within the large base segment is questionable.}
\]

5.2 Organisational encouragement routines

At an organisational level the main challenge in stimulating creativity can be recapitulated as creating an organisational culture and climate which positively influences the creative behaviour of all members of the organisation. In a creative climate, communication is open, employees experience trust, are able to take risks, and are recognised for their creativity. Within creative organisations, certain routines are presumed to be in place to influence the organisational culture and facilitate organisational creativity. Within the large base segment of the advertising industry however, it is expected that a focus on business prevails over the focus on creativity compared to the small award winning top segment. Because of this business approach towards creativity it is assumed that creativity stimulating routines will not be present in the base segment. A creative culture will
therefore not be present as the routines to manifest this culture are not in place. It is therefore hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 2:** Within the large base segment of the advertising agencies, no clear creativity stimulating organisational encouragement routines can be distinguished compared to the small top segment.

5.3 **Leadership encouragement routines**

One step below organisational encouragement routines, supervisory encouragement routines influence creativity. The style of supervision is clearly of importance when creativity needs to be encouraged, and when high levels of creativity are desired within each project, the style of supervision needs to be repeated. The style and execution of supervision or leadership over a project also indirectly influences creativity. This for example determines the degree of freedom members of a team experience; it influences how challenging team members experience their jobs, and how the amount of resources influences creativity. As discussed in chapter 4, when a repeated pattern is used that involves multiple actors, a routine comes into being (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). Based on this, it is expected that in the top segment of the advertising agencies, where creativity is not only for business but also for art’s sake, the various elements of supervisory encouragement and leadership style supportive for creativity, are repeated processes. Within the large base segment however, it is expected that organisational routines are more focused on stimulating business than creativity. It is therefore hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 3:** Within the large base segment of the advertising agencies, no clear creativity stimulating leadership encouragement routines can be distinguished compared to the small top segment.

5.4 **Work group encouragement routines**

The third level of encouragement is based upon work group encouragement. Team composition and structure can influence creativity as it exposes individuals with different backgrounds and from different cultures to more varied and unusual ideas. Given the fact that diversity in teams is important, assuring this diversity is crucial for organisations in the top segment where creativity is a key element. In the large base segment however, it is expected that these routines are not present at all, or at least
not as visible and firmly entrenched. Initiatives to establish collaboration and trust within a group in an early stage are also important when creativity is at stake. Since these aspects of work group encouragement are vital for the process of producing creative ideas, it is expected that within the top segment actions are undertaken within each project to ensure that collaboration and trust are build rapidly. It is assumed however, that in the large base segment these routines are not that crucial, since business is prioritised over ‘art’. It is therefore hypothesised that:

**Hypothesis 4:** Within the large base segment of the advertising agencies, no clear creativity stimulating team routines can be distinguished compared to the small top segment.
6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes how information was gathered in order to examine the relationship between the approach towards creativity, the presence of organisational routines and the level of organisational creativity within the advertising industry. First, the research strategy for this study will be discussed, where after the population and sample will be elaborated upon. Subsequently the methods of data collection will be disputed.

6.1 Research strategy

Different research approaches are at hand when testing empirically, nevertheless choosing the appropriate research method or technique is vital. Every technique has its own suitable place; the important thing is to be aware of the limitations of any particular method and not to make claims which cannot be justified on the basis of the methods used. For this particular research, qualitative research was chosen, more specific the comparative study method. Within a comparative design, two or more cases can be compared in order to illuminate existing theory or to generate theoretical insights as a result of contrasting findings uncovered through the comparison (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The studied cases are in some respect similar, as comparison would otherwise not be meaningful, but also differ in some respects. In this study, the main focus is on the large established base segment of advertising agencies. The art for art’s sake property by Caves (2002) does not apply on this group, creativity has a strong product orientation and is sometimes referred to as art for business. Furthermore, this large base segment has never won creativity awards. In order to put the presence or absence of specific routines and their influence on creativity within this base segment in perspective, the base segment will be compared to the small top segment. The small top segment of advertising agencies are in fact the same type of companies, active within the same industry. However, part of the industry has won creativity awards and the art for art’s sake property does apply here. The comparative study is used to illustrate the differences in organisational creativity within the same ‘creative’ industry.
6.2 Data collection

Within the comparative study strategy, multiple methods of data gathering can be used. To learn more about the presence or absence of routines related to creativity within the large base segment, a qualitative research method was used. By conducting semi-structured interviews with a combination of open-ended questions, two-way conversational communication was stimulated. Over 30 companies were contacted by telephone for an appointment to co-operate in this research, where after in most cases (if interested) an e-mail was sent to explain the research in more detail. The companies were randomly selected but with an initial focus on gathering empirical information on agencies who had won creativity prices as well as on agencies who had not won any prices. The twelve agencies with most creativity awards (nearly also the twelve largest agencies concerning the size of the company) were contacted in order to receive empirical evidence for the top segment. Furthermore, around twenty smaller agencies without creativity awards were contacted for their cooperation. Nevertheless, only three advertising agencies were willing to cooperate. Two of the agencies have never won an advertising price, the third agency did win a few prices, however no creativity prices. Most agencies denied their cooperation because of a lack of time (as most of the agencies put it). Something that might have influenced the willingness to cooperate is the recession which was already clearly noticeable during the last months of 2008. According to Deleersnyder (2003), a recession often hits the advertising industry harder compared to other industries. In 1990 and 1991 the American economy shrunk with 2%, whereas the expenditure on advertising shrunk with an average of 5%. Many organisations determine their marketing spendings upon a percentage of their profit. In an economic crisis, the marketing budget decreases. Furthermore, organisations tend to offer their clients discounts on products instead of investing in marketing campaigns (Deleersnyder, 2003). It is clear that when everything is well, organisations are more willing to cooperate than in times of crisis.

The three co-operating companies are at first sight all part of the large base segment as they have never won any creativity awards and do not belong to the medium to large sized agencies. Because of this really low co-operation rate, secondary data such as past studies, websites, articles, and books, is used to collect sufficient data on the top segment of the advertising industry. The advertising agency KesselsKramer was chosen to serve as an example of a creative agency from the top segment. An interview between Dr. H. Snijders and Dr. M. de Jongh, strategic director of KesselsKramer serves as an important starting point and is complemented by various sources on this advertising agency which were to be found online. Table 4 shows an overview of the cooperating agencies.
Table 5 List of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Advertising Agency</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maarten Klep</td>
<td>LaMarque</td>
<td>Creative Director</td>
<td>17-10-2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogier Droogsma</td>
<td>Puurfct</td>
<td>Art director/ Manager</td>
<td>03-12-2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel Nelissen</td>
<td>Custom Media</td>
<td>Creative director</td>
<td>7-12-2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire used during the interviews was composed of different parts, related to the different identified indicators of creativity. The first part of the interview focused on creativity and routines in general within the advertising agencies. Thereafter the focus narrowed to the presence of routines related to the four identified indicators. The complete questionnaire can be found in appendix II.

6.3 Data analysis

The gathered qualitative data was prepared for analysis by tape recording the different interviews. These tape recordings were transcribed the same day or the following day and the outcomes were gathered in an answers overview. This way, the provided answers from all interviews could be compared and analysed more easily.
7. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In the preceding chapters of this research, insights have been gained about the advertising industry in the Netherlands and about the theory on routines and creativity in general. In this chapter, the relationships between routines and creativity will be discussed as it is studied in the two segments in the Dutch advertising industry. This chapter will report upon the testing of the hypotheses which are proposed in chapter 5. As described in the methodology, different advertising agencies have been part of this research and also secondary data is included.

In each of the preceding paragraphs the relationship between the identified indicator and creativity will be discussed. In order to describe the essence of the relationship as thoroughly as possible, the results will be supported by statements of the respondents. The results are structured based upon the conceptual model, and therefore starts with the approach towards creativity.

7.1 Approach towards creativity

This chapter will focus on describing and analysing the results related to the differences in approaches towards creativity. Hypothesis 1 argued that within the advertising industry, a top segment exists which is creative and can be defined as being part of the ‘creative industries’, whereas a large base segment exists where organisational creativity is questionable.

In earlier chapters it was already noticed that creativity can mean different things and that in literature, creativity is most often defined differently by different authors. From the interviews with three advertising agencies that were expected to be part of the base segment, the same conclusion can be drawn, as all three respondents’ defined creativity differently. Answers ranged from fairly straightforward answers like ‘the development of ideas’ to ‘distinguish from others’ and ‘finding new entrances’. One respondent put forward that creativity also depends on the objective of a project. Creativity can be related to generating new and distinguishing ideas for the realisation of an advertisement if that is the objective. But if the objective is to reach as many people as possible in a certain region, this creativity is not enough. Creativity is, according to this respondent, also being able to differentiate in approaches. Differentiating in working methods and approaches is thus considered to be creative. The approach towards creativity in general within the advertising agencies does not
differ however. The way the interviewees approach creativity is closely related to how they view the importance of creativity within their agencies. Creativity is of essential importance in the advertising business, as an agency that does not produce new and creative ideas will not be in business for long. However, none of the advertising agencies approach creativity as an ultimate and isolated goal. If what you are doing looks nice and is really creative, that is a nice bonus, but the end result is what really counts. The end result is in the three researched agencies fulfilling the needs of the client. Creativity is a means that is used to reach a certain end, art for business sake. In this respect, the three interviewees were asked whether their agency (would) ever let an assignment pass. By taking on every assignment that comes along, creativity is not stimulated, as it is clear that the agency has purely extrinsic motives. Custom Media indicated that they let assignments go by when they are not creative enough. However, when asked more specific, the assignments that are passed are in fact assignments which are not lucrative enough. The reason to let the assignment go does not result from the intrinsic motivation of stimulating creativity, but has an extrinsic financial cause. As the creative director of Custom Media illustrates it:

‘when the local baker contacts us for a simple advertisement in the newspaper with the prices of his bread, we advice him to ask the newspaper editor to do it for him, as it is expensive for him to hire us and the work is really unchallenging. Lucrative assignments however, we always take on. As a starting company you have to survive financially speaking, and therefore take everything you can take on when enough money is involved.’

Puur!fct pointed out that when a financially interesting assignment is unchallenging, it requires creativity to convince the client to leave the creative part to the creative people within the advertising agency instead of determining which medium to use and how to execute the assignment themselves. Client creativity hinders creativity within the advertising agency, which results in a less challenging job for the employees. Besides that, it might take one unchallenging assignment to connect a client to the advertising agency. In continuation assignments, that same client might leave the creative part up to the advertising agency, making their job challenging again. According to Puur!fct, advertising is an art, a science, but above all also a business. The third advertising agency, LaMarque, indicated that they take on all assignments that they are asked for. The creative director refers to LaMarque as a real account office. The customer gets what he asks for, real creativity has no priority. A common factor related to the three advertising agencies is that they are small to medium-sized organisations. Because of their size, they can not afford it to let financially lucrative assignments pass as the creative director of Custom Media already indicated. The fact whether agencies take on all assignments or let some assignments pass has a clear effect on the level of challenge the employees experience in their jobs. A
challenging job intrinsically motivates employees and with that stimulates creativity, as is discussed in chapter 3. A lack of challenge, caused by the approach towards creativity as a means to an end, also negatively influences creativity.

The art for business approach, adopted by a large segment of the advertising industry also has an influence on the presence of resources such as time and money. Because the objective to make money prevails over stimulating real creative output, clear routines to assure the presence of ample resources are not present. Puurfct indicated that they do make sure that enough time is available for their assignments:

‘Preceding a project, a planning is made with regard to time and money. We make an inventory regarding the time and money we expect to need in order to accomplish the project. Every team member indicates the time he or she needs for his or her part of the assignment. Everybody knows that I always estimate myself far too fast. So if I say I need four hours, we plan in about eight.’

Although this looks like a routine that positively influences creativity, it is a routine that Puurfct only works with in theory. In practice, this agency had to pass on some assignments because of lack of time and therefore shortened the time available per assignment in order to accept more assignments and earn more money. The extrinsic motivation to earn more money, the art for business approach, prevails over any intrinsic motivation. Custom Connect indicated that they make sure that they have enough time and money available to finish the assignment, but no extra time or money is asked to with the goal to reach a higher level of creativity. LaMarque pointed out that they always make sure that they finish the assignment within the discussed budget. Besides time and money as resources, knowledge and human capital are of course also very important assets. As was discussed in the literature, external knowledge transfer can lead to an increased or improved idea flow. In this light, the interviewees were asked if and how external knowledge flow was stimulated within their advertising agencies in order to increase creativity. All three interviewees indicated that gathering external knowledge was something their employees pointed out during their job evaluation conversations. When their employees feel the need to expand their knowledge they indicate which training they wish to take. Only Puurfct also consciously stimulates their employees to follow courses, whereby the initiative is with the management of the company. The management of this agency indicates that a certain skill is for example missing within the team and leaves the decision concerning who is going to follow a course with the employees. Although stimulating the expanding of
knowledge can have a positive effect on creativity in the base segment this expanding is stimulated with a focus on financial gain rather than creative enrichment.

Contrary to the approach of creativity as a business, it is expected that also another segment exists within the same industry, whereby creativity is also approached as an art.

Within the Netherlands, there is one foundation that is solely focused on creativity within the advertising industry. The Art Directors Club Nederland (ADCN) yearly nominates advertising agencies where after all members of the foundation assign the creativity awards. These members of the foundation are all professionals within the advertising industry and therefore able to objectively evaluate the work (www.adcn.nl). Only a small segment of the advertising industry has been able to win a creativity award and an even smaller segment is able to repeat the success of winning. Only 44 advertising agencies were able to repeat the success of winning a creativity award over the last 18 years. This shows that besides the large base segment where creativity is focused on business, also another segment can be distinguished within the same market, whereby creativity is also approached as an art. The assignment of creativity awards is not considered to be a definition of top segment creativity but can however be an indicator.

Evidence for the difference in approach from an advertising agency within the top segment is found in an interview by Snijders with KesselsKramer, a renowned advertising agency located in Amsterdam. Besides a focus on business, which is inevitable, KesselsKramer also focuses on art for art’s sake. This approach can for example be recognised in the fact that KesselsKramer does pass on lucrative assignments. In deciding which assignments to take on and which assignments to pass on, the financial gain is not the most important motive; the assignment has to be fun. This routine clearly stimulates rather than hampers creativity. Kessels indicates that the culture at KesselsKramer is the complete opposite of ‘work hard and be nice to people’ (Lauwen, 2008). The significantly different approach at KesselsKramer leads to significantly different results. Because of their art for art’s sake approach towards creativity, the employees at KesselsKramer are challenged. KesselsKramer sees to it that the assignments that are taken on are fun to work on and do not result in the same outcome over and over again. In doing so, KesselsKramer emphasises the importance of creative freedom. In having the freedom to determine an own course of action, creativity is stimulated as they feel trusted and valued for their expertise. Making sure that enough resources such as time, money, and expertise are present are therefore of importance. These resources are, in comparison with resources within the base
segment, focused on pursuing a certain level of creativity (intrinsic motivation), rather than having a focus on earning more money (extrinsic motivation).

7.2 Organisational encouragement and routines

Based on the study of the literature, it was hypothesised that within the base segment of the advertising industry, no organisational encouragement routines are present which assure an organisational climate and culture that facilitates creativity. In examining the possible presence of such routines, the respondents were asked specific questions related to trust and the encouragement of idea generation, as well as risk taking.

When asked about activities that stimulate informal communication which, according to the literature, creates an environment in which employees feel trusted and which consequently facilitates creativity, various answers were given. Related to informal communication, the three interviewees were asked how lunches take place within their organisation, and whether the employees also meet outside office hours. Within Puur!fct, a clear routine can be distinguished in stimulating informal communication. Everyone lunches together, the owner of the agency sits next to the secretary. Furthermore, every Friday afternoon everyone who is present finishes work an hour early so that they can have a drink. This way, the informal communication is even more emphasised, as work related subject will receive less attention. Puur!fct stands however alone in this informal communication stimulating routine. At Custom Media, the employees lunch together, but not so much to stimulate creativity, more because they share their office building with Custom Connect and the employees at Custom Media do not feel like lunching in the canteen with the other employees. The Creative director is also not present during the lunch as he often goes home to lunch. The creative director is in this case responsible for most decisions and his absence in this informal routine does not stimulate the building of trust between different hierarchy levels within the advertising agency. Although the employees might feel trusted to let their creativity run freely amongst co-workers because of their informal contact, the possible lack of informal contact with the creative director could result in a culture where employees feel less trusted to take risks or generating unusual ideas. Other moments of informal contact, outside office hours for example, do occur occasionally, however only with special occasions. Within Custom Media, no clear routines can be distinguished which positively stimulates informal communication and with that creativity. At LaMarque, the lunch is often shared with multiple employees, but no clear routines can be distinguished here, as also informal communication is not structurally stimulated outside office hours. A dichotomy within the base segment can thus be noticed, as at Puur!fct creativity stimulating
routines are consciously implemented. Although the main focus on creativity is related to business, Puur!fct does recognise the importance of creativity.

Encouraging creativity from an organisational point of view focuses on creating an organisational culture where risk taking and generating unusual ideas is stimulated (Amabile et al., 1996). When asked if risk taking was stimulated the three advertising agencies indicated that it was stimulated, but only up till a certain point. If the risk was not too big and the risk taking or the unusual idea stayed within the boundaries (money, time) of the assignment, risk taking was stimulated. Ideas generated outside these boundaries were not evaluated supportively as generating ideas outside the boundaries takes time. Furthermore, because these ‘risky’ ideas do not meet the set boundaries, they are at hand not useful. It is clear that these answers contradict each other, as real risk taking or generating unusual ideas can only stimulate creativity if a real risk exists. Because of this organisational culture, employees do not feel trusted enough to really think outside the box and come up with distinguishing ideas. The creative director at Custom Media expresses it as following:

‘We are only a small advertising agency. Although we recognise the importance of stimulating our employees to take risks, too big a risk can result in a downfall for a company of our size. We do not want to harm our good reputation by taking too much risk’.

Another aspect that can be related to creating an organisational culture that contributes to a higher level of creativity is the work environment. Within the three interviewed advertising agencies, the environment was observed in order to determine whether it could have a positive influence on creativity. At LaMarque, the offices look directly out over ‘het IJ’. The view can be interpreted as stimulating creativity as ideas might run freely while looking out over the water. The office itself however is not that stimulating, as it is just another office building. The offices of Puur!fct and Custom Media do not stimulate creativity, as they are located in industrial zones and share the office buildings with other organisations. However, the Art director of Puur!fct indicated that their office is currently under construction and that they are therefore located in the industrial zone for the moment. Their own office is located in an old villa in the centre of the city. This work environment was carefully selected as it stimulates creativity. Although no routines can be distinguished based upon location, it is an important aspect that contributes to the organisational culture.

Within the top segment of the advertising industry however, the focus on organisational encouragement routines is clearer as these organisations are more aware of their influence on
creativity. At KesselsKramer for example, lunches take place with all employee and even during the creative process, coffee breaks are taken. This way, formal communication is interchanged with informal communication. These short breaks with informal communication can lead to increased creativity. Within KesselsKramer 15 different nationalities are employed. Because of this diversified backgrounds, employees tend to meet up outside work as well, as they almost become each others family (van der wolk, Brugman, Dekker & Oeij, 2008). That risk taking and generating unusual ideas is stimulated at KesselsKramer can be noticed from their overall mission. As mentioned before, work hard and be nice is not the way to go for KesselsKramer. The employees are challenged and not afraid to come up with risky ideas. In their book, Jacobs and Snijder (2008) emphasise the example of Bol.com. Although the management of Bertelsmann OnLine was focusing on the letters B.O.L. (which means round), KesselsKramer came up with the radically new idea of the little blue round men. Furthermore, employees at KesselsKramer are not afraid to come into conflict with their sponsors or to stop the cooperation if things do not work out. This of course has a risk attached to it, as their reputation might be severely harmed by such actions.

When looking at the work environment at KesselsKramer, a clear difference can be distinguished compared to the advertising agencies in the base segment. The office of KesselsKramer is referred to as a ‘fun-office’ (van Meel & Vos, 2001). KesselsKramer houses in a 19th century church which is converted into an office. Inside, a wooden fortress, watch-tower and special tv-room can be found. Meetings are conducted at picnic benches, probably to make sure that meetings do not go on and on (Lauwen, 2008). The differences between the work environment in the base and top segment could not have been clearer, as the office building of KesselsKramer no doubtly has a more positive influence on creativity compared to the offices of Puur!fct, LaMarque and Custom Media.

7.3 Leadership encouragement and routines

The review of the literature on creativity and leadership resulted in a hypothesis that stated that within the large base segment of the advertising industry, supervisory encouragement routines to assure that the style of leadership contributes to stimulating creativity are not present. The interviewees from the cooperating advertising agencies were asked questions related to leadership in order to research the presence or absence of such routines.
Although none of the interviewees indicated it as a creativity stimulating routine at the start of the interview, all advertising agencies use a transformational leadership style. This result focused style of leadership tells the employees what to do, however the employees can decide how to do it themselves. Within the set boundaries such as money and time, employees can work towards the end result (or milestone) on their own accord. The style of leadership is therefore closely related to the amount of freedom employees’ experience. Related to the style of supervision and the freedom of the employees, the interviewees were also asked if and how employees were empowered to make decisions on their own. The three respondents answered that the employees did get the freedom and authority to make decisions and distribute their own time, but how this freedom was guaranteed was not formalised in any way. The creative director of Puur!fct mentioned:

‘Within our agency it is the end result that counts. If one of our employees wants to take a walk or try a new approach to become inspired, that is fine by us. As long as at the end of the road the result is in consensus with the assignment. This way we want to provide our employees with a certain amount of freedom to make their own decisions. We believe that our employees are more creative when they feel empowered.’

This statement corresponds with the view that independence and responsibilities increases the involvement of employees and with that intrinsically motivates them. This, in turn, positively influences their level of creativity. Despite the fact that all interviewees point out that the style of leadership used in their advertising agencies is transformational, also another routine can be distinguished from the answers. When time and money is limited for a specific project, the style of leadership becomes more transactional. The team leader starts to include more milestones and working methods become more specified. This change in leadership style therefore also influences the amount of freedom employees’ experience, as more control is desired and with that the freedom of employees becomes more limited. People tend to fall back on using approaches they are familiar with, which results in diminished creativity. As the creative director of LaMarque describes it:

‘The running times for our projects become shorter and shorter. Because of this given, the style of leadership confines the freedom of the employees more and more.’

Another element of supervisory encouragement where a routine might be distinguished is concerned with the evaluation or feedback of assignments or projects. The interviewees were asked if evaluating projects and providing the employees with feedback was a routine they, whether or not intentionally, implemented. None of the agencies had a firmly entrenched routine whereby feedback and evaluation
took place at the end of all projects. At Puur!fct, incidentally evaluation takes place, usually when a project went really good or really bad. As discussed in the literature, evaluation can contribute to the learning cycle as the knowledge can be used as new input for creativity. Within the base segment, this supervisory routine is not embedded and does therefore not stimulate creativity.

Within the top segment, the style of leadership can also be referred to as transformational. At KesselsKramer for example, employees have the freedom to decide to work for example four days a week instead of five. Employees are stimulated to make their own decisions and have the freedom to distribute their own time. Within KesselsKramer, belonging to the top segment of the advertising industry, only an example can be found whereby evaluation and/or feedback is of importance. Evaluation is used as a tool to decide whether KesselsKramer want to work on a future assignment for a specific company after producing a successful campaign for them. Whether or not a continuation project is taken on does not depend on whether the former campaign was a success, rather it focuses on whether it was still interesting and fun enough. This does however not provide conclusive evidence that evaluation takes place every time within the top segment.

7.4 Team work encouragement and routines

Hypothesis 4 theorised that no clear creativity stimulating team routines can be distinguished within the large base segment of the advertising industry, in comparison with the small top segment. The interviewees from the three different advertising agencies within the base segment were asked questions related to the extent that organisational routines concerning group encouragement were present in their organisations which stimulated creativity. In order to gain insights in the diversity within teams, the interviewees were asked questions to find out whether this diversity issue was consciously thought of within their agencies and in their team composition. A prevailing view on team composition can be distinguished, as all three interviewees indicate that as far as team composition is concerned, the focus is on selecting the best suitable employees for the job. The creative director of LaMarque stated:

“Our focus is not so much on creating diversity within our team but on appointing the right, most suitable person for that specific project.”

The interviewees denote that creating diversity within project teams in order to stimulate creativity is not a routine they deliberately use. Because most agencies operate with teams consistent of
copywriters and art directors, diversification based on functional background is almost always present, since different functional skills are needed in creating advertisement. The functional backgrounds of the employees provide them with a more diversified knowledge base which in turn can lead to a higher level of creativity. Nevertheless, these functional backgrounds can always be distinguished within organisations and no extra effort is taken to create further diversification within the advertising agencies. The same goes for diversity related to surface-level factors such as age and gender. Although the organisations are diversified at these points, no deliberate actions were undertaken to create this diversity. The employees were selected based upon their fit with the team or their creative work. When subsequently asked about their staffing policy in order to find out whether creating diversity throughout the whole organisation was stimulated, it showed that no clear creativity stimulating routines could be distinguished. Although the advertising agencies have specific hiring routines, these routines do not contribute to creativity, in fact, these routines might even hamper creativity. The creative director of Custom Media describes their hiring routine the following:

‘When we need a new team member, we first ask our employees whether they know someone in their social network who is looking for a job. If that does not work out, we use an employment agency. When a potential new employee meets the requirements the most important thing for us is that he or she fits in with the rest of the team. You cannot assess someone based on their former work, since you will never know how much time he or she has put into the work before it reached this level of creativity.’

This statement clearly puts forward that creating a homogeneous group has more priority than shaking things up and hiring someone who is completely different. The other interviewees also indicated that their focus was mainly on hiring someone who fits in with the team. As Puur!fct puts it:

‘We cannot afford to hire someone from who we know on forehand that he or she thinks about things too different from the rest of the agency. If someone often has an opposing opinion, work will be delayed and team members become irritated. Being a small company, we simply cannot afford it.’

At Puur!fct a new potential employee always visits the office for a day or so in order to see whether he or she fits in with the team. Purely based on an interview it is hard to determine whether someone connect with the other employees and therefore potential employees are asked to come and work for a day. At LaMarque, the creative work a potential employee has produced in the past is also an important criterion during the selection. The creative director believes that past creative work is a good criterion for individual creativity even though it is hard to determine what this level of
individual creativity is, as it is often not clear for how long the job-applicant has been working on it and whether he or she has produced it alone. The creative director indicated that job-applicants are often people who have been working in the advertising industry already and from whom the work and their abilities are fairly known. A presentation of their creative work is then adequate.

Team structure is another element in work group encouragement for creativity that was discussed in the review of the literature. The advertising agencies were therefore asked questions to find out whether intentional or unintentional routinised actions are undertaken to stimulate creativity by focussing on the structure of their teams. Changes in the composition of a team for example, are theorised to stimulate creativity. Puur!fct is aware of this importance as the Art director explains:

‘Our team composition does not change regularly. We do however recognise the importance of changing group members for creativity. It is for this reason that we sometimes also use freelancers. When we need to reach a specific target group or if we need input concerning a specialism, we contact freelance employees. We have chosen to use this approach instead of incorporating that specific specialism within our own organisation by hiring someone or facilitating extra training. By incorporating freelancers in teams with the agencies own employees, the structure changes and we hope to facilitate creativity.’

The creative director of Custom Media however indicates that their team structure never changes:

“Because our advertising department is fairly small, we always work together as a team with the complete organisation. Our employees do have different functional backgrounds because we need copywriters as well as art directors within our agency, but the structure of our team does not change”.

When asked about the expected influence of their team longevity on their creativity, the creative director of Custom Media indicated that he sees himself as the main encourager of creativity within their agency. Because he interacts with the clients he develops the ideas and his employees execute them. The team longevity therefore does not change anything since creativity is still a management-driven activity. It is clear that this routine can have a negative influence on creativity, as this agency fails to use the full potential of their employees. When this was brought up, the creative director indicated that he noticed that his employees choose to select approaches or solutions which offer the least resilience or have been proven to work before, instead of trying new approaches when he is not around. In fact, this is a vicious circle, since the employees do not feel trusted enough to take risks and because of this, the creative director feels that he is the only one suitable to come up with creative
ideas. The creative director did believe that when his employees were given for example a whole day to come up with really creative ideas, they would be able to do so. However if the ideas they then present are not financially feasible, the hours they spend that day cannot be charged to the client. In this case, the lack of trust has resulted in a structure whereby creativity is purely a management driven activity.

Within the top segment, the focus on creating diversity within the organisation is much clearer. At KesselsKramer for example, 40 people are employed with 15 different nationalities such as American, English, Turkish, Finnish, Chinese and Japanese. These differences in nationalities have a positive effect on creativity within the organisation as well as on the end product, as every national character contributes something new (van der wolk et al., 2008). In contrast with the base segment, Kessels Kramer, being a top segment advertising agency, is continuously searching for new employees who bring something new to the organisation instead of selecting someone who is similar to the current employees in order to fit in. All employees are also stimulated to stay up to date concerning the news and developments in the home country or continent. This way the knowledgebase of all employees stays more diversified compared to just focusing on the developments within the Netherlands. KesselsKramer also consciously hires young employees, as they believe that young employees are more aware of new developments within the market (Van der Wolk et al., 2008). At a management level, creating diversity is also an important issue within the top segment. The management of KesselsKramer, for example is varied. Persons with opposing views are employed within the management. These contradicting views assure innovative approaches.
8. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study was set out to research which factors influence the level of creativity within advertising agencies and to find out what role routines play. By researching the Dutch advertising industry as being a part of the so-called ‘creative industries’, a division was made between an expected large ‘not so creative’ base segment and a small ‘creative’ top segment. This study focused on the way advertising agencies approach creativity, the presence/absence of organisational encouragement routines, the presence/absence of leadership routines, and the presence/absence of work group encouragement routines. This chapter sets out to answer the research question by addressing the four hypotheses.

The first hypothesis focused on the approach advertising agencies have towards creativity and stated that a division exists between a large base segment, where creativity is purely for the sake of business, and a small top segment, where creativity is also approached as an art and can be defined as being part of the ‘creative industries’. From the empirical research amongst the three cooperating advertising agencies, it stands out that their creativity is clearly focused on extrinsic motivations like money. As many assignments as possible are taken on and financially lucrative assignments will never be passed on. Because of these routines, the employees’ jobs are unchallenging as management is not focused on selecting specific challenging assignments and because of the time pressure that is created by taking on as many assignments as possible, the freedom of the employees is confined. Furthermore, because making money is the most important motivation, extra resources to further creativity will never be asked for. In terms of Amabile’s focus on organisational creativity, many of the contextual factors that stimulate creativity are not present within this large base segment of advertising agencies. The employees’ freedom is confined, sufficient resources are not present and the jobs are unchallenging. Another segment can also be distinguished within the advertising industry, which is referred to as a top segment. Although competing in the same industry, this segment approaches creativity in another way. Creativity is also here considered to be a business, but it is not just a business. It is considered to be an art as well. This difference in approach is clearly represented by the secondary data gathered on the advertising agency KesselsKramer. Within this agency assignments are passed on because they are not ‘fun’ enough. KesselsKramer houses in an inspiring office building in order to facilitate creativity. Because of this focus on art for art’s sake, employees are intrinsically motivated and their jobs are kept challenging as assignment differ greatly. The difference
between the base and top segment is well explained by the differences in approaching a follow-up assignment. Agencies within the base segment are always willing to take on a continuation assignment as it provides them with money. Agencies within the top segment however, would let such an easier assignment pass, as it is not challenging enough to continue. Overall it can be concluded that the small top segment can be referred to as creative, as the contextual factors positively influencing creativity according to Amabile are present here. Furthermore, in compliance with the theory on creative industries by Caves, the small top segment can be referred to as being part of the so called ‘creative industries’. The contrast between the level of creativity within the small top segment and the large base segment is so significant that it can be concluded that the large base segment of advertising agencies is not really creative. Overall, it can be concluded that hypothesis 1 holds, as the empirical evidence on the base segment shows that these advertising agencies are not creative compared to the top segment, as their motives are purely extrinsically driven. The creative top segment of the advertising industry can therefore be labelled as being part of the creative industry, whereas the large base segment does not qualify for this definition.

Hypothesis two was aimed at the differences in creativity stimulating routines at an organisational level between the base segment and the top segment. Different aspects of organisational encouragement were studied in order to research the presence of routines. As informal communication is considered to be an important aspect in stimulating creativity (Kratzer et al, 2008), it was expected that within the base segment, routines stimulating informal communication would not be present, as creativity is focused on business. Nevertheless, within the expected base segment, one of the three agencies, Puur!fct, did focus on stimulating informal communication within their agency by facilitating lunch together with all employees and meetings outside the office. This creativity stimulating routine could not be identified within the other two agencies. Furthermore, Puur!fct normally houses in a villa in the centre of the city, which is selected to influence creativity. This leads to believe that, although Puur!fct has a business approach towards creativity, stimulating creativity is at some points also important. Based on this, a third segment can be introduced, namely a middle segment, where creativity has to be approached as a business, in order for it to survive, but where also a focus on creativity is of importance. From the two other agencies it can be concluded that no routines are in place to stimulate a more creative organisational environment. Informal communication is not facilitated and risk taking is not supported at all as it can jeopardise their business. When compared to KesselsKramer located in the top segment, it is clear that more creativity stimulating routines can be distinguished. At KesselsKramer, lunch brakes, as well as coffee brakes are used to stimulate informal communication. Because of the many different nationalities, employees
tend to meet up outside office hours as well, as many employees do not have family here for example. Furthermore, risk taking is stimulated as the management sets a good example by letting lucrative assignments pass. When looking at the base segment of the industry, it can be concluded that no clear creativity stimulating routines can be distinguished on an organisational level compared to the top segment, where these routines are more visibly present. Puurfct however, can be referred to as a middle segment advertising agency, since some creativity stimulating routines can be recognised here. It can therefore be concluded that hypothesis 2 also holds.

The third hypothesis stated that no clear creativity stimulating leadership routines could be distinguished within the base segment in comparison with the top segment. When researching the base segment as well as the top segment, no clear differences could be found in for example the style of leadership. From the answers during the interviews with the three advertising agencies, it could be concluded that they all use a transformational leadership style. Employees are provided with an assignment and a deadline, but how they divide their time or come to the end result is their own responsibility. When time becomes more pressuring, more milestones might be included but the employees keep a certain amount of freedom in how they execute their job. When looking at the top segment, the employees at KesselsKramer are also guaranteed a certain amount of freedom and are able to make their own decisions concerning how to execute their job. If time is pressuring here, it is expected that extra time is asked for as it contributes to a higher level of creativity. If an employee indicates that he or she wants to work four days instead of five that is not a problem. Related to stimulating evaluation or feedback, no conclusive evidence could be found that evaluation always takes place within the top segment. Overall it can therefore be concluded that hypothesis three cannot be confirmed, as no clear difference are found between creativity stimulating routines on a leadership level between the base and top segment.

The fourth and last hypothesis focused on the expected lack of clear creativity stimulating routines at a work group level within the base segment compared to the top segment. Within the base segment a clear work group routines could be distinguished, however not one that stimulates creativity. Related to the composition of teams, the focus within the base segment is on selecting the most suitable employees. Creating diversity has no priority, as it can only lead to conflict. Furthermore, when a new employee needs to be hired, another routine can be distinguished which does not contribute to the level of creativity. Within the base segment, the main goal is to find someone who is suitable for the job and fits in with the rest of the team. The organisations are diversified, for example based on age, gender, and functional background, but this is not the result of consciously creating diversification,
but because those employees just fitted in best with the rest of the team. Puur!fct did however indicated that concerning the structure of their teams, they try to diversify by working with freelancers on occasion. This strengthens the believe that Puur!fct is a company that is somewhat focused on stimulating creativity and could therefore be referred to as a middle segment agency. When comparing the base segment to the top segment, clear differences are noticeable. Within KesselsKramer for example, 15 different nationalities are employed. When composing teams, KesselsKramer focuses on selecting those employees that can bring innovative views to the table. Within their hiring process, KesselsKramer emphasises on hiring someone who brings something new. Fitting in with the rest of the employees in having the same beliefs and values is not of importance; KesselsKramer prefers opposing views in order to stimulate creativity. From the empirical as well as secondary research, it can be concluded that hypothesis 4 can be confirmed, as within the base segment no clear creativity stimulating routines can be distinguished compared to the top segment, where the focus on a work group level is much more on stimulating creativity.

From this research it can be concluded that referring to the complete advertising industry as a creative industry does not apply under all definitions. According to Caves (2002), a creative industry is an industry where the art for art’s sake property is applicable. When taking this definition into consideration, a large segment of the advertising industry in the Netherlands could not be referred to as a creative industry. However, when looking at the advertising industry as a whole, the art for art’s sake does apply, as within a small top segment, art is considered to be a business as well as an art. An industry where creativity is a core product does not necessarily mean that the organisation is creative as can be seen from this research. Within the advertising industry, a dichotomy exists between a large base segment of often relatively small agencies where creativity is just for the sake of business and a small top segment where creativity is also referred to as art.

When advertising agencies within the base segment of the industry are aware of the fact that certain organisational routines can be used to stimulate creativity, the focus of advertising agencies might shift to intentionally implementing organisational routines in order to benefit creativity. Heightening the awareness about factors which influence creativity can contribute to a more creative outcome in for example the same time or money. Creating an organisational culture which facilitates creativity can fairly easily be realised by promoting informal communication during shared lunches for example. Keeping the shortening running times in mind, still a lot of improvement can be realised.
8.1 Research limitations

The results of this study should be interpreted as a first step towards analysing the value of certain organisational routines for creativity. The outcome of this study raises the question whether the advertising industry should be labelled as being a creative industry at all, as the vast majority of the advertising agencies belongs to the base segment and have a pure business focus towards creativity. The difficulty in finding cooperative advertising agencies resulted in a limited amount of subjects studied. By studying more cases within the advertising industry, a more comprehensive view of the presence or absence of organisational routines for creativity can be realised. The question whether the advertising industry as a whole should be referred to as being part of the creative industry could be answered in a more comprehensive study.
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# Appendix I

## Overview ADCN ‘Lampen’ awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising agency</th>
<th># Lampen</th>
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<td>1. TBWA\NEBOKO</td>
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<td>2. DDB</td>
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<td>3. Lowe &amp; Partners</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Y&amp;R Not Just Film</td>
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<td>5. Arc Amsterdam</td>
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<td>6. FHV BBDO creative marketi…</td>
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<td>7. Wieden &amp; Kennedy Amsterdam</td>
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<td>8. KesselsKramer</td>
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<td>9. Euro RSCG 4D</td>
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<td>11. VBAT</td>
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<td>12. UbachsWisbrun/JWT</td>
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<td>13. Studio Dumbar bv</td>
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<td>14. Millford Brand-id</td>
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<td>15. ETCETERA</td>
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<td>16. Saatchi &amp; Saatchi</td>
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<td>17. 180 Amsterdam</td>
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<td>18. Euro RSCG Amsterdam</td>
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<td>19. Ogilvy Amsterdam</td>
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<td>20. Publicis BV</td>
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<td>22. BR-ND Mountain Design</td>
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<td>23. N=5</td>
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<td>24. ACHTUNG!</td>
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<td>25. Koeweiden Postma</td>
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<td>29. Dietwee Ontwerpers</td>
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<td>30. Kong Amsterdam</td>
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<td>31. Vandejong</td>
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<td>32. brandnew.design BV</td>
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<td>35. McCann Erickson</td>
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<td>37. Slot &amp; Bos reclameadviesbureau</td>
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<td>43. De Designpolitie</td>
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<td>50. Euro RSCG Bikker</td>
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<td>51. Proximity Amsterdam</td>
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<td>52. ARA Direct</td>
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<td>55. BVH Dienstencommunicatie</td>
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<td>59. SKIPINTRO</td>
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<td>60. CCCP</td>
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<td>64. Springer &amp; Jacoby Interna...</td>
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<td>66. Brand New Design</td>
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<td>67. SVT Branding &amp; Design Group</td>
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<td>68. Watson &amp; Lewis</td>
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Appendix II
Questionnaire

1. Hoeveel medewerkers telt het reclamebureau waar u momenteel werkzaam bent? Hoeveel daarvan zijn daadwerkelijk betrokken bij de creatieve processen?

2. Hoe zou u creativiteit omschrijven?

3. Hoe belangrijk is creativiteit voor dit bureau? Is het doel van dit bureau om altijd zo creatief mogelijk te zijn?

4. Hoe creatief vindt u dit bureau? Denkt u dat er ruimte voor verbetering is?

5. Is routine belangrijk voor dit bureau en is er volgens u veel routine aanwezig binnen dit bureau? Waar zit deze routine?

6. In hoeverre kunnen de medewerkers / het creatieve team dat meewerkt aan de concepten, hun eigen inzicht volgen, en in hoeverre doen ze dat ook daadwerkelijk? Worden ze vrij gelaten in hoe ze hun tijd indelen bijvoorbeeld? Zijn er (ongeschreven) regels binnen het bureau welke deze vrijheid of gebondenheid bepalen?

7. Kunnen of mogen medewerkers zelf bepalen bij welke projecten ze betrokken willen worden? Zo ja, hoe wordt dit geregeld?

8. Vindt er na afloop van een project / opdracht altijd evaluatie en feedback plaats? Zo ja, wat wordt er met deze terugkoppeling gedaan?

9. Hoe wordt een creatief team aangestuurd, gebeurd dit bijvoorbeeld resultaat gestuurd, of juist gestuurd op hoe het proces doorlopen moet worden?

10. Wordt er altijd door iedereen samen geluncht / koffie gedronken? Waarom wel of niet?

11. Wordt er wel eens een bedrijfssuitje / borrel / etentje georganiseerd? Hoe vaak, zit hier regelmaat in?

12. Worden medewerkers gestimuleerd om risico’s te nemen en durven ze fouten te maken, of wordt vaak de weg van de minste weerstand gekozen? Hoe wordt er voor gezorgd dat werknemers het vertrouwen voelen om risico te nemen en fouten te maken?

13. Hoe vindt de werving van personeel plaats, wordt hierbij gelet op individuele creativiteit van de potentiële werknemer? Hoe wordt dit bepaald? Wordt er ook gelet op het creëren van diversiteit binnen het team door bepaalde personen wel of niet aan te nemen? Zijn hier (ongeschreven) regels voor?
14. Hoeveel mensen werken er gemiddeld aan een project en hebben deze mensen verschillende achtergronden qua opleiding bijvoorbeeld? Wordt hier met het samenstellen van een nieuw projectteam rekening mee gehouden, zo ja, zijn hier (ongeschreven) regels voor?
15. Werken vaak dezelfde mensen samen in een creatief team of wisselt de samenstelling voortdurend? Zijn hier (ongeschreven) regels voor? Hoeveel verschillende projecten heeft een medewerker gemiddeld per jaar?
16. Wordt er gewerkt met strakke budgetten en tijdsplanningen, wordt er tussentijds wel eens om extra tijd / geld gevraagd bij de opdrachtgever en wordt dit dan toegekend?
17. Hoe belangrijk zijn trainingen / cursussen / bijscholing voor de medewerkers? Worden medewerkers verplicht om deze te volgen? Waar ligt het accent hierbij, het bijhouden van het eigen vakgebied of juist ontwikkelingen daarbuiten?
18. Laat dit bureau wel eens makkelijke /saaie opdrachten schieten om zo het werk uitdagend te houden voor de werknemers? Ook wanneer de opdracht wel lucratief is?
19. Wanneer een medewerker het aangeeft, kan hij / zij dan nieuwe taken en/of verantwoordelijkheden krijgen om het werk uitdagender te maken?
20. Zijn er binnen uw bedrijf andere routines welke creativiteit moeten stimuleren?
21. Heeft u verder nog iets toe te voegen met betrekking tot creativiteit en routine?