KNOWLEDGE CREATION PROCESS IN ADVERTISING FIRMS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT
Creating new forms of knowledge is particularly crucial for the survival of knowledge-intensive firms. Most of the work in the social capital interaction has focused on the relationship between firms whereas the relationship between individuals in the knowledge networks and teams has been understudied. This study intends to ascertain the evolving role of the knowledge creation process in advertising firms of Pakistan. This paper describes the knowledge creation process by analyzing lived experiences of informants and focuses on different phases of knowledge creation from idea generation to final execution within the context of advertising agencies. More specifically, this study is aimed at studying the role of social capital in supporting the knowledge creation process within the context of advertising firms. This study resides on a relativistic school of thought based on the interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling is used for data collection conducted through semi-structured interviews. Phenomenology was used as a research methodology to develop broader themes for discussion and capture the essence of the phenomenon. It is inferred that collaborative work environment, mutual consensus, informal interactions, motivation, self-respect, sharing culture, social change, client satisfaction and many other factors drive the essence of the knowledge creation process in terms of creativity & quality as strength of relationships in advertising agencies. The major implications of this paper are both for academicians & practitioners to view creativity and quality as strength of relationships based on nurturing relational capital. Managers should foster a productive relationship between employees and use network relationships as a mean for generating new forms of knowledge.
Keywords: Knowledge Creation Process; Knowledge-Intensive Firms; Phenomenology: SECI Model

INTRODUCTION

To survive in today's turbulent environment, organizations are required to constantly innovate and create new forms of knowledge. Innovation and the creation of knowledge are essential for the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage (Nonaka & Toyama, 2003). Over time, the process of knowledge creation is becoming increasingly complex (Veiga et al., 2021), and it requires collaborative networking between different people with diverse knowledge and expertise. Therefore, collaborative networks have become a potent solution in new knowledge creation (Tu, 2020). Within these knowledge networks, individuals are responsible for the creation of new forms of knowledge at the fundamental level. But, knowledge creation is a social activity and a dynamic process that involves multiple actors (Wang, 2016). It is the central tenant of the influential SECI model proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). According to this model, the creative interaction between explicit and tacit knowledge as well as individual and collective knowledge is the source of creation, conversion, transfer, and utilization of knowledge. However, knowledge creation is a dynamic process that transcends individuals, groups, and even organizations. Therefore, this study indicates knowledge creation as "a social process involving interactions among individuals and organizations with different backgrounds, resources, predisposition and insights" (Hu & Racherla, 2008, p. 303).

Creating new forms of knowledge is particularly crucial for the survival of knowledge-intensive firms. Advertising firms are professional service firms as they meet the criteria for such firms laid down by Von Nordenflycht (2010). Advertising firms are characterized by knowledge intensity, low capital intensity, and a highly professionalized workforce. The creation of knowledge in these firms requires access to complex knowledge and the workforce must possess sufficient knowledge base skills. Workers in these organization process information and knowledge instead of physical goods (Gardner, Gino, & Staats, 2012) and must possess the capability for communication and facilitation of new ideas (Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, 2003). Within advertising firms, intangible resources such as knowledge and capability are employed to create knowledge unique and valuable strategic resources. But effective knowledge creation in an advertising firm requires teamwork and collaboration between team members. Therefore, social capital provides the base of knowledge creation in these firms.

Although the concept of knowledge creation was proposed in the 1990s, this topic is still popular among researchers. For example, Mcfadyen and Cannella (2004) have studied the effect of social capital on knowledge creation. Nakano, Muniz and Dias Batista (2013) have focused on the factor that supports the transfer of tacit knowledge on the shop floor by using a qualitative approach. Hautala (2015) has employed an ethnographic case study approach to study temporal interaction between different artists in creating artistic knowledge. Tu (2020) and Weerakoon et al., (2020) have separately researched the impact of social capital in producing new knowledge. Al-Omoush, Simón-Moya and Sendra-García (2020) have found that social capital is positively related to collaborative knowledge creation. Veiga et al., (2021) have studied the different process of knowledge sharing and knowledge creation in SMEs of Portugal. Similarly, Scholars

have studied the knowledge creation process within banks and the corporate sector of Pakistan (Ayub et al., 2016; Bashir, 2015; Memon, Rizvi, & Amir, 2017).

The most influential model for studying knowledge creation and conversion is the SECI model given by Nonaka (1994) and his colleagues. However, Bandera et al., (2017) note that very few studies have applied the SECI model within SMEs. Since mostly advertising agency in Pakistan falls under small and medium enterprises; therefore, advertising firms provide an interesting context for the application of the SECI model. This research addressed this unexplored research gap by investigating the knowledge creation phenomenon in-depth. Most of the work in the social capital interaction has focused on the relationship between firms; whereas the relationship between individuals in the knowledge networks and teams has been understudied (Zamzami & Schiffauerova, 2017). As the overall outcome of knowledge networks depends upon the performance of individuals, it is more beneficial to focus on the interaction between individuals. Moreover, the extant literature mainly focuses on the benefits earned in creating knowledge for individuals who possess social capital (Tu, 2020); while the benefits of social capital on collective or organizational knowledge creation are somewhat overlooked. Lastly, the organizational processes and routines that enable organizations to leverage their social capital and transforming this new knowledge into innovation have been ignored (Weerakoon et al., 2020). The study is motivated by the three research questions: How knowledge creation process evolves in Advertising firms in Pakistan? How different phases of the SECI model are interlinked with the flow of knowledge creation within advertising firms? And more specifically, how social capital supports the organizational knowledge creation process of advertising firms in Pakistan?

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the evolving role of the knowledge creation process in advertising firms in Pakistan. It studies different phases of knowledge creation from idea perception to final execution of advertisements. This would help to understand the role of the SECI model within advertising firms. More specifically, this study is aimed at studying the role of social capital in supporting the knowledge creation process within the context of advertising firms. A qualitative study is carried out to discover the essence of the knowledge creation process in advertising firms. Phenomenology is adopted as a complete research methodology to capture the essence of the phenomenon, and eight informants of different creative (advertising) firms were interviewed. Emerging themes and sub-themes were analyzed by transcribing the informant views. The results of the study are consistent with the arguments of Desouza and Awazu (2006) who believe that socialization is the dominant process for the transfer of knowledge within the organization, particularly in SMEs. However, the other stages of the SECI Model are also observed from the accounts of the informants. The results of this study will help the researchers to understand the processing and creation of knowledge within a knowledge-intensive firm. Researchers have criticized the dynamic theory of knowledge creation as its validity is limited to only Japanese manufacturing firms. However, this study attempts to demonstrate the validity of the SECI Model outside Japan as the authors think that Pakistani firms are philosophically and culturally closer to the Japanese counterpart than Western ones.

This study has importance for both academics and practitioners alike. Academics and managers alike equate knowledge management with knowledge creation (Nonaka, Toyama & Konno, 2000). Since, new knowledge is created as a result of interaction between "human agency and social structure" (Nonaka & Toyama, 2015), therefore, it is important to study how social capital and its different dimensions produce new knowledge. The social capital theory has interesting implications for the knowledge creation process because it provides valuable insight into understanding how individuals take advantage of social networks (Tu, 2020). Differentiating information management with knowledge management will be beneficial in developing new and better theories of knowledge creation and its management.

Similarly, managers have failed to understand the basic gist of the knowledge creation process. A major challenge for modern-day managers is to leverage the tacit and explicit knowledge residing in the organization to create new forms of knowledge (Bashir, 2015; Nakano et al., 2013). For this purpose, managers must view organizations as social communities that specialize in knowledge creation and its transfer (Kogut & Zander, 1993). Treating organizations just as information-processing entities limit the scope of the organization and make the organization unaware of their capabilities to produce new knowledge. This new knowledge is important for survival in the market. It can be used as a driver of success because it converts any organization's knowledge resources into a competitive advantage (So et al., 2020). For this, organizations must realize the importance of social relationships, process and practices in the organization that facilitates the creation of new knowledge. For this purpose, the organization must give due attention toward the creation of knowledge by employing network relationships since an environment conducive for knowledge creation is the one which socially created among actors (Jakubik, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last few decades, knowledge and learning are considered to be critical in understanding innovation. According to Chiva and Alegre (2005), cognitive possession and social process perspective are two dominant approaches in studying knowledge, learning and innovation. Manniche and Testa (2018) categorize scholarly work in social process approach within three different units of analysis i.e. micro, meso and macro. The micro-level emphasizes inter or intra organization relationship between different knowledge actors; for instance, the community of practice. The meso level regards knowledge as socially constructed realities; while at the macro level governance structure and coordination system are focused. Although all three units of analysis are relevant to this study, this paper will focus on the micro-level of analysis.

Following the social process perspective, knowledge creation is referred to as "a dialectical process, in which various contradictions are synthesized through dynamic interactions among individuals, the organization, and the environment" (Nonaka & Toyama, 2015). In simpler words, it entails the conversion of the initial idea into the existing and final form (Hautala, 2015). Knowledge is created through the interaction between individuals as well as the interaction of individuals with their external environment (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000). The widely used model for knowledge creation is the SECI model proposed by Nonaka (1994), which consists of

four stages of knowledge creation. These stages include Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization.

Theoretical underpinnings of the knowledge creation process

In the early 1990s, the concept of knowledge creation began to gain prominence. The concept implied that organizations are just not the only passive user of knowledge, but also their active creator (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2014). Two theoretical underpinnings were responsible for the propagation of this idea. One was the knowledge-based view of the firms which is regarded as an extension of the resource-based view. The knowledge-based view of the firm posits that organizations exist as they are better at knowledge creation and processing as compared to both market (contract-based organization) and hierarchy (authority based organization) (Grant, 1996). Therefore, knowledge creation, acquisition, integration and processing become the primary task of an organization. Peter Ducker's idea of knowledge economy shook the conventional theories of economics by giving more importance to knowledge workers (Bashir, 2015). However, the knowledge possessed by individuals is a source of competitive advantage only when it is shared and synthesized within the organization (Liao & Phan, 2016). Therefore, knowledge creation may be considered as transforming individual knowledge into group or organizational knowledge through its exchange and sharing of knowledge within the organization (Yu et al., 2017).

The second stream was the dynamic theory of knowledge creation, also known as the SECI Model, proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). This theory postulates that knowledge is created through dynamic interaction and dialogue between tacit and explicit knowledge (Mehralian, Nazari, & Ghasemzadeh, 2018). Knowledge creation is essentially a transcending process that allows individuals and groups to rise above their boundaries for the creation of new knowledge. According to Nonaka and Toyama (2003), knowledge creation is a dialectical process wherein the dynamic interaction between individuals and groups leads to the resolution of various contradictions existing at a different level. This calls for dialect thinking and actions to synthesize these antithetical concepts and contradictions.

Individual knowledge is the starting point of this dynamic theory since they are the prime driver of the knowledge creation process. Nonaka believes that knowledge possessed by individuals is both organizational and practical (Bandera et al., 2017). Knowledge creation is an ability to create knowledge in which individuals mutually create new knowledge through experiments, observations and interactions etc. It entails amplifying an individual's knowledge as well as crystallizing and connecting with the knowledge base of an organization (Nonaka, Von Krogh, & Voelpel, 2006). There are two perspectives which explain knowledge creation in SECI model i.e. first shows that only individual creates knowledge and second relates to the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge to create new spirals of knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). While the first perspective is at the individual level; the second one describes knowledge creation as a social process since social relations are considered to be more effective for knowledge creation than market and hierarchy (Nieves & Osorio, 2013).

SECI Model

SECI model was different from the other models of knowledge management presented by Western scholars. While Western scholars focused on the storage and reuse of knowledge; Nonaka emphasized the creation of knowledge. Particularly, the SECI model contradicts the information processing model, and view organizations as the creator of knowledge instead of information processing entities. This model provides a mean of transferring individual knowledge to organizational knowledge by combining different organizational processes and routines (Al-Mulhim, 2017). Knowledge is produced by individuals which are later converted into organizational knowledge after different organizational processes (Arijitsatien & Ractham, 2017). According to Nonaka and colleagues, the knowledge of an individual is expanded through a four-stage conversion process between tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka; 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Nonaka & Toyama, 2003; Nonaka et al., 2006). Knowledge is justified and socially accepted ideas that lie on the tacit-explicit continuum (Hautala, 2015). *Tacit knowledge* is difficult to formalized and articulate. All knowledge has a certain tacit component to it. On the other hand, *explicit knowledge* can be easily articulated and transferred between individuals. The first stage of the SECI model is *socialization* which describes the sharing of tacit knowledge between individual through social interactions such as an apprenticeship. The second stage named *externalization* involves the articulation of the tacit knowledge and conversion of tacit it into explicit knowledge through metaphors. *Combination*, the third stage of this process, stresses combining explicit knowledge of different team members to produce high-level explicit knowledge. The last stage, *internalization* pertains to embodying and assimilating the explicit knowledge obtained from different sources into internal tacit knowledge. Therefore in this knowledge conversion process, an individual's knowledge is validated, assimilated and synthesized with other's knowledge to create a new form of knowledge (Nonaka et al., 2006). To conclude, the process of knowledge creation starts with socialization which means that new tacit knowledge is created through daily social interactions and sharing of experience between individuals. Hence, social capital plays a central part in the creation of knowledge since it is the starting point of knowledge creation.

Role of social capital in knowledge creation

Due to the complex and rapidly changing environment, many organizations are now employing a team-based approach for innovation and knowledge creation. These teams produce knowledge by integrating the diverse knowledge of their members. Gardner et al. (2012) describe knowledge integration capabilities as "a reliable pattern of team communication that generates joint contributions to the understanding of complex problems" (p. 999). The organization's members create a new form of knowledge through dialogue and practice (Bashir, 2015). Interaction between knowledge workers is key for converting new ideas into concrete results (Hautala, 2015). Effective communication between members of a knowledge teams helps in developing trans-active memory within the team (Lewis, 2004). The diversity of experience and knowledge of the team member leads to a shared knowledge system which can be used to learn, store and retrieve knowledge. Such communication increases the team's productivity and

resulting in superior knowledge creation. In such teams, open debate, challenging other's opinion and expressing doubts are important (Stephens & Carmeli, 2016).

In addition to trans-active memory, information pooling and functional diversity of team members also enhance the knowledge integration and creation capabilities of the team (Gardner, et al., 2012). These collaborative teams provide social capital which is an important ingredient for knowledge creation. According to Wang (2016), both direct and indirect ties are crucial for creating new knowledge. Strong ties between members in the teams allow for collective action, better communication, and mobilization and access to resources. On the other hand, weak ties also contribute to the creation of novel forms of knowledge by bridging structural holes and providing access to a newer form of knowledge and resources (Tu, 2020). The structural hole is a cornerstone in social capital theory. A structural hole describes the extent to which different partners in a network are disconnected. These non-related partners become a source of non-redundant knowledge (Liao & Phan, 2016). In other words, they exhibit the characteristic of requisite variety and redundancy which are essential for the creation of knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). The theory of information pooling proposes that when people with different expertise and experience work together, new knowledge is created through cross-fertilization of ideas. Besides, diversity in the experience, skill-set and expertise of the members help in overcoming decision making biases and group-think (Stephens & Carmeli, 2016).

Another distinguishing characteristic between Japanese and Western Knowledge Management scholar is the concept of *ba*. Ba, roughly translated as space, provides a shared space for emerging relationship and the creation of knowledge (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). This is aligned with the Nonaka conception of knowledge as contextualized, situated, and socially created (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). If knowledge is removed from ba (context), only information is left. Ba presents a transcendental platform for advancing individual and collective knowledge. Ba is not limited to physical space, but it may also include virtual and mental platforms (Nonaka et al., 2006). Different types of ba are suitable for the knowledge conversion process. For example, *originating ba* provides a platform for face-to-face interaction and it is supported for socialization. *Interacting ba* is appropriate for externalization; whereas *cyber ba* is suitable for externalization. Lastly, *exercising ba* facilitate internalization through training or learning by doing. Therefore, the ba provides a space for knowledge sharing, and it fosters communication and trust between organizational members.

Participative practices in this shared space can encourage sharing of knowledge between knowledge workers which may lead to a new form of knowledge (Nakano et al., 2013). Interaction between knowledge workers fosters new knowledge creation for "messages mediated through interaction are interpreted into knowledge" (Hautala, 2015, p. 351). Collaboration and interaction between different actors help in creating new knowledge because knowledge is shared and transferred between different networks in this social process (Al-Omoush et al., 2020). Collaboration between expertise with diverse knowledge and resources fosters cross-fertilization of ideas (Tu, 2020) and creates new knowledge (Mcfadyen & Cannella, 2004).

In this mutual interaction, trust plays an important role. The concept of bonding social capital informs us that closure networks intensify social capital by developing trust and reciprocity (Tu,

103

2020) which in turn supports knowledge creation. Trust enables the knowledge worker to seek advice from their colleagues without any fear of condemnation (Weerakoon et al, 2020). Trust facilitates exchanges of knowledge as members may openly discuss their problems (Akhavan & Hosseini, 2016). It also minimizes fear of any opportunistic behavior from their peers because trust between two parties is shaped by, integrity, benevolence, ability (Becerra, Lunnan, & Huemer, 2008). Cross-cultural differences or conflicts between different actors in the knowledge network can impede the knowledge creation process (Adomako et al., 2019). But, a relationship of trust and understanding is beneficial in overcoming these obstacles.

Small and medium enterprises are characterized by small size, small scope of operation and limited resources. These organizations can't create knowledge on their level. They are required to engage in open innovation that assimilates internal and external knowledge resources to create new forms of knowledge (Veiga et al., 2021). SMEs may overcome their knowledge resource limitation by complimenting their internal knowledge with public knowledge (Mirkovski, Von Briel, & Lowry, 2016). A notable example of this approach is Spinner Innovation Model (SIM), proposed by Figueiredo and de Matos Ferreira (2020), which focuses on the interaction between knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and innovation supported by the public and private knowledge. Knowledge workers in a knowledge-intensive firm consult with their peers and colleagues outside their organization to share knowledge. Moreover, social capital and interaction with external actors facilitate SMEs to sense market imperfections between the corrective actions required to satisfy their customers (Al-Omoush et al., 2020). Therefore, social capital has an important consideration of inter-organization collaboration (Tu, 2020).

RESEARCH DESIGN
Research Methodology
The philosophical lens of this research is constructionism that removes objectivism as the dominant paradigm (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism views knowledge as a subjective meaning of an individual's experiences and practices from the interaction between individuals and their world transmitted within the social context. (Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Neuman, 2007). The question of social ontology is related to the nature of social entities introducing as objective entities exhibiting external reality or social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As this study aims at exploring the individual's experiences and practices within advertising firms and their subjective drives to produce creative & quality-able relationships, thus, the ontology of this study is relativism whereas the epistemology of this study is subjectivism (Scotland, 2012). Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term with multiple methodologies including ethnography, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study. The selected methodology of the underlying study is phenomenology where the central character is the experience itself and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness (lived experience) as there is a possibility that theoretical patterns and pre-existing knowledge have blocked the deep and unique understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As the prime focus of this study is to explore the lived experiences of advertising agency owners and their process of knowledge creation, phenomenology found the most appropriate methodology. Phenomenology as the

methodology is least applied in the field of organizational sciences despite its power to predict and understand human behaviors and experiences (Gill, 2014) and no such inquiry is found in the area of knowledge-creating advertising firms with phenomenological methodology hence this inquiry will fill the methodological gap in this field. The sampling technique for underlying phenomenological inquiry is purposive sampling, the most important kind of non-probability sampling (Groenewald, 2004). Advertising knowledge workers were chosen as informants for this study having experience of 8-25 years in the same field.

Sample Size

The debate of sample size in qualitative research is directly related to concept data saturation developed originally for grounded theory studies and equally applicable to all qualitative research methodologies. It employs continuous interviews until the data arrives at the point of diminishing return (Marshall et al., 2013; Morse, 1995). There is no precise answer to the question of the sample size in phenomenological inquiry as partly depends on several factors e.g. the degree of commitment to the case study level of analysis, the richness of the individual cases, and the constraints one is operating under circumstances and availability of representative informants (Smith, 2006). Creswell (2017) suggested 3 to 15 informants whereas Morse (1995) suggested at least six informants for phenomenological inquiry and a recent study suggested a sample size of 12 for a relatively homogeneous population (Boddy, 2016). Adequate sampling size determination for theoretical saturation is a matter of judgment while ensuring the quality of the information and theoretical saturation (Mason, 2010; Sandelowski, 1995) thus 8 informants (Boddy, 2016) were interviewed and repetitive emerging themes validate the theoretical saturation. Semi-structured interviews with an open-ended questionnaire were conducted in natural settings to encourage the wave of conversation between the knowledge workers (informants) and researchers.

Data Collection

For data collection purposes, face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Goulding, 2005) were conducted in English, Urdu and Punjabi languages depending upon the convenience of the informants which were later translated and transcribed for data analysis purposes. An interview manual was prepared to explore and describe this phenomenon. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed for data analysis purposes. Field notes were also formed for conceptual clarity and authenticity purposes. Informants were not comfortable with disclosing their identity and names of advertising firms and their comfort was honored thus the identity of informants is not disclosed and they were also given the option to withdraw from the study at any time. To confirm the trustworthiness and dependability of transcribed data, the transcriptions were shared and discussed with informants. Attempt was made to ensure that the transcriptions reflect the informant's accounts as they perceived and described during their interviews (Morse, 1995). Though for phenomenological inquiry Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is the most frequently used approach for data analysis where joint reflections of both informants and researchers analytic account produced codes (Smith, 2006), It also assumes that people are knowledgeable agents that can explain and construct their thoughts, intentions and action found very much aligned with the philosophical realm of this inquiry. For the underlying study, the

105

authors have adopted the descriptive nature of phenomenology as aligned with study research questions and objectives. The task of the phenomenological authors of this study is the descriptive investigation of the contents of the knowledge creation process (phenomenon).

Results and Discussion

The demographical profile of informants **(Table-1)** depicts that 8 informants were interviewed. All informants are acting as active participants and face to face interviews were conducted. All informants were male and acting as key major C-level designations in advertising firms. The age brackets of 8 informants were between 30-60 years. Their active and passive role in advertising firms were also considered because an active person can only convey better ideas about the knowledge creation process as per the existing scenario of the business knowledge world. 8 informants were interviewed at their workplaces by taking proper appointment time on the telephone and visited their places for an interview with a semi-structured interview protocol.

Table-1: Demographic Profile of Informants (n=8)

Informants	Gender	Age Bracket	Participation in Business	Years of Experience
$Infor_1$	Male	30-40	Active	10
$Infor_2$	Male	30-40	Active	9
$Infor_3$	Male	30-40	Active	15
$Infor_4$	Male	30-60	Active	10
$Infor_5$	Male	30-40	Active	15
$Infor_6$	Male	30-40	Active	9
$Infor_7$	Male	30-60	Active	10
$Infor_8$	Male	30-40	Active	25

Source: - Authors figure on the base of Informants iterative responses

The demographical analysis **(Table-1)** is considered important because it specifies the context of study through demographical indicators such as years of experience matters informants' way of thinking and describing its process of knowledge creation over the years same as their level of participation in business is also very important. Their active participation has significance importance in describing and observing knowledge flow in advertising firms.

The transcriptions of all interviews were carefully analyzed and emerging categories were located. All eight of the informant's interviews were analyzed with two basic objectives. Firstly, during analysis, all important themes must be mentioned with the utmost care while focusing on no important theme is missing. The researchers analyzed the above 30 themes from each informant. Interviews then later divided into similar and dissimilar themes. This process addressed the account of phenomenological reduction. As an initial step, the emerging codes of all semi-structured interviews are shown in **Table-2** for each informant.

Table-2: Emerging categories of informants responses

Informants	Emerging categories	Informants	Emerging category
$Infor_1$	Role of communication Mutual-consensus in team members Sense-giving Encouraging-knowledge dissemination and creation Quality-oriented focus Critically review each other work for refinement Unpredictable work volume Role of decision making Sharing culture Informal interactions Client satisfaction Internal marketing Stress Difficult to balance work & family life Haphazard series of deadlines Exploitation of employee rights Exhausted working hours Physical and mental health issues	$Infor_2$ $Infor_4$	Role of communication Mutual-cooperation with clients Internal marketing Client satisfaction Brainstorming Locating target audience Role of budgeting (financial aspects) Motivation engages workers Creativity comes from chaos Sense-making (giving) idea matters Dialectical way of interaction urges spiral of new knowledge Demanding audience Advertising as mutual process of learning Creativity (out of the box thinking) Uniqueness is creativity Game of patience and dealing politely
$Infor_3$	Role of communication Mutual-cooperation with clients Internal marketing Client satisfaction Brainstorming Locating target audience Role of budgeting (financial aspects) Motivation engages workers Creativity comes from chaos Sense-making (giving) idea matters Dialectical way of interaction urges spiral of new knowledge		Skills of designing & creativity Good amount of resources & experience Specialized in creating quality ads Collaborative work environment Quality focused work Skills and talent of team members Knowledge of graphic designing Centralized & decentralized decision-making Building trust

107

Infor$_5$

Dialectical way of interaction urges spiral of new knowledge
Role of e-networking in ideas refining
Sharing culture
Flexible work hours
Demanding audience
Advertising as a mutual process of learning
Creativity (out of the box thinking)
Uniqueness is creativity
Game of patience and dealing politely
Saves business time and resources
Creating brand awareness
Building brand equity
Aims towards increasing bottom line (revenues) for its clients
Collaboration and team work
Creative skills of team members

Infor$_6$

Uniqueness drives creativity
Agents of creativity
Quality focus
Social change
Demanding target audience
Thoughts & behavior impacts on product
Role of budgeting
Focusing societal values
Educate people toward positivity
Idea perceiving from society
Informal interactions
Role of Communication
Strong interpersonal skills
Role of language

Infor$_8$

Infor$_7$

Social change
Production as scattered work
Demanded high creativity
Professionally exchanging knowledge
Idea conceiving as continuous process
Creativity generates in chaos
Societal injustice
Pre-planning process production
Creativity drives audience mystery
 Quality focus relationship
Strength of relationship require
Important time factor

Role of tacit knowledge
Importance of experience
Demanded Target audience
Role of communication
Creativity is an art
Social change negatively impacts on behavior
Passion, devotion and commitment drives creativity

At that phase, the researcher compared each theme with all informants for similar and dissimilar themes. In the dimension (box) of creative advertising firms, 31 themes were found similar among all eight informants. Likewise, 19 themes were found dissimilar or different for each informant. The detail list of similar, dissimilar and total emerging themes of all informants is given (exhibited) in **Table-3**

Table-3: Phenomenology of horizontalization details

Similarities among categories	Dissimilarities among categories
1.Relational focus	1.Rapid increase in media houses
2.Role of Communication	2.Indian drama industry damages audience
2. Sense-giving	3.Cognitive
3.Mutual- consensus	4.Structural
4. Trust	5.Encouraging-knowledge dissemination and creation
5.Quality-oriented focus	
6.Collaborative work environment	6.Exploitation of employee rights
7.Critical review at each stage	7.Difficult to balance work & family life
8.Less role of number of relationship	8. Conflicts as a tool to up bringing novelty
9. Sharing Culture	9.Complex thought process while creating winning media strategy
10.Social change	
11.Client Satisfaction	10.Game of patience and dealing politely
12.Tight & haphazard deadlines	11.Less-significant overtime rates
13. Role of decision Making	12.Threat of competitors
14. Focus on Innovation	13.Educate people toward positivity
15.Physical & mental health issues	14.Idea perceiving from society
16. Internal marketing	15.Negative role of technology (social media)
17. Brainstorming	16.Society Influential mindset
18.Role of budgeting	17.Viewers priorities changed
19. Locating & targeting right Audience	18.Over-exposure of audience
20. Role of E-networking	19. Structural
21. Creativity comes from chaos	
22. Flexible work hours	
23. Informal Interactions	
24.Over-exposure of clients	
25.Decentralized Leadership	
26.Physical & mental health issues	
27. Stress	
28. No role of number of relationships	
29.Strength of relationship	
30. Motivation	
31.Uniqueness is creativity	

109

After highlighting the emerging similar and dissimilar themes from the interviews of eight informants, the next step is the application of phenomenological data reduction in which authors compare similar and dissimilar themes with literature review. Afterwards, researchers reduced and separated the themes in the defined categories of social capital in terms of cognitive, structural and relational dimensions, and then related the experienced insides of eight informants with them. The themes were grouped and counted into the aforementioned codes with frequencies for the step of phenomenological reduction mentioned in **Table-4.**

Table-4: Phenomenological reduction: advertising & production firms category

Categories	Themes	N
Cognitive	1. Sense-giving 2. Role of language 3. Importance of experience 4. High expectation 5. Imaginative skills 6. Stress 7. Society Influential mindset 8. Creativity as an art	19
Structural	1. Innovation as a core focus 2. Encouraging-knowledge dissemination 3. Brainstorming 4. Client satisfaction 5. Societal injustice 6. Pre-planning process production 7. Professionally exchanging knowledge 8. Social change 9. Competitors as their clients 10. Staff members hide important related information from others 11. Quality is compromised in tight deadlines 12. Efficiency requires fewer resources	16
Relational	1. Trust 2. Commitment 3. Role of Communication 4. Informal interactions 5. Strength of relationship requires 6. Quality focus 7. Strong interpersonal skills 8. Collaboration and teamwork 9. Collaborative work environment 10. Sharing culture 11. Free-will 12. Flexible work hours 13. Mutual-cooperation with clients 14. Internal marketing 15. Role of social capital in creating harmony 16. Creativity as an art	23

Source: Author's figure coding for Phenomenological reduction

Knowledge creation refers to a series of transformation in which standard resources available in the market are used and integrated within the organizations for the creation of new spirals of knowledge. The process of knowledge creation occurs through communication, informal

interactions, direct and indirect ties, sharing culture, mutual consensus, trust, commitment, teamwork, brainstorming and dialectical ways of interaction within the organization. In the whole process of knowledge creation, social capital plays a vital & invariant role. The invariant role of social capital is grounded upon the three levels of dimensions i.e. cognitive, structural and relational (Nahapiet & Goshal, 1998). The central purpose of these three dimensions is to create the new spirals of knowledge in organizations but the process of creation is variant. The structural dimension supports innovation as an outcome of knowledge creation. In this dimension, social capital is embedded in the formal structures of ties in the social network. This aspect focuses on the creation of knowledge through formal and structured relationships among individuals. Formal ties between team members also promote innovation as it also better information sharing between team members (Bunderson and Boumgarden, 2010). As reported by informants in their interviews, *"E-networking as a source of formal interactions among team members, procedural/formal brainstorming sessions, meetings and strength of network ties, professionally exchanging information all are the requisite sources of knowledge creation that captures both linkage and strength of relationships formally"*. Thus, on the base of the informant's collective experiences with the support of the literature review structural social capital captures the structure of non-personal relations in the organizations (Hautala, 2015). The central aim of the knowledge creation process in the structural dimension is innovation.
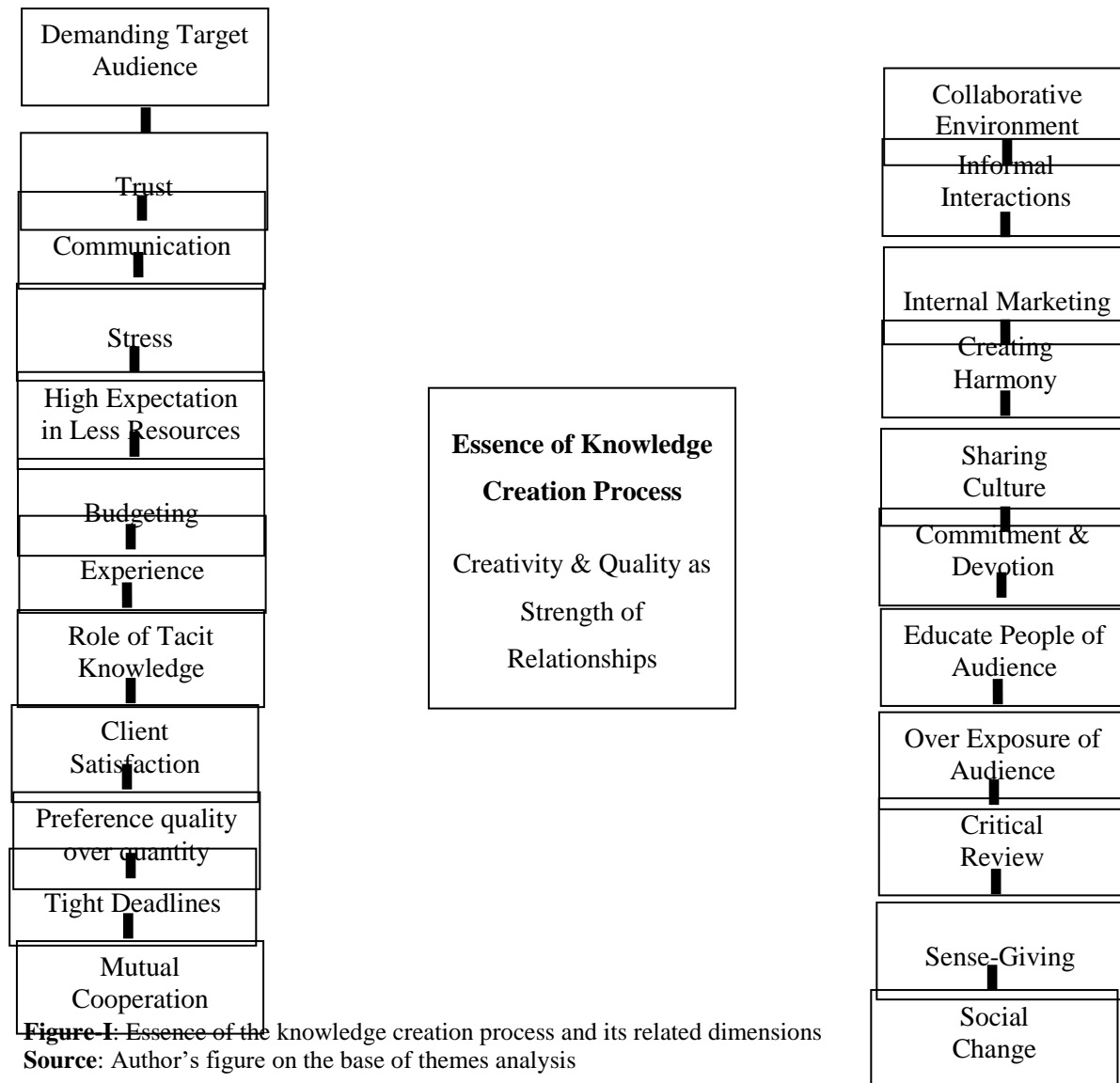
The second dimension of social capital is cognitive in which knowledge creates through the use of common language and understanding. This common language supports to appreciate of other's knowledge and expertise (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Narratives and shared language increase the absorptive capacity which enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of firm performance in the knowledge network (Borgatte & Cron, 2003). As informants described in their interviews *"the role of tacit knowledge, language and experience influence the process of knowledge creation"*. People perceived reality based upon their mental schemas and then they interpret it in multiple ways. Several interpretations when relating with each other than common understanding develops among individuals. Language plays a central role during these interpretations. Informants stated, *"That everyone has its school of thought which strongly influence their behaviour that ultimately supports to form product (in terms of adz and dramas)"*. Informants identified these aspects in form of imaginative skills, experience, stress, society influential mindset and sense giving aspects. The cognitivist perspective of social capital in the way that knowledge creation as an efficient procedure to process, interpret and respond to explicit nature of information.

Relational perspective is described as a type of personal relationships people have developed with each other through a series of interactions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Such practice based perspective of organizing emphasizes informal coordination in an uncertain and distributed experience situation (Ben-Menahem et al., 2016). This aspect of the relationship focuses the informal interactions, the role of trust, and reciprocity in the formation of the unique tie of the relationship among individuals. All the eight informants have emphasized the importance of trust, cooperation, informal interactions, commitment, and personal interest, mutual collaboration with clients, internal marketing, sharing culture, participative leadership and flexible informal communication are the invariant drivers of the knowledge creation process especially in creative

111

advertising firms. Thus, *"the core element of advertising revolves around the uniqueness (creative) perspective and creativity may come from chaos (informal ways)"*. Within this relational aspect, trust between knowledge workers plays an important role. Trust causes knowledge workers to engage in risk taking behaviors associated with knowledge sharing (Sankowska, 2013).

In light of the above detail thematic explanation and the vast literature and theoretical support; it depicts that the knowledge creation process flourishes and nurtures more effectively under the relational dimension of social capital. Since creativity relates to informal interactions and chaos, when people interact socially with each other then they give sense to the phenomenon in multiple ways which nurtures the waves of the knowledge creation process. Thus, the whole thematic description (findings) and the essence of knowledge creation (phenomenon) is exhibited in **Figure-I**. The phenomenology as research methodology was adopted to reach at the essence (Cresswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) of phenomenon. It is inferred that creativity and quality as strength of relationships is the essence of knowledge creation process. It depicts that the knowledge creation process flourishes and nurtures more effectively under the relational dimension of social capital.

Figure-I: Essence of the knowledge creation process and its related dimensions
Source: Author's figure on the base of themes analysis

From the above phenomenological reduction, the following themes pertain to different activities of the knowledge creation process.

Knowledge Acquisition
1. Experience
2. Brainstorming

Knowledge Sharing
1. Trust
2. Mutual Cooperation
3. Informal Interactions

113

4. Role of Tacit Knowledge
5. Sharing Culture

Knowledge dissemination
1. Communication
2. Collaborative Environment
3. Internal Marketing
4. Creating Harmony
5. Sense-Giving

Knowledge Transformation
1. Uniqueness is creativity

Knowledge Acquire:-In this stage, knowledge is acquired by other sources. Tacit knowledge is perceived from surroundings then discussed with clients, writers (drama production), and team members tentatively. Organization conceives & perceives idea on the base of tacit knowledge. It's an idea-generating stage at the initial level.

Knowledge Sharing: - At this point, knowledge sharing is converted into explicit knowledge by constructing new concepts. Linking your thoughts with previous acquiring sources of knowledge & then refines it in the form of shaping new concepts.

Knowledge Exchange: - At that phase, tacit knowledge is discussed with individuals through interactions, exchanging ideas. It's a dialogical way of interaction in which explicit knowledge is formed & justifying concepts.

Knowledge Dissemination*: -* At this level, the role of technology involves in which collective consensus-based tacit knowledge is transferred into a TV advertisement form.

Knowledge Transform: - At this phase, time to execute the full cake. The message is conveyed to the target audience by finally executed TV ads at media. An idea transforms explicitly into an explicit form.
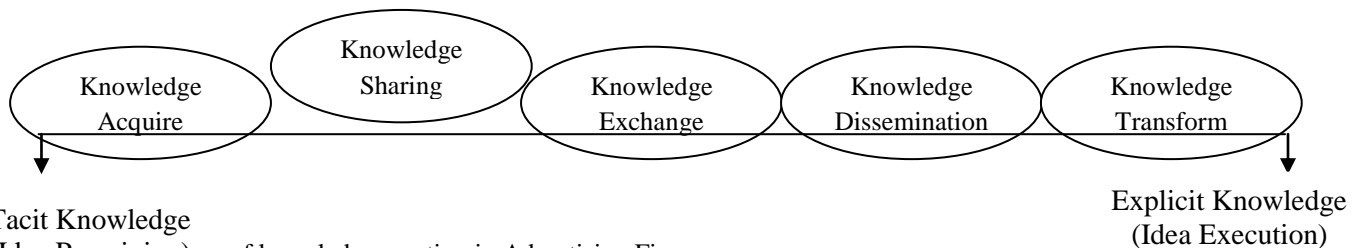
Tacit Knowledge
(Idea Perceiving)   of knowledge creation in Advertising Firms
Source: - Authors figure on the base of informant's response

Proposed Application of the SECI Model in the Context of Creative (advertising) Firm's
On the base of these two dimensions, Nonaka presents a SECI model in which four processes of knowledge creation were described. The purpose of this study is to address the knowledge

creation process in creative advertising firms, in terms of the above described Nonaka two dimensions. Therefore, this study relates the SECI model with the creative firm knowledge creation process because here knowledge is created and transferred through the tacit and explicit form.

Socialization (Tacit > Tacit) • Discussions (Face-Face) • Dialectical way of interactions • E-networking	Externalization (Tacit > Explicit) • Documents • Proposals • Scripts
Internalization (Explicit > Tacit) • Databases/ organizational memory • Collective knowledge networks	Combination (Explicit > Explicit) • Execute TV ads • Social media

Figure III: The four processes of Knowledge creation/conversion (Advertising Firms)
Source: Author's figure in the context of informant's interview

Socialization: Tacit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge during discussion sessions & meetings etc. When the idea is conceived from chaos (somewhere) then it discusses among each other through brainstorming sessions, dialectical way of interaction, meetings, debate form, e-networking and group discussions virtually etc. Multiple ways are adopted to refine tacit knowledge (idea) among each other through discussing knowledge workers & share their insides.

Externalization: Tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge and outlined in documents, manuals etc. When consensus is established through discussion (transferring tacit to tacit) then collective consensus-based tacit knowledge is converted into explicit form and outlined as proposal, manuals, script and documents form etc.

Combination: Explicit knowledge is converted into another form of explicit knowledge. When collective knowledge is transferred or converted into explicit form then the idea execution stage will come. At that stage, firms started working on previously consensus-based explicit work (idea documented form) to convert into final execution TV commercial in which the whole explicit knowledge display in front of the audience at final presentable explicit form as an outcome.

Internalization: Explicit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge by individuals. In this phase, the final explicit knowledge (TV commercial executed) is converted into the tacit form of knowledge for the firm and the individual both. Because at that stage is stored in the memory or database of creative firms and become a memory

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to explore the process of knowledge creation in the advertising agencies of Pakistan. More specifically, it focuses on the role of social capital in supporting the knowledge creation process in the said context. However, unlike most of the previous studies that focused

115

on the role of social capital in producing individual knowledge, this paper adopted a micro-level unit of analysis to study how advertising firms leverage social capital in creating organizational knowledge. For this purpose, a qualitative study was undertaken and eight informants of different creative (advertising) firms were interviewed. Phenomenology was adopted as a complete research methodology to capture the essence of the phenomenon. Emerging themes and sub-themes were analyzed by transcribing the informant views. Findings of the study reveal that collaborative work environment, mutual consensus, informal interactions, motivation, self-respect, sharing culture, social change, client satisfaction and many other factors drive the knowledge creation process in advertising agencies. This highlighted that advertising firms are knowledge-intensive sectors where social relationship drives innovation and creativity.

Future Directions

This study is limited to advertising and production firms in Pakistan. Future studies may explore the knowledge creation process in other sectors. The scope of this study is limited to the phenomenon of the knowledge creation process through social capital. This scope can be broadened. The knowledge creation process has been studied extensively in various researches with a multi-dimensional unit of analysis. Similarly, this phenomenon can be studied in collaboration with other concepts such as the role of leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), network ties, internal marketing and co-creation etc. Different cultural and sub-culture determinants may also be considered. For example, future studies may focus on the role of gender. The fruitfulness of the knowledge creation process may be linked with the financial measure of profitability. Future study may use a quantitative research approach to test the models based on the themes highlighted in this paper.

Research Implications

This paper has importance for both academics and practitioners alike. The social capital theory has interesting implications for knowledge creation and it has been demonstrated how social capital enables a firm to create knowledge at the organizational level. Managers must look organization beyond the conventional information processing approach and view organizations as social communities which actively creates and shares knowledge. Managers should foster a productive relationship between employees and use network relationships as a mean for generating new forms of knowledge.

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119

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