A critical review of brainstorming considering creativity models

Reza Sepahvand, and Heshmatollah Sadeghi*

*Corresponding author E-mail: hhsadeghi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Corporations often conduct brainstorming sessions for finding creative solutions and new quirky ideas to deal with their problems to stay and prosper in the current hyper-competitive and dynamic global market. Moreover, brainstorming as a creativity tool helps them come up with new undertakings to be more flexible and also grasp a vast opportunities in the marketplace. This paper, first, performs a brief review of creativity models in order to get the essence and core concepts of creativity. Then, with this review in mind, a critical analysis of brainstorming as a creativity tool is done in which its advantages as well as its shortcomings are discussed. Moreover, this analysis shows this tool has some shortcomings in topic clearance, incubation, and at the time of shaping new idea at potentiality state. On the other hand, this tool facilitates intersecting different frames of references, divergent thinking, rich communication and social need fulfillment of the participated members.

Key Words: Brainstorming, Creativity, Incubation, Insight, Knowledge, Thinking

Introduction

Organizations and their managers should pace accelerating changes in different aspects of the business world. Rapid changes in economical, social, legal, political, and technological environments bring more uncertainty and ambiguity. In addition, removing different trade barriers and improvement in communication technology and Internet facilitate competing globally. These conditions, on one hand, have imposed threats and intensified competitiveness among organizations. On the other hand, organizations especially small firms and entrepreneurs face a vast opportunities in different niches in the global market.

How can organizations respond to these challenges and grasp opportunities in the business environment? It is no doubt that creative and fresh business ideas can help them resolve these issues effectively. One important tool for generating creative ideas is brainstorming. Moreover, organizations usually hold brainstorming sessions in which participating members usually come from different functional units and hierarchical levels. Although this creativity tool can yield valuable new ideas, it has some shortcomings.

The aim of this article is reviewing brainstorming and pinpointing its advantages and defects based on creativity theory field. To do this, it is necessary to briefly explain the creativity and its process and models. Then, brainstorming as a creativity tool is analyzed based on the creativity concepts explained.

Materials and Methods

In this section, creativity, its models and key concepts are described and explained. Then, brainstorming is also described. These descriptions provide the materials needed in the next section for our discussion.

Creativity

Creativity has different definitions. It is “the ability to produce novel and useful ideas” (Robbins, 2002). According to Anthony LeSorti (2010), creativity equals to synthesis and creating new workable and on demand ideas. Otto Rank, Austrian psychologist, defines it as “assumptions-breaking process” (In Karpf, 1953).

Erica McWilliam (2008) describes two generations of thinking about creativity. The first generation views creativity as an attribute of exceptional individuals, and mysterious that likewise a flower needs a good environment to keep growing and survive. But, the second generation is about trying to optimize and enhance the potential creativity of people. To elaborate more, creative thinking is teachable, learnable and assessable as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2006) says it is “no longer a luxury for the few, but … a necessity for