Exploring the impact of control powers and agency philosophy on the creative identity: an exploratory case study on a Pakistani advertising agency

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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MSc in Global Brand Management programme

Griffith College Dublin

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Date of submission: 27th August 2020

Candidate Declaration

Candidate Name: Zeeshan Ahmed Tariq

I certify that the dissertation entitled: Exploring the impact of control powers and advertising agency philosophy on creative identity: an exploratory case study on a Pakistani advertising agency.

Submitted for the degree of: **MSc in International Business Management - Global Brand Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given.

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Acknowledgements & Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to few key individuals, who provided me motivation and strength in developing this study with significant depth. First, I would like to thank the Almighty GOD for blessing me with enough strength, intelligence, and dedication for pursuing this study. Moreover, I would like to appreciate the efforts of my parents for keeping faith in me.

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Abstract

Creative advertising is considered as vital ingredient for any advertising agency to sell their services. However, in any advertising agency, the creative department serve as a backbone for campaign or any marketing collateral development. Whereas, the client and account managers are also considered as the key factors in a service-oriented advertising business.

This study aims explore the impact of client's power, account manager's power and agency's philosophy over the creative identity of advertising professionals, working in a local Pakistani advertising agency. In the context of understanding the impact of each of these factors over the creative identity, the study sought to explore the experiences of these creatives through the lens of realism and interpretivist approach. For this purpose, a qualitative interview-based study had been conducted with ten creatives of a local Pakistani advertising agency, belonging to different functions. The research revealed that the client has the outmost authority over their marketing collateral, and they influence the operations of agency as account manager represent them, due to their monetary involvement. Whereas, the client's influences the creative identity in negative manner as through ambiguous or no feedback over an idea.

Likewise, the account manager also impacts in negative way due to their attitude towards creative and control over the agency. But on the other hand, agency's philosophy contributes positively towards the strengthening the creative identity of Pakistani creatives, working in this agency. Moreover, the unrealistic deadlines and Budget constraints are also mentioned as significant factors influencing their identities. This study suggests that creatives should have in person communication with client and account managers along with keeping a written record of conversations for smooth flow of creative process.

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1   Introduction

1.1   Overview

The proposed topic for author's dissertation is "**Exploring the impact of control powers and agency philosophy on creative identity: an exploratory study on a Pakistani advertising agency"**. The research highlights the perspective of a creative professional and how his creative identity is impacted upon by these critical factors, leading towards developing the creative output. The prospective research is be guided by an overarching research question which is '*to what extent does the client's power and the account manager's power along with agency philosophy, create an impact on the creative identity of a person'.*

The focus of this applied research was to highlight the issues related to developing a significant identity by creative professionals in a Pakistani based local advertisement agency. As visible from the literature, these issues comprise of internal agency conflict along with overarching power of client's demand (Devinney, Dowling and Collins, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2008; West, Kover and Caruana, 2008). Furthermore, the research also provided an insight into advertising agency philosophies and how they along with client power and account manager's power affect the creative process and control the desired outcomes from an individual from creative department (West and Ford, 2001; Devinney, Dowling and Collins, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2008)

Furthermore, the overall analysis from the secondary data reveals that there is a significant gap between the correlation of client power, account manager's power and the advertising agency's philosophy over the creative identity of a professional, working in the local Pakistani advertising agency. Likewise, the relevant significance of this research is reflective from the critical analysis of secondary data, which indicates that a study of such context has not been conducted in a Pakistani advertising agency.

1.1   Research Purpose

The purpose of considering this subject as the topic of interest is to analyse the experiences faced by creative individuals, while working on creative idea or campaign. This research holds an important perspective in the form of pinpointing key issues faced by Pakistani creative individuals and serve recommendations to smoothen the flow of work on marketing campaigns. Furthermore, the research was also valuable in

terms of highlighting additional issues of respective advertising creatives, which are not presented by secondary data.

Through the critical analysis of existing literature, it is evident that research of such a nature, especially in the context of Pakistani advertising agencies has not been conducted. This further highlights the need of such a study to be conducted. For instance, a report from HubSpot reflects that company leadership and lack of work satisfaction are the two significant factors producing low employee morale in advertising professionals (Cook, 2016). The respective research also indicates creative freedom as the significant factor, contributing towards positive employee morale. Furthermore, Digi day (2019) report also suggests that advertising agencies are governed by hustle cultures, which demand professionals to push themselves for a breaking point or reaching near to that point to seek internal reward. On the hand, it has also been argued that despite of advertising agencies act as rewarding places, they can act as a place of conflict for these for creative professionals in terms of negotiating their professional identity (Hackley and Kover, 2007).

1.2   Significance of the Study

The significant importance of this topic came into the light for the author after experiencing a job role as a creative associate in one of the largest advertising agencies of Pakistan. Fascinated with the creative ideas, the author started serving multiple clients with different marketing campaign needs. During the tenure, the author had developed numerous marketing campaigns, based on the respective clients' briefs. But in regard to developing the marketing collaterals, it had been observed by the author that there are significant levels or checkpoints, which are required before pitching the overall marketing campaigns to the desired target audience in advertising business. It was observed by the author that there are two significant forces, which guide the flow of a campaign and they function internally as well as externally. These factors are highlighted as client's power *(serving as an external factor)* and the account manager's influence, being an internal factor of an advertising agency, as they impact the overall creative output to be produced (Vanden Bergh, Smith and Wicks, 1986)

However, the author had also observed that the significant mindset of the advertising agency, contributes positively towards developing a good idea into marketing campaign. In the light of the observed phenomena, the author has analysed the literature and found that a creative individual working in advertising, develops a sense of identity, which lays

the foundation of their functionality (Glăveanu and Tanggaard, 2014). This identity has been referred to as the *creative identity*, and it is influenced by few factors in an advertising business. For instance, the disagreement and difficulties faced by creative professionals, serve as an important resource in formulation of their identity (Hackley and Kover 2007). So, in the light of these researches and the relevant significance of this subject, the author has laid the foundation of this research.

1.3   Research Objective

This study is guided by following research objectives:

1. To explore the impact of a client and an account manager's control power on the creative identity of a Pakistani creative professional
2. To analyse the impact of advertising agency philosophy on the creative identity of advertising professionals and on the creative process pursued by a Pakistani advertising agency
3. To determine relevant issues and recommend suggestions for smooth flow of creative output in a Pakistani advertising context.

Through this research, the author considered in presenting the actual experience and highlight the significant underlying situations, which serve the basis of contradictions for creative advertising professionals in terms of developing creative output. Furthermore, the author considered that in the light of these objectives and the respective significance of this study, the research will serve as a valuable addition in the academic circle for prospective employers and employees along with current working individuals as creatives in any capacity.

1.4   Structure of the Study

The respective study follows the sequential process of scientific research. Initially, the research seeks to present the topic in the light of significant background and with an aim to identify the need for the research topic. At the next step, the study outlines the research objectives aligned with secondary research gathered in the literature review. In the following step, a conceptual framework is driven from critically analysed literature, pertaining to the role of client, account manager and advertising agency philosophy on creativity identity is highlighted. At the next step, the author establishes the research philosophy and paradigm along with the significant methodologies, aligned with the nature of the study.

In the subsequent stage, the methodology for primary data collection along with its sampling techniques, ethical considerations and overall analysis strategy is outlined. Proceeding further, the author presented the key data findings and their interpretations along with logical conclusion. In the last stage, the author sought to present the overall limitations of the study and conclusion along with reasonable recommendations for smooth flow of creative process and resolving the significant issues relating to creative identity of an advertising professional.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Overview

This chapter covers the relevant academic literature pertaining to this study. The section comprises of a critical evaluation of the overall necessary concepts and theories aligned with creative identity, the client's role, advertising agency philosophy and an account manager's power on the advertising campaign process.

2.2   Creativity and Creative Personality

The concept of creativity has been a subject of debate in the academic circle. Throughout several years, the literary authors have not been able to provide a comprehensive definition for this concept. It is due to the complexity, prevailing in the nature of the term "*Creativity*". According to Eysenck (1993), the theoretical view and analysis for creativity is difficult to comprehend as it can be presented in two senses. The research elaborates that creativity dwells as a human characteristic (such as *Einstein, Picasso and etc*) and can also be viewed as the measure to analyse the product from an individual such as *Battle of Cannae, Mona Lisa*. However, on the contrary, it has also been argued that creativity is a subjective argument and varies depending upon an individual's judgment. Rodhes (1961) confirms its subjective nature and elaborates further creativity as a mental process, which cannot be considered in isolation. He further describes that the creative by-product from an individual can be impacted by social environment and respective need in any given context. Continuing it further, Amabile presented a notion that creativity for a person is an internal phenomena and thus carried by subsequent intrinsic motivation (Hamera,1986)

In this connection, the study of "*creative personality*" is also necessary. Maslow (1961) presents a view that creative individuals are considered as outspoken, expressive and daring beings. Whereas on the other hand, Freud (1995) argued that creative personnel face difficulties and tensions during their course of work. Similarly, few researches often argue that creative individuals are strongly associated with psychoticism. Eysenck (1985) suggests that being creative, egocentric and antisocial are the few of the underlying factors, which develop psychotic behaviour in a person. However, considering this vast literature, it can be deduced that creative personality and creativity are complex phenomenon.

2.3 Creative Identity

Amabile (2019) argues that a person's creative identity is developed based on three significant factors. She presents that social, historical, and cultural contexts are considered important in the context. Furthermore, she also proposed a componential model of creativity, which is guided by four critical factors shaping creativity. According to this model, there are three internal factors such as relevant domain-oriented skills (*technical skills and other aspects*), motivation for task and relevant process of creativity *such as the style of working, personality style and etc.* (Amabile and Pillemer, 2012). These factors influence the creative output from a person.
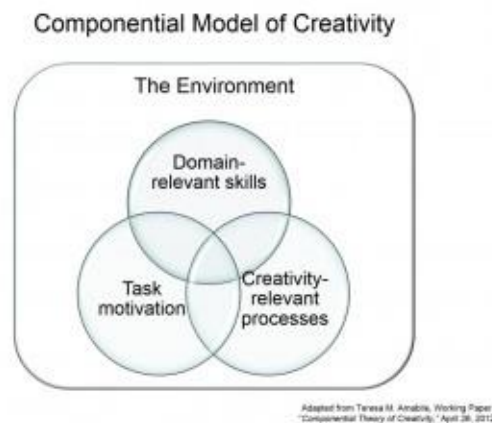
Table I: Componential Model of Creativity

However, as mentioned above the social context of the creative identity is also important as it resonates with social identity theory (1781), which states that self-concept of a person is formulated on basis of his or her belonging to a certain group, which may have psychological consequences. In this connection, Stryker and Burke (2000) suggested that social and cultural contexts are considered as the most important part through which individual's identity arise in a way. It also reflects to what extend does a person perceive its self-image and how others treat him/her. Whereas, the same research also suggest that identity can be developed on individual or collective basis. For instance, Glaveanu and Tanggard (2014) presented a view from their research that development of an identity is comprised of how a person interacts with its own self and others.

2.4 Creativity in Advertising

It is often argued that in the advertising world, the element of creativity is considered as an important factor. For instance, Till and Baack (2005) had conducted a research and found that there is a significant impact of creative advertising on brand recall, purchase intent and developing an attitude towards a brand. But on the contrary, the concept of

creativity in advertising is difficult to study as it varies and surpass any measurement means (Zinkhan, 1993). However, it is also argued that the element of creativity is required for lying the foundation of copywriting, visual design and development of overall marketing campaign (Zinkhan, 1994).

Similarly, the need for creativity for any advertising is considered as the deciding factor to sell their services to a potential client (West, Collins and Miciak, 2003). For instance Henke (1970) found through her study that client evaluates the creative potential as a deciding factor for the delivery and service from an advertising agency. Similarly, Jansen van Rensburg, Venter and Strydom (2010) argue that the agency is appointed by a potential advertiser on the basis of their creative ability. Whereas, Turnbull and Wheeler (2016) conducted a study and explored the other reasons for the advertiser's preference to seek services from a particular agency. The study suggests that clients seek services from an agency, which can fulfil their needs such as;

- Craft - the creative skill of the agency
- Affinity – Compatibility with agency in number of areas, especially developing a chemistry
- Functionality – The ability to carry out the overall marketing campaign.
- Perspective – The agency's capability to add value for the client.

The same study also suggested that agency's marketing communication drives the expectations of the potential client and proved as an essential benchmark to estimate the future services.

2.5   Advertising Professionals and Creative Identity

The advertising employees working in the creative department develop a sense of social identity, which is defined by their work role and respective position in the agency (McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley, 2011). However, on the contrary, Koslow, Sasser and Rioden (2003) argues that identity for these creatives are defined in terms of seeking original ideas for a marketing campaign. Furthermore, Powell (2007) argues that the identity of creative professionals in the advertising agency is directly associated with the work produced or the overall process. Furthermore, the same research also suggest that their work serve as motivation for them.

Furthermore, Hackley and Kover (2007) conducted a research and found that advertising agencies serve as a place of dispute and uncertainty. However, the same research also suggests the workplaces for creatives help in terms of possible achievement. Whereas, on the other hand, Sasser and Koslow (2008) present that the

creative individuals are different from others and their behaviour along with significant experiences develops their personality.

However, on the other hand, West, Kover and Caurana (2008) argues that the advertising professionals tend to push themselves to the respective boundaries of their definition for being creative with a focus to be effective and building connection with their targeted viewers. However, Sasser and Koslow (2012) argues that expertise, knowledge along with internal passion act as significant ingredients required for the creative professionals. So, the overall analysis reflects to the point that the understanding of critical factors in an advertising agency, impacting the creative identity of advertising professionals is essential.

2.6   Social systems in an advertising agency and creative processes

In the advertising industry, the work is selected based on the overarching powers acting inside and outside. Ang, Lee and Leong (2007) presented a study and suggested that creative work is accepted based on complex negotiation from internal and external forces. It has also been argued that relevance and acceptance of a work will be considered if it resonates with required marketing objectives from client (Hackley, 1998). However, relating with the philosophies and creative processes, the distribution of power in advertising business are also complex phenomena. For instance, Ghaffari, Hackley and Lee (2019) presented that there are three powers namely *persuasive, knowledge and control power*, which exist in the advertising world. The article also explores that control power refers to client's veto power and it is dominant to the other existing powers. This also highlights that while being a service-oriented business, the advertising agency is subject to client's approval.

Furthermore, Turnbull and Wheeler (2017) conducted a study and found that out of three dominant factors for creative judgement. The study presented that two of these factors, are the client and the agency itself. In this connection, Bergh and Stuhlfaut (2006) provided a better explanation for the systematic theory of creativity by proposing a model, adaptable to the advertising agencies. The study classifies three consistent fields in social systems acting in practice to develop a creative process:

1. Creators – referred as the copywriters or art directors
2. Field – referred as creative directors, clients, account manager or agency management
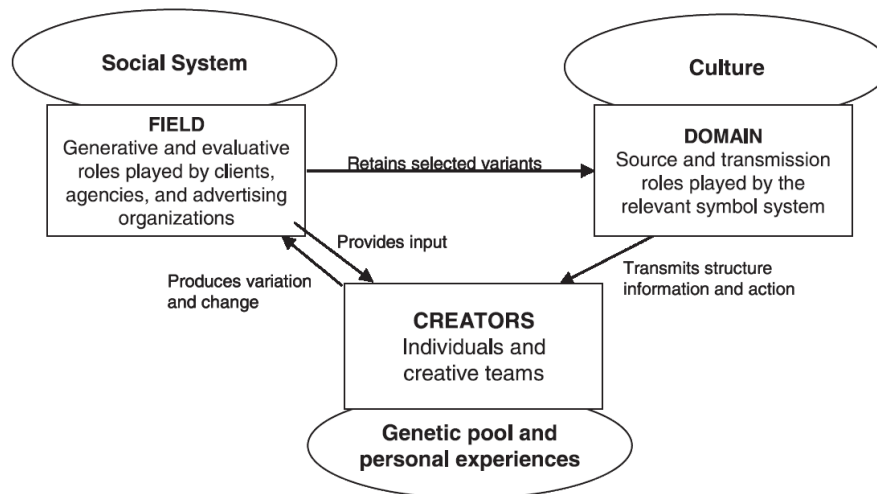3. Domain – signified as the relevant culture

Table II: Social systems model of creative process

The study also suggests that these creators develop a creative concept, which is subject to approval from client and agency management, acting as Field (Bergh and Stuhlfaut, 2006). It is also argued by the research that advertising ideas are not deemed creative until evaluated by creative directors, clients, account managers and eventually the respective target audience.

Whereas, the advertising system and the overall social context does not create any hinderance for advertising professionals, but these processes tend to motivate them to develop more creative, exciting and ambitious work. (Roca *et al.*, 2017). In this connection, it is also argued that formulating more creative alternatives, significantly increases the chance of developing the most effective marketing campaign strategy (Vanden Bergh, Reid and Schorin, 1983). On the contrary, the creative companies are dependent heavily on their employees and the respective processes, which defines their reputation among the clients (Powell, 2007).

2.7 Importance of client in advertising business

The client for an advertising agency holds a great significance. The respective clients have a significant influence over the idea to be selected and they consider low risky campaigns (El-Murad and West, 2004). However, on the contrary, client's willingness to experiment and attempt new ideas are the underlying reasons for forming best creative methods (Sasser and Koslow, 2012). Similarly, awards received are considered important in advertising business as they highlight the exemplary work produced and serve as a mean for client attraction (Kilgour, Sasser and Koslow, 2013). Moreover, the clients use creative identity as a measure to analyse the work styles and correspond to the client and agency relationship (Gotsi *et al.*, 2010). On the contrary,

there is a sense of psychological tension exists between creative artists and commercial obligations required for any campaign (Taylor and Littleton, 2008).

Moreover, Murad and West (2003) argues that clients show a significant amount of reluctancy in terms of accepting novel ideas or creative campaign, which shape the creatives attitude towards risk taking. Furthermore, Sharma (1997) argues that professional exchanges between businesses under agency theory gives excessive power to clients, in terms of design and enforcing contractual agreements.

A further evidence for the overarching power of client is visible from a study conducted by Devinney, Dowling and Collins (2005). The study indicates that there is a difference in judgement of creativity associated with ideas and the biggest conflict arises, when the client demands changes in the creative deliverables from the advertising agency.

2.8 Role of account manager in advertising agency

In an ideal structure of an advertising agency, creative department is considered responsible for the crafting the advertising message, including being specialized in art direction and copywriting (Yeshin, 2006). Despite of such importance, the creative is often overshadowed by account services. The account department is the business generating function as it deals with clients and marketing briefs. However, there are several disputes arises between these functions. For instance, Bergh, Smith and Wicks (1986) suggests that there is a substantial dispute prevails between the two departments due to different views of being generalists (account management) and specialists (creative services).

However, Gregorio, Cheong and Kim (2012) proposed that dispute between the departments of an agency result in the form of constructive or destructive conflict, which shape the output of the respective agency. The study highlights that internal volatility, centralization, formalization, and psychological distance corresponding positively towards destructive conflict. But the team spirit act in the inverse relation.

Furthermore, the agency theory presents that a potential agency is taken on board and compensated on the delivery of desired outcomes of the respective principal (clients). Davies and Prince (2010) confirmed this phenomenon and argued that despite of valuable importance of account manager's or directors, they tend to overstate or over-promise for hiring a new client. So, it can be argued as account manager manages to create a direct impact over the creative department and may lead the basis of the conflict between these two parties. Another factor evident from literature is that

advertising planning and development is no longer considered in Isolation. In this regard, Grant and McLeod (2007) argued that there are several parties such as account managers, media planners, creatives are involved in development of creative campaign from an agency by acting as network relationships. The same research also suggests that there is a sense of conflict and trust may arise during any advertisement development.

However, there is another challenge presented by the account managers for the creative development, which derives conflict. For instance, Bennett and Kottasz (2006) argues that customer expectations, under the expectation theory, can be classified broadly into six categories such as fuzz, implicit or unrealistic expectations. Considering the advertising business in this regard, it has been observed that clients have unclear understanding of their requirements from the agency (Turnbull and Wheeler, 2016). This refers to the point that creative advertising professionals are left on their own to seek answers from the client's brief and resonates to the problem of this study. It can also be argued that the creatives would have faced with pressure from account services to provide the accurate campaign in allotted timeline.

Another source of conflict between creative and account services is the relevant perspective towards the idea generation. For instance, Berg and Stuhlfaut (2006) presented that account executives consider ideas are driven by marketing strategies and market research. Whereas, the creative professionals pursue free flowing state for idea generation. This refers to the point that creatives often face the debate to consider the artistic or commercial value of their campaign (Taylor and Littleton, 2008). This further strengthens the need for the research on this subject matter and analysing how account manager's influence towards the developing of creative identity.

2.9   Advertising agency, its philosophy and creative process

The advertising agency philosophies can have significant on the overall output being delivered to the client. For instance, West and Ford (2001) agreed with the notion and presented two philosophies, namely *Rational* and *Emotional.* The rational philosophy seeks to hold a variety of scientific approaches. For instance, Problem solving, Pre-emptive, Unique selling proposition (USP) and Positioning approach. Every communication under this philosophy revolves around discussing the product or its features. Reeves (1961) in his book agree with the similar philosophy and argue that advertisement must provide two messages, which are purchase a product and you will be rewarded with certain benefit.

Whereas, on the other hand, advertising agencies are also driven under emotional philosophy. Under this respective approach, the emotional bond is created rather than communicating the potential benefits and features of the product. The focus of such philosophy is developing brand image and brand identity. Ogilvy (2011), the father of advertising, presented a similar view in his book and through his services the emotional philosophy became popular.

However, there is a prevailing creative code, which prevails in the advertising agencies as a form of culture. The culture of an organization is formed as the construct for the learning which is gathered to fulfil the standards for the others (Goodenough, 2005). Furthermore, connecting to this notion, there are creative codes prevailing in a service-oriented company and they determine as to what is accepted or what is not liked for drafting an idea. Stuhlfaut (2011) conducted a study and explored that these codes are somewhat dependent or independent in the particular context of the advertising agency. Furthermore, the author also found that it can be beneficial for the client, account manager and even creative department employees in order to aligning mentally with each other along with creating a significant influence over the creative process.

However, the advertising agencies are also driven by creative processes which outline their course of work for the client. Lubart (2001) define creative process as the sequential actions and thoughts, which lead to production of novel and adaptive ideas. Many researchers have presented a step by step process in literature. However, Amabile (2019) suggested the key creative process for a person, which is driven by five different stages. She elaborates the importance of each stage as follows:

1. *Problem/ Task Identification:* the awareness for resolving an issue rises at this stage.
2. *Preparation:* at this stage, the domain relevant skills are considered most important
3. *Response Generation:* the creativity relevant skills and task motivation act in a combined manner to create a solution
4. *Response Validation:* domain relevant skills are required to evaluate the novelty and usefulness of the idea.
5. *Outcome:* in the last stage, acceptance will be resulted if idea is considered novel or a total failure will lead to stage 2,3 or 4
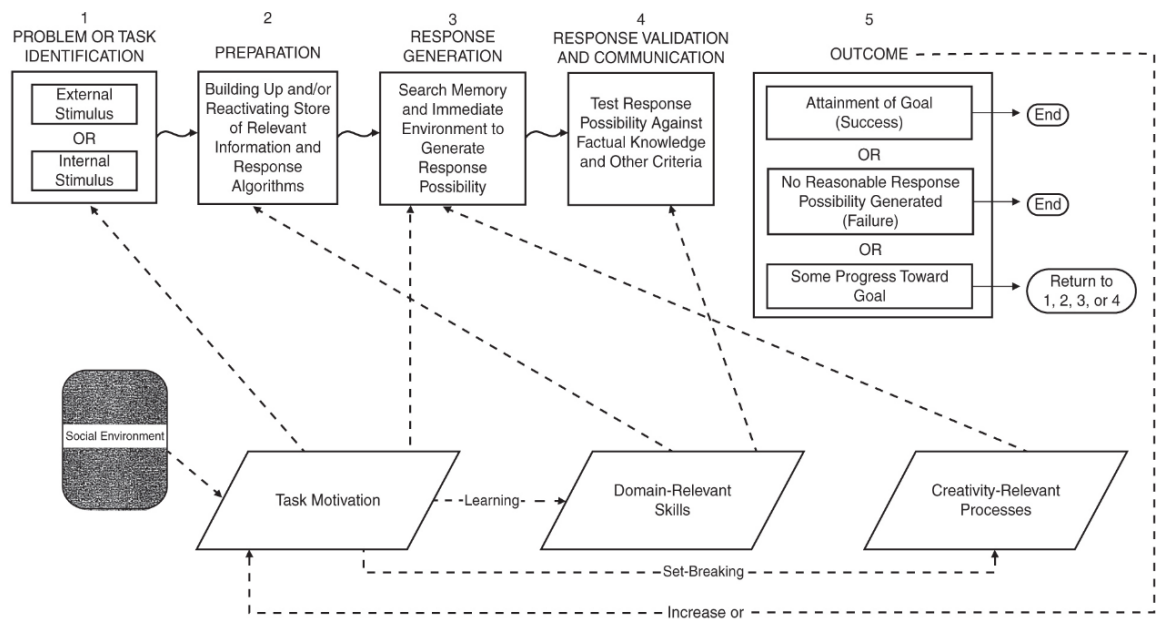
Table III: Creative Process

Whereas, originality in formulation of creative concepts is preferred by clients. In this regard, Amabile (1986) explained that creativity has different dimensions and out of those, originality is considered as one. Therefore, it is often argued that a work to be truly acceptable in the advertising world, the respective piece must be novel, unconventional, and relatively new for the target audience. On the contrary, originality as a major for effective advertising cannot be determined in isolation. Wang et al.(2013) conducted a research and found that originality in campaign development is closely tied with client's risk taking ability, which is further dependent upon the creative qualification and the defining trust in the advertising agency. The study also suggests that the client's intention for risk taking is a major influencer for creative development from the advertising agency as compared to the budget of the client.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

In the light of literature reviewed, the author has observed a significant research gap in terms of how the account manager and client's power create a substantial impact on creative identity of an individual. For instance, the Gosti et al. (2010) presented a study and found that creative workers face conflicts and tensions during the course of their job. The author has also analysed the literature and found that despite creatives believe in working in a free environment, they are governed by advertising agency philosophy. Similarly, West (1993) conducted a research and revealed that creative personalities often tend to pursue originality and intelligence along with artistic nature in

their ideas. Moreover, the author has not found any research, which analyses the impact of client's role, account manager's role and the advertising agency philosophy over the creative identity of a creative professional. Likewise, in the context of creative identity and the factors impacting it, the author had not discovered any research on Pakistani creative local advertising agency.

The respective dissertation is guided with a conceptual framework to analyse the impact of client's decisive power and manager's influence create an impact on creative identity. The conceptual framework is cause and effect relationship. The conceptual framework formulated by the author through the literature as author has observed a significant pattern in research. It has been analysed that the client's power is linked with the agency (Sharma, 1997; Bergh and Stuhlfaut, 2006; Gotsi *et al.*, 2010). Likewise, the author has also analysed that account manager along with agency's philosophy can have an impact over creatives (West and Ford, 2001; Davies and Prince, 2010; de Gregorio, Cheong and Kim, 2012)
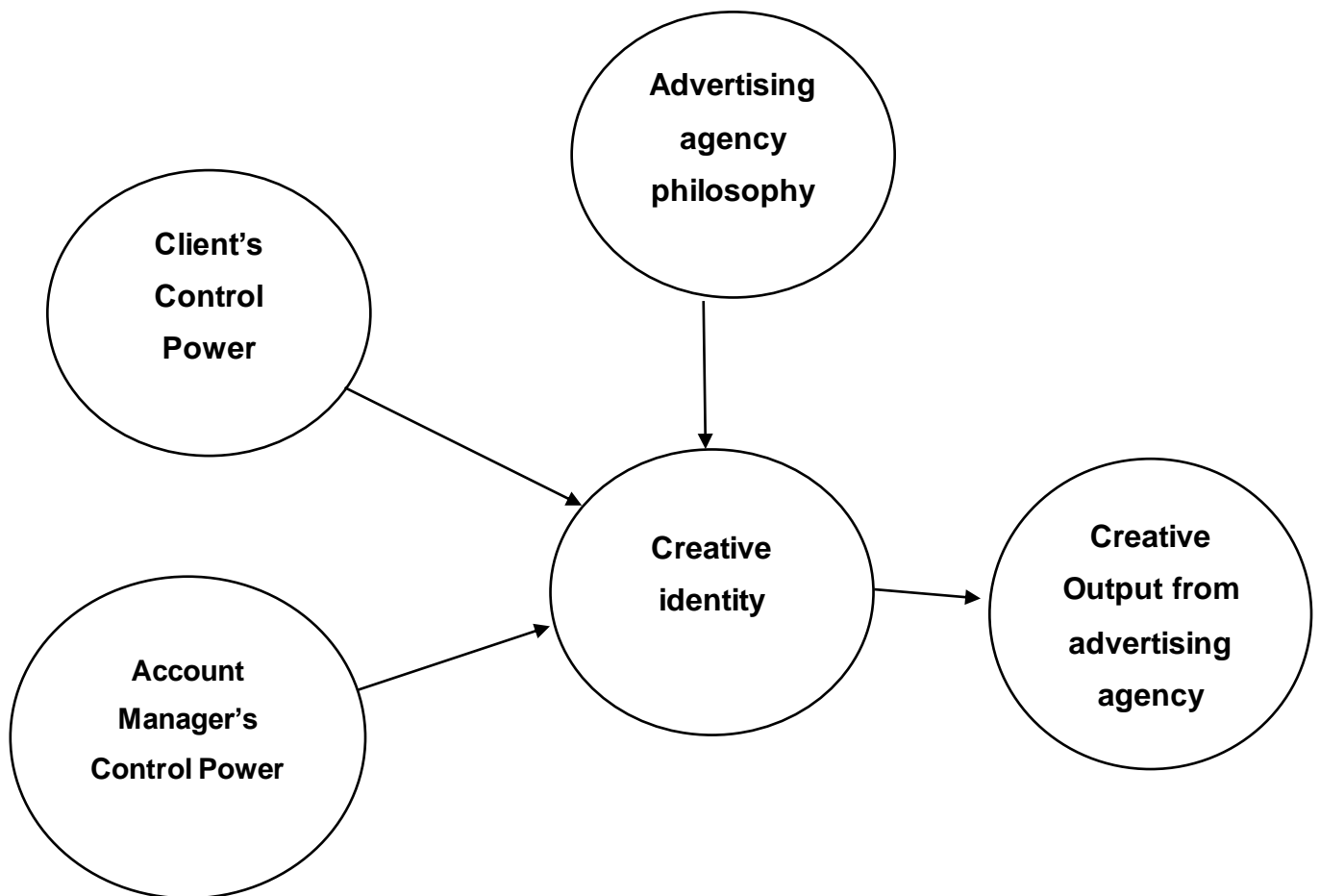
2.11 Conclusion

Creativity is determined in literature as humanistic or subjective argument presented by the literary authors. However, it can also be referred as an internal phenomenon. Moreover, the creative personalities face difficulties in terms of their daily routines and conflict that may arise. But the reason for the conflict is developing identities, which are formed in social, cultural and historical context. On the other hand, the advertising businesses require creativity as the core element of their services. But in the process of crafting marketing campaign in an advertising agency, there are several factors. A significant one of them is client's power. The client has an over-arching power as they have overall control and the propensity to take creative risks. Moreover, the account manager also acts as a gate keeper and significant influencer over the creative process. But there is a significant gap in the secondary, which is in the form of how these two factors create an impact over the established identities of creatives. Moreover, the advertising agency's philosophy can contribute significantly towards impacting the creative identity of advertising professionals. Whereas, the secondary data has not provided significant correlation in terms of how the creative identity is impacted by client's power, account manager's power in a Pakistani advertising agency. So, in regard to the observed gap, the author sought to pursue this research.

3 Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Overview

This section covers the research methodology aligned with contextual background of the research philosophy, pursued for this study. The section first presents the significant evidence and relevant justification for research approach chosen. At the next stage, the overall research strategy and design is also elaborated for collecting primary data. Furthermore, data gathering methods along with primary data analysis techniques are also discussed in this section.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

This dissertation seeks a research paradigm from the research onion as presented by Saunders and Lewis (2017)
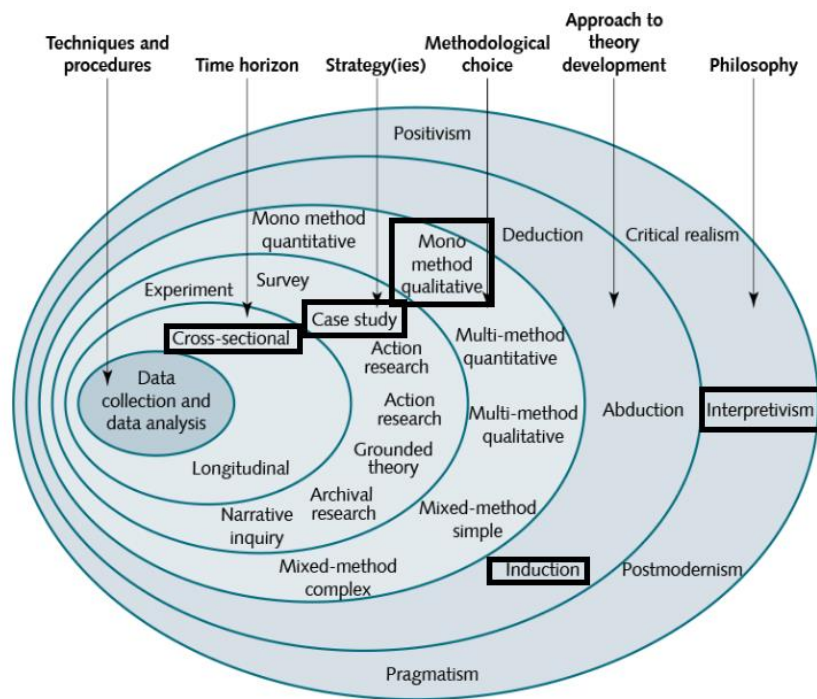
Figure 5.1 The research onion here

Source: © 2015 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill.

The underlying question of this research study is to understand the impact of account manager's power, client's power and respective advertising agency's philosophy on the creative employees, formulating their identities in a Pakistani advertising agency. Furthermore, this research also seeks to highlight the significant issues faced by these

creative individuals, in context of these developed identities and the process of crafting a marketing campaign.

The basis for the overall analysis of this research was to explore and interpret the experiences faced by these creative individuals under different circumstances. The need of this study was further defined as exploring how each of these factors creates a different set of experience for creatives. Therefore, the Interpretivist approach was considered for this study through the through the lens of realism.

A significant justification is visible as Saunders (2017) in his book "Doing Research and Business Management" defines the term realism as the philosophy, defined as the structure of reality by understanding its existence on the basis of observed phenomena and experiences. He further defines that the realistic mind seeks an interpretivist approach to its underlying research problem.

Further, Saunders (2017) also presents an insight into interpretivism. He defines it as the study of social phenomena in their natural environment context. The respective philosophy considers the roles played by individuals as social actors, which defines their interaction under a particular situation.

In the light of above evidence, the rationale for considering this research philosophy is to understand the subjective reality of experiences faced by advertising agency employees during the course of a campaign development and delivery. In this context, the pursuance of research objectives for this study are well grounded in this approach. As the two essential objectives seek to explore the impact of one variable over another, the subjective nature of the experiences and their variation require a scientific approach to be interpreted and analyzed.

Another validation for need of such paradigm is visible from the critical analysis of established literature and the observed significant gap in context of Pakistani advertising industry. Moreover, there are mix of local and global advertising agencies exist in Pakistan. This refers that there is a chance that such experiences are different from agency to agency in Pakistan.

Whereas, with the past experience of the author and socio-cultural differences, it is observed that these decision-making situations may be different for client or account manager as it may be depending upon the type of campaign being proposed or accepted. This leads to validate the choice of interpretivist approach as each business situation is considered complex and unique (Saunders and Lewis, 2017).

As the research is considered as applied to local Pakistani advertising agency, the inductive approach covered specific issues faced by those creative professionals, unidentified in the literature. Some of these issues observed by the author through his personal experience are time management for campaign, conflict with peers, social pressure to produce innovative ideas. Another, consideration for pursuing this approach due its ability to provide detailed view to a specific situation, which can be later generalized in broader context (Saunders *et al.*, 2019)

3.3   Research Strategy

The research design provides a blueprint for the gathering, analysing and interpreting the required information for a particular subject (Zikmund, 2003)

The proposed research conducted as an exploratory research. The rationale for considering the exploratory study is that a further depth is required if a respective problem is not definite in nature (Zikmund 2010). So, the proposed research highlights the need to consider a deep understanding of a Pakistani advertising agency, which is not fully explored in the academic literature.

Further, the research study pursued the case study methodology as to gain an insight into the participants and their interactions with account manager and clients. The rationale for considering this study presented by Zikmund (2003) elaborates that case studies seeks tentative answers for a respective problem and cannot be generalized. Furthermore, the research proceeded through contrasting and comparing the experiences of advertising professionals. Moreover, this research also focused towards one local Pakistani advertising agency. This justified the need of case study as a relevant methodology for this study. Likewise, the two research objectives of this study highlight the need for gathering experiences in social and circumstantial situation faced by creative employees in a Pakistani advertising agency. This provided a valid reasoning for pursuance of case study methodology. Moreover, the study also gathered sufficient information based on the advertising agency's internal environment formulating marketing campaign for clients.

In the light of prescribed approach and paradigm, the suggested research methodology is in qualitative in nature. The reasoning for consideration is that the study seeks to analyze the subjective experiences of creative individuals and the respective data seeks to exist in the form of expressions or feelings. This indicates that such information requires a non-numerical data approach. Furthermore, the Sage book of Qualitative research and Management Research Methods highlights that Interpretivist researchers

seeks qualitative as a mean of research as it provides the access to real life scenarios of the social interactions along with proper context (Cassell, Cunliffe and Grandy, 2018). Moreover, this research methodology is aligned with the objectives of this respective study, pursued by the author. As the study seeks to explore the influence of client's power, account manager's power and advertising agency's philosophy over the creative individual, the data can only be valid in terms of qualitative nature. A reasoning for such is that this study seeks to explore open ended responses from the potential respondents to highlight the experiences and their impact over these individuals.

3.4   Collection Primary Data

The author devised a plan to contact a local Pakistani advertising agency for primary data collection. The prospective respondents had been contacted using the judgemental sampling technique as non-random sampling technique. The rationale for considering this strategy is that the author considered selected ideal candidates suitable for this study, considering their experience and position. Furthermore, the author had also considered the respective functions (such as copywriting, design, creative executives, creative digital executives and media planners) performed by these individuals in the respective advertising agency.

Furthermore, the author had considered using a structured interview as a suitable approach for conducting this research. The rationale for considering this method is justified in the light of the research study requirements and the intent to gather crucial details from the respondents. The respective interviews were conducted online through Zoom or skype. During the interview, the participants' responses were recorded in the audio format.

However, in the current unforeseen circumstances of COVID'19, there was possibility of several issues that may arise. The significant one out of them would be respondents' unavailability for online interview. Whereas, in this regard, respondents would have been provided with open ended questionnaire as an alternative through survey monkey or google Forms to be answered. However, the need of mixed methods did not appear during the research.

3.4.1   *Sources*

The nature of data to be collected under this research was non-quantitative. The type of the data gathered from the respondents was guided by the purpose and objectives of this research. As the author was gathering experiences and drawing inferences from the individuals working in the advertising agencies, the observations reflected the

difficulties faced by such individuals in term of developing and presenting their work to the account manager and respective client.

3.4.2 *Access and Ethical Issues*

The access to the pertinent information and relevant source is necessary for this research as highlighted by Saunders (2017). In this regard, the author had already contacted the local Pakistani advertising agency. The rationale for considering the local advertising agency is to highlight the notion of experience in a greater depth while dealing with local and global clients.

Moreover, the author sought suitable time and conducted online Zoom based interviews for purpose of the research. Furthermore, the possible implications were conveyed to the respondents for gathering more profound data.

Furthermore, the research ethics covered all the ethical issues that may arise under pursuing this study. The issues presented by Zikmund (2003) were catered through consideration of being objective and pursuing obtaining informed consent. The author provided rights to the respondents over their data, freedom of questions to be answered and ensure confidentiality along with privacy. Moreover, to ensure the smooth research process the author has created an informed consent form and plain language statement as code of conduct for respondents (as attached with the appendix)

As for the ethical obligations required for researcher, the author pursued truthfulness and objective result consideration. Moreover, any misrepresentation or unauthorized use of data was omitted by the author. Likewise, the accuracy of information was considered aligned with the research being conducted.

3.5   Approach to Data Analysis

The author pursued the critical incident technique. The rationale for considering this technique was to gather the data from the respondents relative to specific marketing campaigns or client briefs to obtain objective and pertinent data (Saunders and Lewis, 2017).

Collected data has to be critically analysed and presented in the analytical manner to result into a meaningful forms (Saunders and Lewis, 2017). For this research, the author had considered developing the coding system for this research. Moreover, the proposed coding for this study was In vivo coding system. The rationale for considering this form of coding is that it derives the relevant codes from the data being gathered as

well as guide the inductive perspective towards developing an accurate response. As for the analysis, the author has used MAXQA software to identify codes and make valuable correlations between variables.

3.6   Conclusion

The respective research had been guided through an inductive case study approach. The purpose of this study is to consider the experiences faced by different individuals in a specific industry, phenomena in a specific industry and in Pakistan. The research was qualitative in nature and focused towards a local Pakistani advertising agency. Moreover, the respondents were filtered on the basis on judgmental sampling. Likewise, the data was gathered using online interviews, using Zoom. In case of any issue such as unavailability for online interview, the respondents were facilitated with open ended questionnaire. The ethical consideration for this study was ensured.

The coding proposed for this study is In vivo coding system as it derives from the data set gathered. Furthermore, the data was analyzed in the light of critical incident technique, using the Maxqda software.

4 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Overview

The author conducted structured interviews with ten different creative professionals working in the creative department of an advertising agency in Karachi, the economic hub of Pakistan, in order to generate the primary data for this research. For confidentiality purposes, the names of the respective participants' and the agency are not disclosed. Whereas, the respective respondents range from entry level executives to mid-level managers, working in the sub-departments within a creative department such as copywriting, design and audio-visual. Likewise, the data collected by the author had been thoroughly analysed and is presented in an analytical manner within this section.

The author analysed the data using Maxqda Software for coding purposes. Within the process of data analysis, the author had explored significant codes (attached in the appendix), which transformed into substantial framework for In vivo coding system. As this research seeks to explore the creatives' experiences, the interpretivist approach considers the sequential patterns from the data gathered. In this regard, the author had analysed the data and analysed few similarities along with key differences in opinion among these advertising professionals.

Furthermore, the author had also highlighted the relevant keywords along with details used by respondents, which are essential for the analysis of the findings. Moreover, this section also indicates the comparative correlation with the secondary data findings and points out disputes which exist between creatives over certain issues. This respective is derived based on three significant hypotheses formulated by the author, in the light of extensive literary research:

H1: The client's decision creates a significant impact on the creative identity of Pakistani advertising professionals

H2: An account Manager's decision over a creative idea creates an impact on forming the creative identity of a Pakistani creative advertising professional.

H3: The agency's creative philosophy and working environment affects the creative identity of Pakistani creative advertising professionals.

The author had developed the research questions to reflect the hypothesis and seek to explore answers by contrasting and comparing the responses.

4.2 The client's role and his impact on creative identity of advertising professionals

The author's first hypothesis was linked with the first objective of this research. As per one of the objectives, the purpose of this research is to find out does the client's control power create an impact on developing the creative identity of advertising professionals working in a Pakistani advertising agency. Through the overall analysis, the author evaluated that there are several factors, which creates a significant impact. The first aspect of client is the overall power that defines its strategic position in service-based operations. The author developed the questions to understand the gravity of the client's power and analysed that they have a much greater stake in running the daily affairs, associated with developing the marketing communications for the respective client. The creatives referred the client's importance with words or phrases such as 'gods of campaign', 'bosses of our bosses', 'our caretakers' and 'the one who run us'. These phrases indicated that the importance along with the honour of clients is highly considered among creatives. This derives the author to an understanding that not only the client's existence is important for a creative, but it also holds a much greater monetary value for the agency. This creates a significant and distinctive position of the client for the advertising agency and strongly connects with the secondary data findings (Sharma, 1997).

Whereas, it has also been observed by the author that all the creatives agreed with the notion that clients have an overarching power as highlighted from the literature review (Devinney, Dowling and Collins, 2005). Referring to conceptual framework of this study, the author analysed that impact caused by the client's power is a greater to any of the other factors. A reason for this was highlighted, when the respondents were questioned on the involvement of the clients in the campaign development process. It has been analysed that majority of the respondents agreed with the fact that clients overshadow everything in the agency, including the client services department. Whereas, one of the creatives referred to the account manager as an "advocate" of the client. This reflected that account management is also bounded to honour and obey the client's desires. Whereas, the majority of the creatives agreed with the notion that this company is a service-based agency, which only produce meaningful marketing communications for their clients (Ang, Lee and Leong, 2007). It has also been argued by a few creative individuals that if we are producing an advertising idea for their brands, their choices must be considered. One of the respondents also added that:

"In a way, yes, they have an impact on the agency because honestly, they give us our salary. I would say that we make things for their products or brands that they produce. So, they influence. But they only reply after we pitch an option to them."

On the other hand, there is another respondent, who argued the importance of the client as:

"So, they have an overall say in what do we produce and what not to be produced for them"

Referring to the literature (Grant and McLeod, 2007; Amabile, 2019), it has been highlighted that a respective creative process is impacted by the social environment. The significant evidence to this notion had been observed by the author. During this research, the respondents were questioned to understand the stake of the client in managing the campaign development process. Regarding this specific question, the author had noted that the respondents were highly likely to agree to the point that the power of a client is reflective in an indirect manner. The rationale presented by all the respondents is that they are managed by the client services and the respective concerns are directed to this department from the client. In correlation with this argument, a respondent contributed that:

"Well actually yes, they do have everything on their desk. The reason for this is that the client services is working with the agency and also corresponding with the clients. So, despite of producing meaningful content for the company, we are working with the client services as well. So, directly, or indirectly but yes, the client has a very significant influence as the client services is forwarding their concerns to us"

This was further supported by another discovery from the literature that the systematic theory of creativity (Bergh and Stuhlfaut, 2006) indicates that creators are highly influential over the creative identity. However, relating to this point form the literature (Gotsi *et al.*, 2010), the author explored the rationale from respondents that reflects the influence of a client in the advertising agency:

"We are being judged by the client services for the thing that has to be produced by us. So, if we are not being given the green signal for ideas. So, in a way, yes, they do influence it".

Whereas on other hand, another aspect of client's power had been impactful over creatives. The author explored that the client's feedback usually acts as a second

essential element for the creatives to analyze their creativity. This refers to the literature related to this research, which highlights that creatives function under the influence of task motivation for certain work as stated by the componential model of creativity (Amabile and Pillemer, 2012). The author analyzed that majority of the creatives argued that the discrepancy and the ambiguity found in the client's decision over consideration and rejection of a proposed idea. The author had also explored it through questioning the respondents on grounds of a client evaluating a proposed idea. Apart from the literature, the author had made a key discovery that showed that the many creatives argued that clients consider that meeting the marketing objective is the most essential part for campaign acceptance (Hackley, 1998). Likewise, one creative also argued that the client considers an idea impactful on the basis of personal biases. It was further explored by the author from few creatives that personal needs of the clients vary in terms of product placement, logo placement or celebrity endorsement. However, other creative professionals argued that they do not have a significant clue about the criteria. One respondent argued that:

"This is still a question for us. To be honest, I do not know, and I have no clue. All I can say that they evaluate my idea in a way that does it respond to their need. All they consider if their brand is there or not if the product is present or not. Did we include the most random stuff from their old branding?"

Similarly, there is another evidence from the data gathered that presence of an absolute uncertainty leaves the question mark for the creative. This ambiguity leads to demotivation and negative influence over their association for the work. The author had compared this discovery with the literature of this study. This reflects the point from the secondary data that creatives often struggle with the debate to pursue their creative instincts in response to the pressure of selling an idea or creative campaign to the client (Taylor and Littleton, 2008). This further extends to our understanding that Pakistani creatives are often working in the pressure to get their idea to be approved. Similarly, the data patterns also indicate that creatives struggle to reach a conclusive evaluation of their performance in the absence of any contribution or remarks available from the client. It also negates the point from the literature that creative ability of the agency is considered by the client (Henke, 1970; West, Collins and Miciak, 2003) in a Pakistani advertising market context.

The analysis was gathered using two questions relating to evaluating the usefulness of feedback and the impact of it over their motivation to produce work are presented to the

respondents. It had been analyzed by the author that the unclear intention from the client (Turnbull and Wheeler, 2016) and irrelevant feedback often drives the creatives towards a feeling of demotivation. As per one of the respondents, the feedback is:

"We are service oriented company and I think that the main motivation of the clients is to get his work done and that is only thing and the feedback. It is quite hard sometimes and we do feel demotivated in a way that our best idea is not getting across the board due to XYZ reasons from the client and we are not sure about that. So, having said that it's really difficult for all of us to consider it"

However, another argued that the industry practices are also another factor as such:

"Well, it is not a matter of motivation but a matter of requirement. It is an established norm in industry that you need to have three options to present. So, if a client does not have that much choice. Then you are actually facing a problem. Also, any changes in those are rare as they are usually turned down with no justification."

This further linked with another question, which refers to exploring any specific reservations that may arise in terms of accepting a unique idea. The pattern from the data collected revealed that there are several factors such as the type of client, industry norms, competitor's activities, and fear of negative response from the mass audience. Whereas, through the analysis of data gathered, the author has derived to a point that it is the reciprocation of the old ideas or just an addition of a version from previous ideas. One respondent presents that

"This again really depends on client to client and the type of work. For instance, if we have a big FMCG client, they will love to hear or implement new ideas for the client. But in case of a new client or low budget client, we see that they do not like unique ideas."

So, the overall analysis and the respective data sets provides an insight that completely supports the first hypothesis of this study. Whereas, the research also reveals that the client's power to decide and govern the agency operations serve as an overarching stake that they have in the campaign development process. In this regard, there is a strong correlation between client's influence over the creative identity of a creative professional. The analysis reveals that clients have a supremacy over the communications to be produced and their right defined by bearing the cost of it, which an income for the agency. But the data and its pattern, reflects that this influence usually affects in a negative manner due to evident issues such as unclear feedback, irrelevant wish list from client and the budget being another important factor.

4.3 The account manager and his impact on creative identity of a Pakistani creative professional

For this study, the author has formulated a second hypothesis based on the objective of this study. The second hypothesis sought to find out the impact of the account manager over the creative identity of Pakistani creative professionals. During the research, it was revealed that account managers are referred as 'client services' or 'client manager' in this respective Pakistani advertising agency. The author conducted the research and analysed the gathered data, which revealed that the account manager's attitude towards creatives is relatively negative as some creatives recalled them with words such as "devil to us", "stubborn" and "sticking to business". It had been revealed by the data that account managers are the core element for the campaign development and delivery to the client.

To understand the impact and significant, the author first questioned the respondents to express their views in terms of the standard campaign development process that may rise in this company. The answer to this question, revealed the significance of account services department in an advertising agency. It is presented by one of the respondents as:

"In our agency, we work together on every bit. So, there is a strategy, client services, creative and digital. So, if there a brief or any work received by the client services, we are informed by them. We sit with each other and discuss the possibilities with every minor detail to pitch the idea to the client. So, that is how it all works"

Despite of having an important stake, the creatives also stated the significance of an account manager in the agency is considered as the highest (Hamera, 1986). So, some creatives presented an argument in the favour of account manager as they guide the creative department in positive direction (Grant and McLeod, 2007; de Gregorio, Cheong and Kim, 2012). In this regard, one of the respondents argued that:

"Yes, they have a very crucial role in maintaining the relations with client. So, they are our source of information in the agency. Given that such high status, they definitely have a distinctive status in the overall campaign development and management"

To inquire further, the author had presented the questions such as the role for account manager in idea generation and campaign management. To answer this respective question, most of the respondents have shown a different set of facial expressions, which indicated a series of an unpleasant experiences. A further validation to such tensions is highlighted from one respondent as:

"I think that the account services or the client services are the main fore front people for the client, and they are the main person to be dealing with them and presenting their needs. So, yes they do take an active part as during the meeting they have a big stake in what needs to be put on the table and what needs to go into the production of a creative output."

This relates to the secondary data of this research that creatives are bounded by the internal along with external challenges to defend their idea (Ang, Lee and Leong, 2007). A further validation is also linked with the literature is that account services and creatives are always subject to conflict in an agency environment. Likewise, the extent of account manager's power should also be taken into consideration. For the purpose of analysis, the author had also questioned about the feedback that creatives receive by presenting their work to the client services. It had been observed by the author that these account services have utmost autonomy over accepting anything and they have a substantial power to negate any solution offered by the creative team. The rationale for this subjectivity from the account department is resonating with the secondary data of this research. In this regard, the literature mentions that the role of account management under the agency theory (Davies and Prince, 2010) is to bring the financials for the agency in exchange of a promise for a certain work to the client. The author evaluated the data sets from the respondents and analyzed that all creatives agree with the notion that account managers are given importance over the daily functions of the agency as they bring money to the agency. One respondent, argued that:

"The account services are the one keeping us all going in a way that they are bringing money in the company. Due to this fact, their position is extremely high and yes, they do not give a proper deadline to us."

Whereas, the author had also analyzed the creatives are also impacted by the feedback received by the account managers. However, in this regard, the author made a discovery that there is a mismatch of information, exists in this specific agency. As for the information, the account managers to tend to provide their own deadlines and work schedules, which are often difficult and harsh for the creatives. As one of the creatives argued that:

"Well, in reality, we are just given work with a very short span of time. Imagine if you are leaving an office and you have to make the visual, which can take all night. So, we are often bombarded with such requests from client services"

Likewise, the author had also observed that the issue of providing an alternative deadline in the agency is considered as the usual norm. The creatives were observed by the author and it had been analyzed that they are bounded with the account services as they maintain the flow of information. This highlights that the creatives are monitored and governed by the account management in this agency. It resonates with the secondary data the points to the same as a negative point for creatives.

Further, the feedback is usually observed at the end of the producing a campaign or an idea. Whereas, there are some creatives, who argued that account service executives sometimes provide a feedback in the middle of a campaign or designing a marketing collateral. Another question, which is understanding the impact of deadlines and feedbacks on creatives had also been asked by the author. The respondents have presented an ambiguity over this. From the analysis, it became evident that client services provide their own deadline, and this is justified by being the gate keepers of the agency.

In an overall analysis, it had been observed by the author that the second hypothesis is fully supported by the data gathered. In this regard, it can be stated that the account services create a significant influence over the creative department in this advertising agency. But the data set and the patterns observed using the Invivo coding presents that their influence occurs in two way and usually impacts in a negative manner. It had been analyzed that the account manager's power is defined by their supreme power in the agency as they manage finance. Whereas, another factor is that they have a huge stake as account department hold the key information about the client, which is vital for the creatives. Another significant factor is that account managers set their own deadlines rather than providing an actual time frame to creatives.

4.4 Agency's Work Philosophy and Its impact on the creative identity of Pakistani advertising professional

The third hypothesis considered for this study is to understand the impact the of agency' philosophy over the creative identity of Pakistani creative advertising professionals. For better understanding of the agency's work mantra and its impact, the author had questioned regarding respondents on the type of work philosophy that might impact their work. It was observed they all agreed that there is a mutual work philosophy that dwells within the company. The work practices are revolving around being open and producing something out of the box. As from one of the respondents presented the perspective as:

*"To be honest our company's moto is to make something, which is out of the box and we use the term to define our work. This is called **"Wangri"**. This is not a grammatically*

meaningful word, but we refer it as something, which would blow your mind. So, I think we are guided by this principle."

The respective term as presented by one of the respondents had been explored by the author. It had been observed through the data analysis that this respective word had a strong standing in the agency, and it derives the work behavior along with motivation to produce something different as highlighted by the literature (West and Ford, 2001) . The author also explored that it defines their unique way of differentiation as well.

The author had explored further that the impact of this agency's philosophy is significantly produce positive impact over the creative identities. The data set reveals that despite of having less impact, if compared to the other factors of this study, the philosophy act as "creativity booster" as stated by one of the respondents. Whereas, it had also been observed that creatives were satisfied with the positive impact of this phenomena and they labelled the mantra with phrases such as "free flowing ideas", "Pursuing the mind" and "Just being different". This reflects that creative codes in this Pakistani advertising agency is independent as mentioned in the secondary data (Stuhlfaut, 2011). Likewise, it had also analyzed by the author that the respective philosophy pursued by the agency is a hybrid, as compared to the literature (West and Ford, 2001) Under the secondary data, it can be argued that the agency is pursuing the emotional philosophy.

4.5 Few other key observations and their impact on the creative identity of Pakistani advertising professional

During the research, the author had observed several other factors which have an impact on the creative identity of these professionals. The first observation was that the creatives were proud of their service or the idea. One of the respondents referred it as an "artistic masterpiece". When asked about the influence of account managers, all the creatives agreed to the point that for the existing clients, the respective creatives serve as the caretakers. The author observed that creatives felt have and enjoy a sense of pride in managing the clients. Some referred themselves as "Sole custodian", "I am the manager" and "decision maker for the campaign". This reflected that the creatives have an autonomy in terms of the formulation of the creative campaign. However, the acceptance and approval are beyond their control.

Further, few highlights of observations are peer evaluation, budget constraints, and dispute between departments. Whereas, few creatives also represented that there had been a rise in negative motivation to work, when there is too much involvement, or a

sense of judgement exist by the other workers. Also, the pressure for being creative and constantly producing sellable marketing communication option is another challenge faced by creatives. Similarly, the impact of budget constraints had an impact as one of the creatives argued that:

"Budget is the biggest issue for us. Most of the ideas are inapplicable due to it"

According to one of the creative, the budget constraints are usually the most dissatisfying part of any campaign. He further highlighted that this restriction from the client had never been communicated in the much earlier time. Whereas connecting to this point, some other creatives also agreed to the notion the one of the reservations or rationale for rejection from the client is budget and it impacts them in creating hinderance to think freely or creatively.

4.6   Conclusion

The overall outcome of this proposed study is reflected on the data collected and analysed by the author. The research sought comparison between experiences faced by creative individuals during the marketing campaign development or suggesting an idea to a respective client. Keeping in consideration the literature explored and author's prior experience, the following outcomes are concluded by the author at the end of this study:

1. Clients' have the outmost authority over any campaign and their input is highly necessary for developing successful marketing collateral, in Pakistani advertising agency.
2. The clients have their own stake at first as they are spending money.
3. The account managers are the client's voice in the agency in Pakistani advertising agency
4. The account managers and clients influence the creative identity of Pakistani advertising professional in a negative manner.
5. The agency philosophy derives the creative approach and impacts positively towards the identity of Pakistani creatives.
6. Pakistani creatives feel proud in their ideas and sense of ownership exist for pitching any idea.
7. Budget constraints and the unreal deadlines are the two factors impacting the creative identities of the Pakistani advertising professionals, working in this advertising agency.

5 Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

The research has contributed in filling the gap by presenting the conceptual framework in providing the agency philosophy, client's power, and account manager's power over the creative identities of advertising creative professionals working in a local Pakistani advertising. Through the significant data analysis, it can be inferred that client's power has an overarching impact over identity of the creative professionals. Likewise, the study also indicates that client's power is represented in the form of account manager in the agency. So, the account managers are used by clients as medium to control the actions along with ideas of creatives over the client's collateral to be produced. It had been argued that there is a sense of confusion between creatives towards the type of work being accepted. Some creatives argued that relevance to marketing objectives is the most crucial part for any campaign to be accepted. Whereas, other professionals argued that there is no absolute benchmark for campaign acceptance and in the case of the absence, they are often struggling.

Likewise, the research also indicates that some established norms create negative impact for creatives. One of such is developing multiple options for the creative deliverables. Furthermore, the justification of client's funding serves as the significant tool to control the operations of a Pakistani agency. Likewise, the account managers are referred as the gate keepers, but their role is far greater than creatives. The study reveals that account managers provide direction and they often react in negative way with creatives as they seek to sell ideas.

Likewise, the account managers (also referred as client services) have the highest stake and respect as they run the financial operations in this Pakistani agency. The study also revealed that this advertising agency's philosophy act in a positive towards motivating the creative individuals and their intention to achieve towards thinking differently. Moreover, the study also revealed that there are some factors which can influence the creative identity of a creative individuals. Two significant out of these are unrealistic deadlines by the account managers and the budget constraints

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The contribution of this research is valuable can be analysed in two folds. First, the study indicated presented a correlation between three factors and presented data set to

support the existence of such relation. Similarly, the study also presented some additional concerns, pertaining to this specific advertising agency. Whereas for the limitations, the research conducted by the author is time bound. The respective study was conducted for dissertation purposes only, which highlights the limited scalability and scope of this project.

Further in this regard, the study is conducted based on the data gathered from the single local advertising agency. This reflects that the results may vary from agency to agency and the study is exploratory in nature, which limits the applicability of the results to the whole each phenomenon in this domain. Likewise, there is a chance that the experiences may vary depending upon the person to person as there may be a condition of different socio-cultural settings. Moreover, the respective study had a small sample size and it is conducted as exploratory study. This reflects that the results of this study cannot be generalized overall and require further exploration.

5.3   Recommendations for Practice

The study highlights few key issues and the relevant recommendations on them (if implemented) can be helpful in terms of creative positive impact over the creatives. The first observation is the client has outmost power over any marketing campaign in this advertising agency. This indicates that the creatives are provided with less room to be involved as they account managers act as information hub between creative and client. It is suggested that creatives should have in person dialogue with account manager and client to clear any misconceptions. Furthermore, if feasible, the creatives should have a logbook or series of documents for the feedback to be recorded and responded accordingly.

Another issue observed by the study is that the creatives are given tough time by account managers and they act only as the client's voice. So, in this regard, it is suggested that creatives should consult the account managers first and then pursue towards developing expectations from that clients, which allow them to think freely and take creative risks. Moreover, creatives have the intellectual knowledge for any agency, which can be used to persuade the account management and agency higherups to function in their benefit. Two other significant issues observed in the study are the unrealistic deadlines and budget constraints. It is suggested that creatives should have a written budget along with brief received from the client, which should have the breakdown of it (if feasible). Whereas, the deadlines should be cross checked by the creatives with the client directly.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The future research can be conducted in determining how the client's power is subdued by the agency for selling the creative campaign. In this study, the author has discovered patterns from the primary data, which reveals that there is a need for the topic to explored in much greater depth. Moreover, this proposed dimension is also well supported by the data gathered from the respective respondents. Whereas, the future research can also be conducted in terms of how the financial type of client view these three factors and how are they impacted over the creative identity of Pakistani creatives.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

The study reflects the literature in its findings and reveals significant insight. The first insight from this study is that the role of client and their power are vital in Pakistani advertising industry. This power translates into controlling agency through account managers and creating negative impact over the creative identity of the creatives. The negative influence is impacted by the budget constraints, ambiguous feedback and no defined set of benchmarks for any campaign acceptance or rejection.

Likewise, the account managers in Pakistani advertising agency occupy a high status and they act as a representative of clients in the agency. Their aim is to get the job done from the creatives. Furthermore, the attitude of account managers influences the identity of creative professionals in a negative manner. Whereas, the advertising agency of this respective agency impacts the creatives in positive manner as it provides them room to think freely and enable their ideas to free flow.

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Appendices

Plain Language Statement

I. Introduction to the Research Study

Research Study Working Title: Exploring the impact of control powers and agency philosophy on creative identity: an exploratory study from Pakistani advertising agency.

University: Griffith College Dublin

Principal Investigator: Zeeshan Ahmed Tariq, Contact: 089 4929 363 or email: zeeshan.ahmed.tariq95@gmail.com

II. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require

This project involves taking part in semi-structured interviews. The respective interviews will be audio taped and are focused on understanding the practical circumstances faced by you as a creative individual from an Pakistani advertising agency. The questions will most likely use probing technique to seek answers in terms of how your organization's atmosphere and the underlying decision-making powers influence your creative identity and overall creative output. Most of the questions will be directed towards your experience in the working environment and are aimed to find the relevant solutions for creative individuals or pinpointing the underlying reasons, which create discrepancies in the creative output in an agency's overall output. The interviews are expected to last till 60 minutes. All the participants will be offered a copy of their interview transcripts for validation purposes.

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study (if greater than that encountered in everyday life)

I do not anticipate any risk that may occur to the participants as a result of involvement in the respective research study.

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research Study

The objective of this study is to highlight and understand the significant factors effecting the creative identity of an individual in the Pakistani advertising agency. The study seeks to finds the loopholes in terms of significant factors and present relevant solutions to increase the efficiency for producing creative output. The study will be beneficial to you by providing you an opportunity to present such issues and contribute for devising meaningful solution as this will may benefit you and other staff.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

All the efforts will be made to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the participants. The names of each participants will not be recorded as all the respondents will be provided with a respective code. The interviews will be conducted in video form through online software i.e Zoom and participants will be provided with a password to join for an interview. Audio interviews can also be facilitated through Zoom on the request of the participants. The respective interviews will be recorded in audio format with consent from participants and they will be downloaded/ saved in a password protected computer. To ensure further safety, all the interviews and typed transcripts will be stored in password-controlled folder. Biographical details and mention of the

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agency will be omitted in the final report to protect participant's identity. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

The audio tapes will be destroyed on the successful completion of Masters in Global Brand Management

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

The involvement in this research study is voluntary. Invited participants and their relationship with the agency will not be affected in anyway should they decide not to take part. Participants may choose to withdraw from the Research Study at any stage. Withdrawal will not result in any form of penalty at any stage.

A Plain Language Statement should end with the following statement:

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person.

Please contact:

Dr Garrett Ryan,

Griffith College Research Ethics Committee
South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Mail: garrett.ryan@griffith.ie

Tel: +353 1 4163324

Informed Consent Form

I.   Research Study Title

Research Study Working Title: Exploring the impact of control powers and agency philosophy on creative identity: an exploratory study from Pakistani advertising agency.

University: Griffith College Dublin

Principal Investigator: Zeeshan Ahmed Tariq, Contact: 089 4929 363 or email: zeeshan.ahmed.tariq95@gmail.com

II.   Clarification of the purpose of the research

The objective of this study is to highlight and understand the significant factors effecting the creative identity of an individual in the Pakistani advertising agency. The study seeks to finds the loopholes in terms of significant decision-making powers and agency philosophy contributing effecting the creative identity and creative output (on overall basis). The research further seeks to present relevant solutions to increase the efficiency for producing a creative output

III.   Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

This project involves taking part in semi-structured interviews. The respective interviews will be audio taped and are focused on understanding the practical circumstances faced by you as a creative individual from a Pakistani advertising agency. The questions will most likely use probing technique to seek answers in terms of how your organization's atmosphere and the underlying decision-making powers influence your creative identity and overall creative output. Most of the questions will be directed towards your experience in the working environment and are aimed to find the relevant solutions for creative individuals or pinpointing the underlying reasons, which create discrepancies in the creative output in an agency's overall output. The interviews are expected to last till 60 minutes. All the participants will be offered a copy of their interview transcripts for validation purposes.

For omitting interference in business operations, the research interviews will not be conducted at month or quarter end.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)
I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)   Yes/No
I understand the information provided   Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study   Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions   Yes/No
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped   Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

The objective of this study is to highlight and understand the significant factors effecting the creative identity of an individual in the Pakistani advertising agency. The study seeks to finds the loopholes in terms of significant factors and present relevant solutions to increase the efficiency for producing creative output.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

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All the efforts will be made to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the participants. The names of each participants will not be recorded as all the respondents will be provided with a respective code. The interviews will be conducted in video form through online software i.e Zoom and participants will be provided with a password to join for an interview. Audio interviews can also be facilitated through Zoom on the request of the participants. The respective interviews will be recorded in audio format with consent from participants and they will be downloaded/ saved in a password protected computer. To ensure further safety, all the interviews and typed transcripts will be stored in password-controlled folder. Biographical details and mention of the agency will be omitted in the final report to protect participant's identity. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

VI. <u>Signature:</u>

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Coding Extract

Invivo Codes	Themes	Second order analysis
Creatives' Feelings		
No strict deadlines Difficulty in being creative over Peer pressure	Peer evaluation	Creativity is questioned from peers within the same department
It is actually directed by client services Possibility of Mutual Understanding We work together as a team	Control from peer & client services	Peers and client services contribute positively for the work
Innovative ideas Making sure the client satisfaction	Inner Happiness	Self-satisfaction is essential
Sole Custodian Being the manager Acceptance of Ideas	Sense of achievement & Proud in their work	Self-appreciation
Account Manager's Importance		
source of information in the agency at every stage of the brief and campaign development.	Influence in each part of daily operations	Too much involvement
Deadline is always a crucial part of the task being given to us Devil to us his guiding angle	negative association with creatives	A negative impact on creatives
Agency's Philosophy		
out of the box "Wangri"	Differentiation	Creatives' work is inspired with mantra
Client's Importance		
god of campaign Supreme power over campaigns Total Control over anything	The huge power	Indication of Client's excessive power
it's the relevance with the marketing objective Variation with respect to client and type of work Detail feedback Abusrd analysis	Feedback can be positive or misleading	Client's feedback varies
You need to have three options to present as a matter of requirement. it is not a matter of motivation	Push for demanding extra	Creatives are asked for excessive work

Appendix D –

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Appendix E –

Interview Questions

Q1: Can you please tell me broadly about your job and the responsibilities?

Q2: Can you explain to me your workload on weekly basis?

Q3: How often do you work on current clients or acquiring new clients, in terms of designing their campaigns?

Q4: How do you see your department's contribution towards campaign development?

Q5: Can you briefly explain the flow of work between departments in you r company?

Q6: How do you see your role in the idea generation of advertising campaigns?

Q7: In your view, what are the different challenges faced by a creative professional in an advertising agency?

Q8: In your opinion, how do you see the client's role in the overall campaign development?

Q9: To what extent, do you consider that client's power has an overall stake in managing the campaign development process in advertising agency ?

Q10: In your view, on what criteria does your client evaluates the proposed idea?

Q11: Can you specify the concerns of some clients in terms of attempting a new or unique idea?

Q12: To what extend does you consider the client's feedback useful?

Q13: Can you broadly explain how does that feedback from the client impact your work and motivation to produce another idea?

Q14: In your view, what is the account manager's role in idea generation and overall campaign development?

Q15: At what stage, does the account manager provide you with feedback and how does it help?

Q16: How do you see the respective deadlines and the feedbacks from the account manager?

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Q17: Can you provide an example of the best campaign and worst campaign that you have worked on along with influencing factors on them?

Q18: In your view, what is your company's work mantra & overall philosophy?

Q19: In your opinion, how do you see your company's philosophy impacting your creative output?

Q20: Consider in an ideal situation, which one of the following factors do you think can be the most influential and problematic in nature (Client's power, Account manager's power and agency's philosophy)?

Q21: Is there anything that you would like to add further which can be beneficial for this research thesis ?

Transcript Extract

I: Hi, thank you so much for providing me this great opportunity. Can I ask that have you read the plain language statement and consent form?

Z: Yes

I: So as mentioned in the forms, I will be recording this interview for transcription purposes only. The Transcriptions will be emailed to you with in 24 hours. Well, if you agree with it, we can proceed.

Z: yes, I agree with that, you can proceed.

I: Thank you so much. My first question is that Can you please tell me broadly about your job and the responsibilities?

Z: Well, I am currently working in the creative department. My job is to manage a set of clients allotted to me. The responsibilities range from situation to situation, but it usually revolves around proposing an idea to the client and making marketing campaigns.

I: Thank you. I have another question that can you explain to me your workload on weekly basis?

Z: The workload usually revolves around upon the workload from the client. It also varies from client to client basis. So, if a client needs a campaign on urgent basis for their product launch or something like that. Then our workload increases. So, yeah it depends.

I: Thank you. I would now like to ask that how often do you work on current clients or acquiring new clients, in terms of designing their campaigns?

Z: It is actually directed by client services. My most of the time is working on the briefs sent from my existing client base. But there are certain times in which we are asked to do a pitch. Well it again depends on the company.

I: Thank you. I would like to ask another question now. So, how do you see your department's contribution towards campaign development?

Z: Well, we are the brains of the agency. This means that all the creative ideas or pitches are done from us. So, we as the department, cracks the brief, drives an idea from it and then pitch it. Well, it can be said that any marketing campaign is made by us.

I: Thank you. I have another question that can you briefly explain the flow of work between departments in your company?

Z: In our agency, we work together on every bit. So, there is a strategy, client services, creative and digital. So, if there a brief or any work received by the client services, we are informed by them. We sit with each other and discuss the possibilities with every minor detail to pitch the idea to the client. So, that's how it all works.

I: Thank you so much. You are doing quite well. I would now like to ask another question that how do you see your role in the idea generation of advertising campaigns?

Z: Well, it again depends that if it's a new client or just the regular clients. So, in case of my regular clients, I work as the sole custodian and formulate all the ideas for them. Whereas, in case of new clients, we form a team and work with senior people from the department.

I: Thank you. I have another question that in your view, what are the different challenges faced by a creative professional in an advertising agency?

Z: Well, there are a couple of challenges that are faced by individual first of them is the acceptance from the colleagues and another is that we really struggle in terms of our ideas getting accepted. Another thing that really struck us is the ability to work on different ideas to think out of the box and we're really pushed towards it by our managers. So, these are the two crucial things. However, there are some other things of that may create an impact on us such as no strict deadlines, innovative ideas, making sure the client satisfaction.

I: Very well. You are going really great. I will now ask another question that in your opinion, how do you see the client's role in the overall campaign development

Z: To be honest a client has the Supreme power over campaigns and it is justifiable in the sense that they are giving us the money to run our businesses. We are working as a service-based agency. So, they have an overall say in what do we produce and what not to be produced for them.

I: Thank you so much. Can I ask that to what extent do you consider that client's power has an overall stake in managing the campaign development process in advertising agency?

Z: well actually yes, they do have everything on their desk. The reason for this is that the client services is working with the agency and also corresponding with the clients. So, despite of producing meaningful content for the company, we are working with the client services as well. So, directly or indirectly but yes the client have a very much significant influence as the client services is forwarding their concerns to us.

I: Thank you so much Mr Z. I would like to ask another question that in your view on what criteria does client evaluates the proposed idea?

Z: Well to be honest there are multiple criteria on which a client determines our work of being worthy or not. But most importantly, I think it's the relevance with the marketing objective that we receive in the brief. So, it is pretty common with most of the clients. As long as, we are aligned with their objective, which can be a brand launch or a or a brand awareness, the idea pitched will have greater chances of acceptability.

I: Very well. I would like to ask another question that can you specify the concerns of some clients in terms of attempting a new or unique idea?

Z: This again really depends on client to client and the type of work. For instance, if we have a big FMCG client, they will love to hear or implement new ideas for the client.

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But in case of a new client or low budget client, we see that they do not like unique ideas.

I: Thank You Mr. Z. I would now like to ask that to what extend do you consider client's feedback useful?

Z: Its hard to say and strictly again depends upon the type of client. So, we usually have some client, which are very open and they provide very relevant feedback. But on the other hand, there are some clients, who gives most abusrd analysis or idea to something.

I: Thank you so much. We will now proceed towards some other question. So, can you broadly explain how does that feedback from client impact your work and motivation to produce another idea?

Z: Well, it is not a matter of motivation but a matter of requirement. It is a established norm in industry that you need to have 3 options to present. So, if a client do not have that much choice. Then you are actually messed up. Also, any changes in those are very rare as they are usually turned down with no justification

I: Many thanks. You are going really great. Now I would like to ask that in your view what is the account manager's role in idea generation and overall campaign development?

Z: Yes, they have a very crucial role in maintaining the relations with client. So, they are our source of information in the agency. Given that such high status, they definitely have a distinctive status in the overall campaign development and management

I: Thank you. You have been cooperating quite well. I would now like to ask that at what stage, does the account manager provide you with feedback and how does it help?

Z: I would say that at every stage of the brief and campaign development. Also, even delivering the work. The feedback depends upon the type of client. But it is usually helpful for us and we always ask for clarity along with justification.

I: Very Well. Thanks Mr Z. we are only left with few questions only. I would now like to askt that do you see the respective deadlines and the feedbacks from account manager?

Z: As explained earlier, the feedback varies. But the deadline is always a crucial part of the task being given to us. It not only defines our work, but also measure our expectation. So, to be honest the deadlines are sometimes there to make our lives more difficult.

I: Thank you so much. I have another question that can you provide an example of best campaign and worst campaign that you have worked on along with factors influencing on them?

Z: Well, there are multiple accounts in which we have faced the ideal situation and personal scenario that I could remember. From my past experience, we were working for one big FMC company and given a very tight deadline by the account manager. The main problem with that is the restricted time along with too much influence from the account manager as they were considering making the client happy. However, I would like to present another experience that we did for a small client. The client was very

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open and loved our idea, which shaped that they were quite happy with our services.

I: Very well, I would like to ask ask that in your view, what is your company's work mantra & overall philosophy?

Z: To be honest our company's moto is to make something, which is out of the box and we use the term to define our work. This is called **"Wangri"**. This is not a grammatically meaningful word, but we refer it as something, which would blow your mind. So, I think we are guided by this principle.

I: That's really impressive. I have another question that in your opinion, how do you see your company's philosophy impacting your creative output?

Z: As I have mentioned earlier, the word that we use does derive our work. So, in a way, yes our work is derived from the company's philosophy. I also see this in our work practices and the liberty to be flexible.

I: Very well. Lets consider in an ideal situation, which one of the following factors do you think can be the most influential and problematic in nature (Client's power, Account manager's power and agency's philosophy)?

Z: Well, First of all client. He is the god of campaign that I would say. Well at the next stage the account manager is his guiding angle and may sometimes seem devil to us. But the agency's philosophy is I would say the last one.

I: Thank you so much Mr Z. I would like ask one last question before we end this interview. So, is there anything that you would like to add further which can be beneficial for this research thesis?

Z: I think it will be beneficial enough.

I: Thank you so much Mr Z for your participation. I will send you the transcript of this interview in 24 hours. I will once again like to thank you for your collaboration. Take care and Bye.

Z: Thank you. Same to you as well.