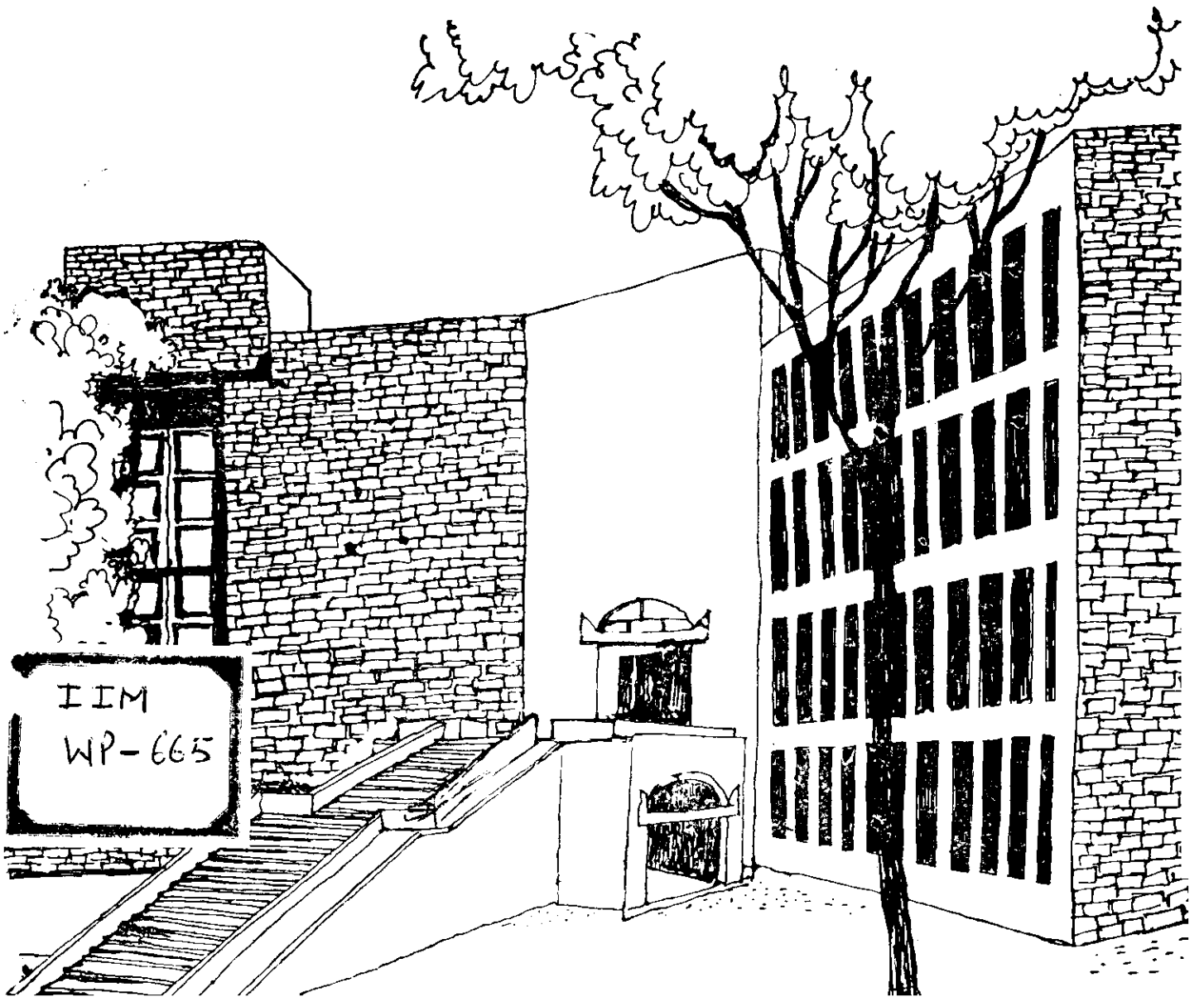




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# Working Paper



JOB STRESS OF A CREATIVE  
MANAGER

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JOB STRESS OF A CREATIVE MANAGER

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## JOB STRESS OF A CREATIVE MANAGER

### I INTRODUCTION

Research on job stress used to have its focus on the adverse effects of stress on the human system. Such effects, known as 'strains' could be physiological, psychological, attitudinal or behavioral. Initially, the major concern of stress-research was the management of the physiological strains, which include such illnesses as coronary heart diseases, blood pressure, peptic ulcer, insomnia, rashes and various kinds of allergies. Since these illnesses have a direct impact on the life span of an individual, it was but natural that researchers concentrated on the identification and management of the causes of these strains; and there used to be a notion that stress in itself was bad for the individual. Later, there occurred a shift in the perspective; and researchers, following the Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908) of animal behavior, began to hold that a certain amount of stress may facilitate performance rather than hinder; and the search for the optimum level of stress was on, because such an ideal level would help bring out the most creative aspects of an individual's performance. The theory of optimal stress was confirmed and modified by later researchers (Hannes, 1956; Broadhurst, 1957; Lowe and McGrath, 1971) and the hypothesis that a moderately high level of stress is a condition for creative activation has gained currency. Recent studies on the theme often have performance (not

necessarily creative) as the dependent variable (Jamal, 1984) and occasionally there is a study with creativity as the dependent variable (Sampson, 1980).

Though there are not many studies on creativity as an outcome of stress, the inverted U relationship seems to be reasonably well-accepted. In addition to the performance-studies discussed above, many studies on individual/organizational learning (Hedberg, 1981) have contributed to this acceptance. This, however, is not the case with the reverse relationship between stress and creativity. Does creativity produce its own stresses? Do the creative have to endure a more stressful life than the non-creative? The question is relevant for two reasons: (1) Creativity and innovation, especially in organizations, have become a top priority with organizational practitioners and researchers as perhaps the only means of catching-up with the fast changing environment. It may be useful to identify any special stressors associated with the career of a creative manager so that he may be helped to cope with them better which would hopefully facilitate his creative activities. (2) Since the latest concept of stress sees it as resulting from the complex interaction among the person-system, task-system, role-system behavior setting, physical environment and the social environment (McGrath, 1976), it is legitimate to hypothesize that creativity, which involves the performance of rather unconventional tasks by individuals holding distinctive personality traits (Khandwala, 1984;

Motamedi, 1982; Petrosko, 1983; Torrance, 1965), may give rise to special kinds of stresses for the individual. This is especially true of creative work in formal organizations because the requirements of creative activity are often antithetical to the requirements of formal organizations (Peterson, 1981). Hence, the inquiry into the job-stress of a creative manager seems to be rewarding.

Despite the obvious research-gap, there is but one empirical study which has a direct bearing on this relationship (Pamperin, 1983). Other empirical studies such as Boyd and Gumpert (1983) and Kanter (1982) are suggestive of the innovative owner-managers' job-stress. There are also a few experience-based writings (Cf: Elbing, 1984; Howard, 1967; Mumford, 1975; Warmington, 1975), which contain useful insights. While it is proposed to draw support from the conclusions of these writers, the approach of this paper will be to match the requirements of creative processes, tasks and persons with the demands of creative and non-creative organizations and to make some propositions about the potential stressors for creative managers. The stress potential with reference to the creative owner/non-owner managers occupying creative/non-creative roles in creative non-creative organizations will be examined. Coping strategies, especially those recommended in the literature, will also be discussed.

## II THE CONCEPT AND THEORY OF JOB-STRESS

The concept of stress in psychology is an adaptation from physics/engineering, where it "refers to the internal force generated within a solid

body by the action of any external force which tends to distort the body; 'strain' is the resulting distortion, and the external force producing the distortion is called 'load'" (Marshall and Cooper, 1979). One of the early uses of the concept of stress in psychology was by Cannon (1935), who defined stress in terms of some temporary distortion due to external forces and the organism's efforts to return to its natural state. It is viewed as an outcome of the homeostatic tendency of the organism. He also observed that the physiological reactions of the organism are the same whether it is a flight or a fight. Based on these concepts, Selye (1946) formulated the 'general adaptation syndrome', consisting of three stages, namely, (1) the alarm reaction, (2) resistance, and (3) exhaustion. Thus, it is clear that originally, stress was conceived as an outcome of overload on the individual. It was a natural extension of the concept in engineering.

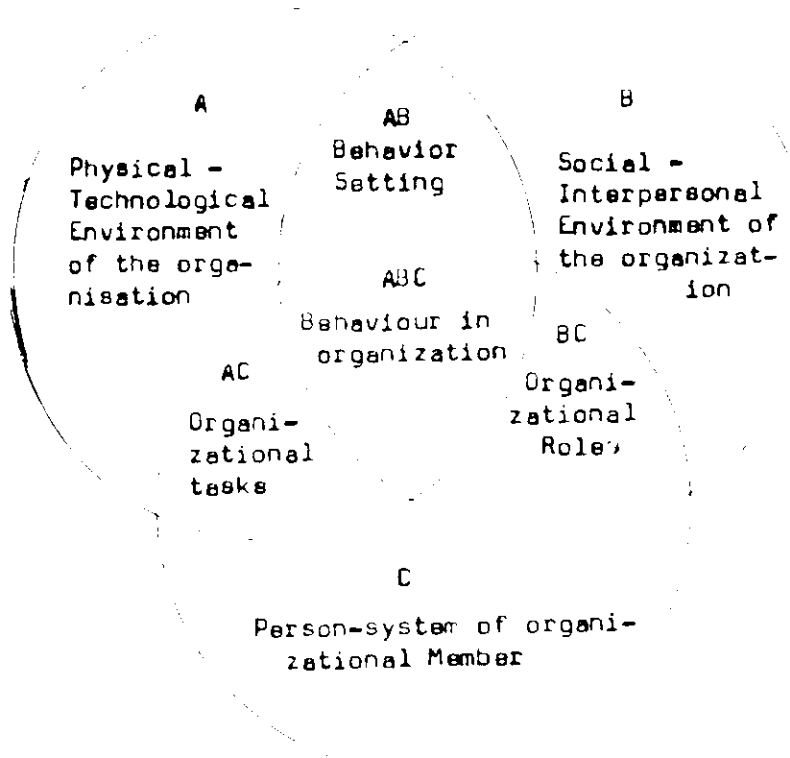
During the 1950s and after, the concept of stress underwent a change, and was begun to be viewed as arising out of a lack of person-environment fit. Wolf (1953) was the first to conceive of stress as a dynamic and inevitable state of human organism. He contends that "since stress is a dynamic state within an organism in response to a demand for adaptation, and since life itself entails constant adaptation, living creatures are continuously in a state of more or less stress" (Wolf and Goodell, 1968). The concept of overload borrowed from the physical sciences was also getting modified slowly. Basowitz et al. (1955) caution that "we should not consider stress as imposed upon the organism, but as its response to internal or

external processes which reach those threshold levels that strain its physical and psychological integrative capacities close to or beyond their limits." Lazarus (1966) points out the importance of the individual's perception in causing stress for himself. This is "not a simple perception of the elements of a situation, but a judgement, an inference in which the data are assembled to a constellation of ideas and expectations". Researchers, therefore, are more concerned with the characteristics of the individual rather than the environment as responsible for stress-generation. The environment which is stressful to one individual may not be so for another. Hence the investigation into the relationship between personality traits and stress. The pioneering work in this field was done by Rosenman et al. (1964 & 1966) who found a strong relationship between the speed and impatience in a person's behavior (Type-A behavior) and coronary heart diseases. Appley and Trumbull (1967), cite research evidence to show that personality, demographic factors, physical make-up, past experience and motivation are primarily responsible for a person's ability or inability for coping with stress. They have devised a method of constructing an individual's vulnerability profile, and have found that well-adjusted, integrated and mature individuals showed less performance-decrement in stress situations than did persons not so classified. The emerging model views stress as an outcome of person-environment fit.

A similar model is proposed by McGrath (1976), which is more relevant to the <sup>present</sup> discussion because the environmental variables chosen are organization specific (see Figure-1). The focus is on stress in an organizational context



Figure - 1



Source : McGrath, (1976)

According to McGrath's scheme, stress as well as its sources arise out of the interaction among : (1) the physical/technological environment of the organization, (2) the social and interpersonal environment of the organization and (3) the person-system of the member. There are, therefore, six sources of stress, namely, (a) the task system, (b) the role system, (c) the behavior setting, (d) the physical environment, (e) the social system, and (f) the person system.

In the context of a creative manager's job-stress, the task-role-social system - person system interaction will be the major source of stress.

Such stress is generally known as Organizational Role Stress (ORS). Role conflict and role ambiguity were two of the earliest identified components of role stress (Kahn et al. 1964); and researchers have been working on the identification and elaboration of the components of role stress (Parasuraman and Alutto, 1981; Van Sell et al. 1981). Pareek (1983) summarises these and adds a few others identified by factor analysing the responses of his sample. Thus, there are ten components of role stress on the Organizational Role Stress (ORS) Scale developed by him. They are:

- (1) Inter-Role Distance (IRD), which is the conflict among the different roles occupied by the same individual.
- (2) Role-Stagnation (RS), which is the inability or lack of opportunity for the individual to change roles as he grows.
- (3) Role Expectation Conflict (REC), which is part of role ambiguity and is the result of the conflicting expectations of role-senders about the same role.
- (4) Role Erosion (RE), which is the feeling on the part of the role occupant that certain functions which legitimately belong to his role are performed by other roles or that others are given credit for his performance.
- (5) Role Overload (RO) which is the feeling that the expectations from the various roles occupied by a person are too many for him to fulfil satisfactorily.

- (6) Role Isolation (RI) which is the feeling that one's role has not got sufficiently strong linkages with other roles in the same role-set.
- (7) Personal Inadequacy (PI) which is the feeling that the role-occupant does not have the skills, training and competence to perform the functions associated with his role.
- (8) Self-Role Distance (SRD), which is a measure of the mismatch between one's concept of self and the functions one has to perform on account of one's role.
- (9) Role Ambiguity (RA) which is the result of the lack of perceived clarity of role expectations.
- (10) Resource Inadequacy (RI<sub>n</sub>) which is the feeling that the role occupant is not provided with adequate resources to perform his role effectively.

The dimensions of the task-system are often intertwined with those of the role system, and hence many of the role stress components have their roots also in the nature of the task system. However, there are certain specific types of stress which have a primary source in the task system. Examples of such stress are task difficulty (McGrath, 1976), uncertainty of outcome, physical hazards associated with the task, etc. In a study of 22 R & D labs, Hall and Lawler (1970) considered three other sources of task-stress, namely, (1) quality pressure, (2) time pressure, and (3) financial responsibility pressure, and found that these were generated by the job design and were, except in the case of time pressure causally linked to job-involvement and performance.

The study of job-stress assumes importance because of its impact on the health, attitude and behavior of the individual. It is rather well-known that stress has adverse effects on the individual's health (French et al. 1982). Among the attitudinal outcomes are the adverse effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bedeian and Armenakis, 1981; Beehr and Newman, 1978; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972; Pestonjee & Singh, 1982; Van Sell et al., 1981). Psychological effects, such as boredom, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic diseases etc. are discussed in French et al (1982). On the behavioral outcomes, the evidence is mixed (Briet and Aldag, 1977; Hall and Lawler, 1970). This is in support of the inverted-U hypothesis. Of the person-system variables that affect the outcome, some of the oft studied ones are locus of control (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Beehr and Schuler, 1982), speed of behavior (Rosenman et al. 1964 & 1966), trait anxiety (McGrath, 1970; Spielberger, 1966) and demographic characteristics (Indik et al. 1964; Rizzo, et al. 1970). It may be interesting to see if creativity is associated with any of these traits or if there are <sup>other</sup> traits of the creative person which might cause him stress. As we have suggested earlier, there could be two sources of creativity-induced stress : (1) Stress arising from the special traits of the creative person; (2) Stress arising from the special features of the creative process. The latter may be subdivided into two: (a) stress associated with the ideational process, which is often independent of the organizational context; (b) stress associated with the implementational process, which is often moderated by the organizational context

dealt with  
These three aspects will be / under separate headings, the third of which will also discuss the special case of the owner-manager. The last section will be devoted to a discussion of the coping strategies for the creative manager.

### III STRESS-POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE PERSONALITY

Research on the distinguishing traits of a creative person is quite extensive. This is reflected in the fact that Torrance (1965) could make a list of sixty-two such traits which were then rated by a panel of experts for their close association with the creative person. As a result, Torrance obtained 19 traits that are most characteristic (grouped under (a) courage and independence, (b) risk-taking, (c) persistence, (d) self-sufficiency, (e) inquisitiveness and (f) intellectual, motivational and emotional complexity) and 17 traits that are least characteristic (grouped under (a) passivity, (b) abrasiveness, (c) attractiveness to others and (d) miscellaneous including physical strength, talkativeness and punctuality) of the creative person (Khandwalla, 1984).

It may be noted that the Torrance traits are intended only to delineate a broad profile of the creative person. There is no implication that every trait is applicable to every creative individual. Moreover, the limitations of the methodology employed for identifying these traits are such that there may even be some contradictions. Therefore, there is <sup>need</sup> also look for other supporting evidences from the literature before speculating on the stress potential of these traits.

Petrosko (1983) summarises Eric Hoffer's thoughts on creativity. Hoffer distinguishes between the environmental factors and individual factors that contribute to creativity. There are ten individual factors, all of which are not personality factors. However, there is much in common between these and the traits identified by Torrance (1965). Direct examples are self-confidence and persistence. Besides these, there are related traits such as divergent production, ability to work with any type of techniques and belief in the possibility of sudden and drastic change, which may be classified under complexity in Torrance's scheme. Love of leisure (or the availability of leisure) as a condition for creative production is indicative of the creative person's difficulty with deadlines. These traits are also supported by other researchers. Roseman, in one of the pioneering studies (1931) of the traits of 710 inventors found that perseverance, followed by self-confidence, was the most frequently mentioned characteristic of successful inventors. Mackinnon (1968) found that the creative architects are more self-confident than the non-creative. A study of the 19th century scientists by Hardin (1959) showed that many of them had substantial leisure at their disposal and that they worked at their own pace, not being bound by the deadlines set by any organization.

Hoffer's 'playfulness' and 'inner tension' do not find a place in the Torrance-list. However, there is some support for these in the findings of other researchers. Playfulness is observed to be associated with divergent thinking (Khandwala, 1984). Studies by Lieberman (1977) and Parnes (1972),

have found that 'free association' and 'removal of brakes' are critical to creative production, especially in its incubation phase. As for inner tension, it is <sup>the</sup> cornerstone of the psychoanalytical theory of creativity. The Freudians believe that inner tension due to maladjustment is the source of creativity (Hall, 1954). Recent studies by Finch (1977) and Kandil and Torrance (1978) offer supportive evidence to the Freudian position. Finch observed that the socially and emotionally maladjusted children have higher creative potential than the adjusted ones. Kandil and Torrance got a slightly modified result that the maladjusted children scored significantly higher on fluency and originality, but not on flexibility. Thus, there seems to be some evidence that inner tension is one of the conditions for creativity, though one may not agree with the extreme psychoanalytic position that creativity is an outcome of neurosis. The yearning for new things can be viewed as an outcome of discontent, incongruity, incapability to adjust and so forth. In this sense, the creative person will always be under tension.

As a consequence of these and the similar characteristics of the creative person, he is likely to behave differently at the work place too. Though there are no empirical studies showing such differences, there are a few experience-based writings on these. According to Howard (1967), the behavior of the creative person in the work place is characterised by: (1) above average intelligence, (2) dislike for structured leadership, (3) insistence on getting explanations, (4) desire for independence and permissive work atmosphere (5) boredom with routine (6) frequent need for exception to rules, (7) desire

for tangible results and recognition, (8) irritability at system and/or personnel inadequacies, (9) desire for objectivity and (10) insistence on concise and timely information. It is not implied that all these traits would stand scientific scrutiny. They do, however, provide a general idea about the creative person's behavior at work place.

Based on the discussion of the traits associated with a creative person, one may speculate on the type of potential stressors he may encounter in an organizational situation. For example, his independence may involve him in interpersonal conflicts and loneliness; his risk-taking nature may bring in problems of uncertainty-tolerance; or the complexity of his mind may cause boredom in a structured situation. Stresses that are likely to be associated with the traits of the creative person are listed in Figure-2.

Figure - 2

<u>TRAITS OF THE CREATIVE PERSON</u>	<u>TYPE OF POTENTIAL STRESS IN ORGANIZATIONS</u>
1. Courage and Independence	Pressures of conformity Interpersonal conflict Loneliness Social Boycott.
2. Risk taking	Uncertainty and ambiguity Loneliness Exposure to hazards Material and psychological losses
3. Persistence and Determination	Interpersonal conflicts Exposure to hazards.
4. Self-sufficiency	Loneliness
5. Inquisitiveness	Result anxiety Exposure to hazards
6. Complexity (Intellectual motivational & emotional)	Goal ambiguities Task difficulties Emotional stress Interpersonal problems Boredom with routines.
7. Love of leisure and work at one's own pace.	Time Pressure.



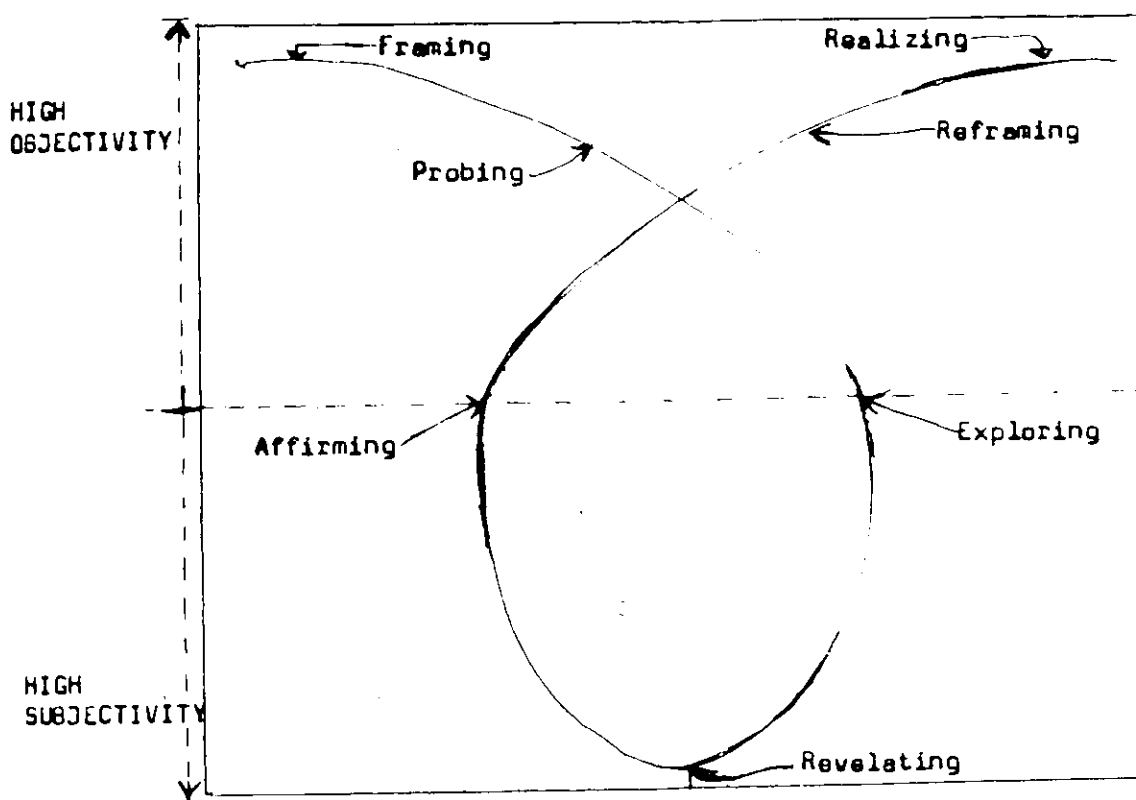
#### IV STRESS POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

One of the earliest notions about the creative process is that it involves four stages, namely, (1) preparation, (2) incubation, (3) illumination and (4) verification. (Poincaré, 1952; Vinache, 1952; Wallace 1926). In the preparation stage the problem is studied in all its details, with an effort to structure, define and analyse it using known procedures. During the next stage the problem is, so to say, forgotten by the conscious mind; all the same, it is alive and active in the sub-conscious mind. Then there is an unexpected illumination wherein the solution to the problem is revealed to the conscious mind. Apparently, this solution is not inductively obtained, and so has to be verified against the observed phenomenon. Thus, the creative process involves both convergent and divergent thinking (Khandwalla, 1984). During the initial and final stages the convergent thinking activity predominates. Divergent thinking occurs when the person gets deeply and even emotionally involved with the problem, and hence there is a subjective element in it. This is why a solution thus obtained has to be verified objectively using convergent thinking.

The journey of the creative mind starts from the objective, passes through the subjective and returns to the objective. The transitional stages are especially stressful. An elaboration of these stages is available in Motamedi (1982), who identifies seven stages in the creative process, namely, (1) framing, (2) probing, (3) exploring, (4) revealing, (5) affirming, (6) reframing and (7) realizing; (see Figure-3 for a graphic representation of these stages).

Figure - 3

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE STAGES IN THE CREATIVE  
PROCESS



Source : Adapted from Motamedi (1982)

The difference between the traditional scheme and the Motamedi scheme is that the latter stresses the subjective and the 'irrational' aspects of the creative process. The irrationality and the subjectivity of the creative process lies in the fact that it involves a unique way of experiencing a fact of life. Rogers (1976) defines the creative process as "the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events,

people or circumstances of his life on the other". Brunner (1967) thinks that creativity is a 'choiceful' act that produces effective surprise, the triumph of which is that it takes one beyond common ways of experiencing the world. An empirical support for the irrationality of creativity is provided by Brown (1977), who studied several scientific break-throughs and found that each of them involved an 'irrational, illogical element, a suspension of reason together with a mental leap of creative insight. Mota-medi (1978) suggests that it is the intimate, emotional relationship with the phenomenon that makes the individual behave irrationally with it and consequently go beyond the everyday routine which paves the way for a new understanding of the phenomenon. It is this 'tryst' with the unknown or the unfamiliar on a personal basis that is a major source of stress for the individual.

During the first two stages of framing and probing, the individual works with known tools and theories. The operations are largely objective except perhaps for the selectivity in rubricising the reality and circumscribing its boundaries to provide a frame for it (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Maslow, 1968). However, the third stage of 'exploring', extends to the subjective and intuitive ways of experiencing things, where the coexistence of antithetical ideas and images of the phenomenon is also appreciated (Rothenberg, 1979). There may be shifts in the conception of the problem and the alternatives considered (Guilford, 1979). There would also be a feeling that the existing paradigms are insufficient and the individual must be prepared to abandon his original

frame, and to question his favourite theories, paradigms and modus operandi. This stage where the individual is often required to give up old perceptions, encourage a self-doubt and define a new role for himself can be especially stressful (May 1975). Some of the likely stresses are :

- (1) doubts about one's abilities and perceptions,
- (2) feelings of puzzlement and uncertainty (that it could be a never-ending search with a basic error of judgement) and
- (3) fear of failure (Motamedi, 1982).

A similar stressful stage is when the person emerges out of his subjectivity after the revealing stage. During the affirmation, reframing and the evaluation stages, a major stress is the anxiety of external evaluation. This is especially true if the previous findings are inadequate, incomplete or false. The anxiety of being evaluated by experts is followed by the difficulties in communicating the new idea to the laymen.

These are some of the stresses that would possibly be experienced by a creative individual acting alone. However, when he is acting as <sup>the</sup> leader of a team, the nature of the creative process imposes on him the additional worry about keeping up the group-morale during the uncertainty-phase. James Watson who discovered the structure of DNA has pointed out what he experienced during his work with his team (Watson, 1968):

- (1) Emotional distress about the uncertainty of results;
- (2) Feelings of 'stuckness';
- (3) Worry and fear that nothing significant would be found;
- (4) Dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics among the members of the investigating team;

- (5) Difficulties in keeping up group-morale during the period of uncertainty.

The stresses inherent in the creative process are summarised in Figure-4.

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Figure - 4

STRESSES INHERENT IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

1. Self-doubt
2. Agony of abandoning pet notions & theories
3. Feeling of 'stuckness'
4. Outcome uncertainty
5. Fear of failure
6. Interpersonal problems, (if working in a team)
7. Difficulties in keeping up group morale (if working as leader of a team).
8. Evaluation anxiety
9. Communication anxiety

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V. STRESS POTENTIAL FOR CREATIVE MANAGERS

The previous two sections were devoted to the examination of the stress potential for the creative individual arising out of the special characteristics of the creative person and the creative process. The organizational context in which the creative manager operates will exert a moderating influence on such stresses. The organizational context may enhance or mitigate the creative manager's stress, depending on whether the person occupies a creative role in a creative organization and the like. It is also possible to find subtle differences between the owner-manager and the professional manager.

The exercise of managerial creativity involves two processes :  
(1) ideational process, <sup>and</sup> (2) implementational process. The ideational process is largely an individual affair (or at the most a small group effort) and so it involves all the stress associated with the creative process. The implementation of the ideas generated and accepted is the typically managerial part of organizational creativity. This is why the proper implementation of even a borrowed idea may pass for managerial creativity. A commonly observed obstacle to organizational creativity is the lack of leadership qualities on the part of idea-men. Following the finding by Smith and Miner (1983) that entrepreneurs scored significantly less on managerial motivation, there is a current hypothesis that innovativeness and leadership could be negatively correlated. Though this hypothesis is not supported by other studies (Albert, 1977), there is evidence to say that the two variables are not positively related either (Albert, 1977; Taylor, 1978). So it is possible that there are several idea-men who may not have the necessary leadership qualities for implementing their ideas. This may become a source of stress for them.

Leadership and political use of power are especially critical for innovation in large bureaucratic organizations (Kanter, 1982; Quinn, 1985). Such organizations are disinclined to promote creative ideas because of problems associated with their size and administrative structure. Size-related barriers include risk of losing an existing investment base or of cannibalising on existing products, difficulties in changing the internal culture, resistance from organised groups from within or outside, and psychological/economic costs

of changes. Among the bureaucratic barriers to innovation are top management isolation from the shop floor or customers, intolerance of deviants, short-time perspectives, inflexible accounting practices, excessive planning and rationalization, excessive bureaucracy with several stages of approval, and inappropriate incentive schemes which do not reward risk-takers or punish 'opportunity-losers'.

These barriers are characteristic of non-creative organizations and are a source of stress for the creative manager. Frustration and boredom will be the major type of stress for him. In the creative organization, on the other hand, it is role ambiguity, role expectation conflict, and inter personal problems that will be the predominant stressors for the creative manager. This is because creative organizations usually require a fluid and loosely defined structure with a lot of criss-cross relationships and temporary power centres (see Figure-5).

There is yet another type of organization which professes to be encouraging creativity and innovation but hardly practices (Elbing, 1984). Role expectation conflict, role-erosion and self-role distance are the most likely stressors for creative managers in such organizations. This is because they are given to understand from the top management statements that they are free to make innovations provided they can increase productivity, profitability and group morale, but are later evaluated by traditional norms such as a semblance of 'hard' work, obedience to authority, preservation of the conservative culture, and so on (Elbing, 1984).

Figure - 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

1. Constant emphasis on the mission and vision of the organization through slogans, mottoes and other statements.
2. Market orientation
3. Small flat structures
4. Multiple approaches to problems
5. Multiple reporting relationships and overlapping territories
6. A free and somewhat random flow of information
7. Many centres of power with some budgetary flexibility
8. A high proportion of managers with loosely defined positions or with ambiguous assignments
9. Frequent and smooth cross-functional contact, a tradition of sharing credit widely and emphasis on lateral rather than vertical relationships as a source of resources, information and support.
10. A reward system that emphasizes investment in people and projects rather than payment for past services, wherein outstanding work, even if it is on a losing project, is well-recognized and rewarded.
11. 'Skunk working' and interactive learning with little regard for the level and status of a person in the organization.

Source : Adapted from Kanter (1982) and Quinn (1985).



Finally, there is the special case of owner-managers, who are supposed to have considerable autonomy about what to do with their organizations. The benefits of being independent owner-managers are many, such as freedom to make decisions, accountability only to oneself, feeling of achievement, total involvement, ability to respond quickly to changes, and the satisfaction of having personal contact with employees and direct impact on the company. These, however, are not without costs, which include loneliness, personal sacrifices of time, money and several simple pleasures of life, burden of responsibility, helplessness in the face of uncontrollable forces and friction with partners and employees (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). The costs are obviously a source of stress. The most dominant among these is found to be loneliness (Gumpert and Boyd, 1984), which is at the root of many other stress-problems of the owner-manager. Loneliness of the owner-manager, according to Gumpert and Boyd, results from (1) lack of resources to hire people at the top level, with whom he can share his ideas and problems; (2) his innovative ideas which others may not understand; (3) lack of time to spend with family and friends; (4) the need, like that of political leaders, to suffer his ailments silently and secretly, because disclosure of ill-health may spoil his public image and business credibility; and (5) solitary pursuits of unconventional paths. Other stress-sources for the creative owner-managers are time-pressure, boredom in having to attend to routine tasks, interpersonal conflicts, outcome uncertainty, fear of failure and the like.

Figure-6 provides a summary of this section by listing the predominant stress-sources in various organizational contexts for the creative professional

Figure - 6

STRESS - POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE MANAGER IN VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

CREATIVE ORGANIZATION		NON-CREATIVE ORGANIZATION			
CREATIVE ROLE	NON-CREATIVE ROLE	CREATIVE ROLE	NON-CREATIVE ROLE		
CREATIVE PROFESSIONAL MANAGER	(1) Goal/role ambiguity Outcome uncertainty Exposure to hazards Task difficulty & uncertainty Exposure to public criticism Evaluation anxiety Communication anxiety Role expectation conflict Difficulties in keeping up group morale Time Pressure	(2) Boredom Frustration Self-role distance Role-stagnation Unfavourable social comparison Personal inadequacy Role isolation Approach-avoidance conflicts about job	(3) Pressures of conformity Resource inadequacy Role expectation conflict Interpersonal conflicts Role isolation Goal/role ambiguity Outcome uncertainty Evaluation anxiety Communication anxiety Task difficulty Time pressure Difficulties in keeping up group morale	(4) Boredom Frustration Self-role distance Personal inadequacy Approach avoidance conflicts about job Interpersonal conflict	
	CREATIVE OWNER-MANAGER	(5) Loneliness Role Conflict Outcome uncertainty Exposure to hazards Task difficulty Exposure to public criticism Communication anxiety Difficulties in keeping up group morale Time pressure Fear of failure Interpersonal Conflict	(6) (This situation is unlikely to exist in the long run)	(7) (This situation is unlikely to exist)	(8) (This situation is unlikely to exist)

manager and the creative owner-manager. This list takes for granted the stresses arising out of the special characteristics of the creative person and the creative process, and concentrates on those peculiar to the organizational context. In the classificatory scheme

adopted, the organizational context get defined in terms of the 'creativity' or otherwise of the role and organization and the autonomy enjoyed by the role-occupant. Thus, there are eight possible organizational contexts. However, three of these (situations 6, 7 and 8 of Figure-6) are unlikely to exist. This is because of the underlying assumption of the autonomy of the owner-manager. A creative owner manager is quite unlikely to set up a non-creative organization. So situations 7 and 8 are ruled out. In a creative organization, however, it is true that the owner-manager may have to attend to non-creative tasks and routines. Under the assumptions of autonomy, he will not continue in a non-creative role for long. He will delegate those tasks to subordinates and choose for himself a creative role in the organization.

be admitted

it should be admitted that the stressors listed in this paper are not all supported by empirical research. In fact, very few of them are. However, the basic hypothesis that the creative manager is susceptible to greater stress than the non-creative seems to be reasonable. There is also an empirical study (Pamperin, 1983) which offers support to this hypothesis. In a study of 117 school social workers, Pamperin observed that creativity had a moderating effect on the relationship between role ambiguity and job

It was also found that satisfaction. <sup>^</sup> highly creative social workers experienced greater role ambiguity and role-conflict. A lot more research is required so that the types of creativity-induced stress are identified and specified.

## VI COPING STRATEGIES

Coping with stress is often considered to be a matter of personal capabilities. Some people have greater stress-tolerance than others. It may be a reasonably safe assumption that creative people are more stress tolerant than the non-creative. The reason is once again their personality traits which, for instance, make them love risk, uncertainty, and adventure, and find solace in independent thought and action. They are not fickle individuals who are overly dependent on social support. The sum total of these traits may be characterised as the 'Ulysses-syndrome', after the great Greek hero, whose wander-lust could not be quenched by twenty years of risky adventure and thereafter by the loving company of his wife and son. The creative mind is also bitten by a 'travel-bug'; he travels through the uncertain domains and seems to derive immense satisfaction from his adventures fraught with risks and uncertainties. It appears that the creative act itself is a coping device for him (McGrath, 1976).

While this opinion may hold true in some cases, scholars are not agreed on its generalizability. For one thing, there is no negative correlation between satisfaction and stress level. In the Boyd and Gumpert study (1983), almost 100% of the 450 entrepreneurs felt that their career is a source of satisfaction for them. However, almost 65% of them had one or

or more of the psychosomatic ailments associated with stress. The creative managers also may experience a similar problem. It could be that since the creative persons are emotionally more sensitive and mentally more complex than the ordinary person, their feelings, whether satisfaction or stress, are more intense than those of the ordinary folk. Besides, the novelty of their ideas often force them to be independent and/or involve them in interpersonal conflicts. Perhaps they would be eager to seek social support provided there are like-minded companions.

The literature on stress recommends several strategies for coping with stress. Newman and Beehr (1979) have identified more than fifty such pieces of writings with recommended coping strategies. They have classified them into personal strategies and organizational strategies. Although many of them are speculative in nature and not research-based, they give an idea of <sup>the</sup> current thinking about coping strategies. Another scheme of classification had been proposed by Kahn et al. (1964), where they talk about :

- (a) Class-I strategies which are aimed at objective problem situation,
- (b) Class-II strategies which are aimed at tension and threat in an emotional or defensive manner, and
- (c) Class-III strategies which are aimed at problems resulting from earlier coping attempts.

In a study by Anderson et al. of ninety owner-managers (1977), it was found that in coping with environmentally induced stress, Class I strategies are the most useful vis-a-vis organizational effectiveness; the Class II strategies, however, decrease organizational effectiveness. Moreover, internality was associated

with Class I coping and externality with Class II, and it was the locus of control, not the objective characteristics of the situation or the level of available resources, that determined the type of coping. Since creative people generally believe they can change things and that they are not totally at the mercy of fate, it is possible that many of them have strong internality and so are likely to adopt Class I coping strategies.

Many of the coping strategies <sup>re</sup>commended specifically for creative managers are aimed at reducing inter-personal conflicts. This is because <sup>stress for</sup> the major sources of the creative manager are his emotional sensitiveness, mental complexity, and novelty of ideas, which may engender problems of communicating with others, getting his ideas accepted and mobilizing resources and support for implementing his novel ideas. Boyd and Gumpert (1983) talk of five <sup>coping</sup> strategies for entrepreneurs: (1) Networking with other entrepreneurs, (2) Getting away from it all for some time (vacations), (3) Communicating with subordinates, (4) Finding communion and sharing outside the company and (4) Delegating especially the routine tasks. The recommendations of Gumpert and Boyd (1984) are similar, who further think that a certain amount of rearrangement of the workplace so as to have more interactions would also be useful. Elbing (1984) also emphasizes the value of social support and advises creative managers to get their proposals accepted by a task force before presenting it to the top management. The problem of mobilizing social and political support is seen to be a major

stressor for creative entrepreneurs and IGV managers by MacMillan (1983) who recommends the following coping strategies: (1) Co-opt the obstructing group, (2) Build a coalition, (3) Bypass the resisting group (through their superiors, for example), (4) Reduce the stakeholders' risk, (5) Develop an influence network, (6) Establish credibility, by offering guarantees, etc., (7) Develop rapport by stressing commonality, seeking advice and providing help, (8) Forge keystone alliances, and (9) Anticipate difficulties and plan for them. The basic assumption underlying all these recommendations is that the major source of stress for the creative manager is inter-personal problems, which is to some extent true, for reasons discussed above. Other strategies like meditation, having a philosophy of life, psychological strengthening/withdrawal, behavior modification, changing occupation, changing one's environment, developing social support, emotional-defensive behavior and problem-solving behavior are discussed in Newman and Bucher (1979).

As for the organisational strategies for making the creative manager cope better with stress, they are not substantially different from the strategies of building a creative organisation; these are discussed elsewhere in this paper (Cf. Elbing, 1984; Kanter, 1982; Molz, 1984; Quinn, 1985; also see Figure-5). Coping strategies, both personal and organizational, available for the creative manager under stress are summarised in Figure-7.

Figure - 7

COPING STRATEGIES

A. PERSONAL STRATEGIES OF CREATIVE MANAGERS FOR COPING WITH STRESS :

1. Developing social support
  - (a) Within the organization, through networking, co-opting, co-alescing, bypassing, interacting, alliances, credibility and rapport building, consulting, communicating, etc.
  - (b) Outside the organization from family members, friends and like-minded people.
2. Developing a philosophy of innovation with and for, not in spite of, people.
3. Psychological withdrawal/strengthening (Meditation)
4. Physical withdrawal from tasks for sometime (vacation).
5. Delegating routine tasks
6. Behavior modification
7. Occupational change
8. Emotional-defensive behavior
9. Problem-solving behavior

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE COPING ABILITIES OF CREATIVE MANAGERS :

1. Clarify the mission and vision of the organization through statements, mottos & slogans.
2. Encourage market orientation.
3. Have small, flat organization
4. Allow multiple approaches
5. Allow multiple reporting
6. Allow free and random flow of information
7. Create many centres of power with discretion at various levels.
8. Avoid strict job-descriptions and elaborate planning.
9. Allow skunk-working and interactive learning
10. Install a reward system that rewards risks taken and penalises opportunities missed.
11. Encourage horizontal rather than vertical relationships

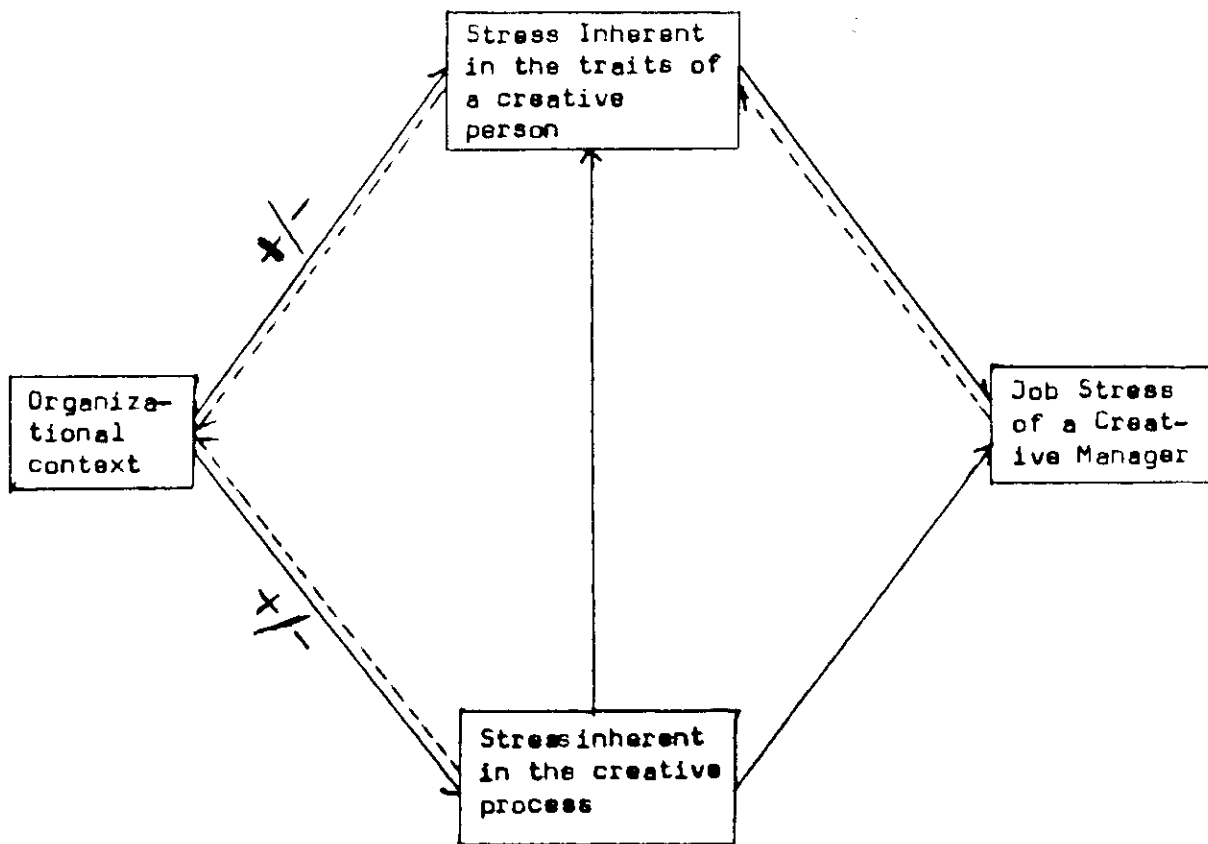


VIII CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to identify the job-stress of a creative manager. The basic hypothesis is that the special traits of the creative person and the nature of creative process are such that they may induce certain kinds of stress, which are not so common in the non-creative person. The organizational context will act as a moderating variable. The emerging model, therefore, would show the creative manager's job-stress as a consequence of the interaction among these three variables (see Figure-8).

Figure - 8

SOURCES OF STRESS FOR A CREATIVE MANAGER



As explained elsewhere in this paper, the organizational context may have a positive or negative influence on the stress inherent in the nature of creative process or <sup>in</sup> the traits of the creative person, depending on the type of stress and the nature of the context. The reverse influence is not immediate, but results from the long-term coping strategies adopted, and so are shown by dotted lines. It may be recalled that a large number of coping strategies envisage changes in the organizational context to accommodate the special needs of creative people (Cf: Figure-7). Another long-term effect (also shown by <sup>a</sup> dotted line) is that of stress on the traits of the individual. The creative process remains largely unaffected, except for the moderating influence of the organizational context on the stress inherent in it. This is apparently the reason why the coping strategies are directed either to the traits of the person or to the organizational context. Obviously, it is very difficult to manipulate the creative process. The ambivalent influence of the organizational context on stress may create problems for the choice of coping strategies. For example organizational changes which are intended to reduce boredom, frustration, self-role distance, role stagnation etc., may increase role ambiguity, role conflict, interpersonal conflict and so on. Hence a judicious combination of organizational and personal strategies will have to be designed to suit each person's requirements so that the creative manager may be able to work with minimum undesirable stress-consequences.

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