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## A creative industries perspective on open strategy drivers

### Joanna Radomska

Department of Strategic Management, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Poland

e-mail: joanna.radomska@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-1597-8947

### Przemysław Wołczek

Department of Strategic Management, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Poland

e-mail: przemyslaw.wolczek@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-5388-985X

### Monika Hajdas

Department of Marketing Management, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Poland

e-mail: monika.hajdas@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0003-1006-2486

### Mikołaj Klimczak

Department of Microeconomics and Institutional Economics, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Poland

e-mail: mikolaj.klimczak@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0003-4761-3421

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**Abstract:** Open strategy is a widely discussed research area, including the themes of organization design, open innovation, and open business models. However, the contextual perspective to analyse this concept is scarce. This paper addressed this issue by providing a framework highlighting a set of drivers that may affect transparency and inclusiveness as dimensions of open strategy and proposed these drivers by exploring the context of the creative industries representing the activities that differ in their business ecosystem. However, they are very similar in some respects (e.g., generating ideas, imagination, copyrights, intellectual property). These similarities make it interesting to bring the CI as

the context for investigating industry factors that impact the strategy's opening to understand the drivers that may hinder or foster its implementation. The authors believe the proposed framework could guide the decision-making process by providing the unfavourable and conducive drivers that might affect open strategy implementation.

**Keywords:** open strategy (OS), creative industry drivers (CI), transparency, inclusiveness, creativeness

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## 1. Introduction

Open strategy (OS) has gained considerable recognition in the literature - openness is perceived as essential in the perspective of resources possessed and reconfigured while seeking competitive advantage (Whittington & Yakis-Douglas, 2020). The idea of OS is rooted in the contestation of perceiving the strategy-making process as secretive and elitist, as established by Whittington et al. (2011). As drivers of such a shift from a secret and exclusive to an open and inclusive approach, one may mention the spread of business education, the development of new social media technologies, and the rise of interdependent ecosystems (Whittington et al., 2016).

Doz and Kosonen (2008, p. 75) defined OS as a process where 'companies actively co-strategise and experiment with multiple stakeholders in line with a comprehensive architecture for staying connected with the world'. Previous research on open strategy recognised its dimensions, practices, dilemmas or benefits and risks (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021; Hautz et al., 2017; Ohlson & Yakis-Douglas, 2019; Seidl et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018, Adobor, 2019; Dobusch et al., 2019; Luedicke et al., 2017). Another stream of research also focused on open strategy enablers (Seidl & Werle, 2018), however, because of its complicated and complex nature, the theory of enablers remains underdeveloped (Schmidt et al., 2020). This is the research gap that the study addressed by applying contextual lenses. The authors were inspired by Hautz et al. (2017), who claimed that although the OS has gained considerable attention among scholars, it clearly lacks contextual approaches, which would help to understand more nuanced contexts of conducting this strategy. Hence, an industrial context was used to revise the existing theory by offering the context-embedded research and expanding theoretical underpinnings beyond that setting (Reuber et al., 2022). Therefore, the authors believe that their contribution to OS literature is twofold, within the studied industrial context and also beyond it.

This study is conceptual in nature and aims to understand the drivers that may affect transparency and inclusiveness as dimensions of open strategy using the context of creative industries (CI). These industries are characterised by a dispersed and polarised industry structure (Throsby, 2008), organised around a few large, often multinational corporations, and many small and micro-businesses or self-employed, one-person businesses and freelancers (Rozenale & Lavanga, 2014). Although the competitive advantage of companies operating in CI is based on creative potential, this is described as a heterodox sector with high variation between firms (Salder, 2021). Such market conditions where networking practices are highly enhanced (Harc et al., 2019), will foster external cooperation and alliances. By reviewing previous studies on industry drivers and open strategy and integrating these findings with CI characteristics supplied with several illustrative examples of companies operating in these industries: Pixar (movie industry), IDEO (design consultancy), and Freitag (fashion industry), the study offers a conceptual framework of drivers that have an impact on OS.

The authors argue that as competencies and skills found in the creative industries are currently considered crucial in the 21st century (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018), the observations made in this industry can be, to some extent, more universal. By transferring the insights from creative to other industries, some theoretical generalisations were proposed for further testing. This framework outlines a more versatile set of industry drivers that may relate to OS development. By indicating these drivers, the study also addressed another critical question: *which industry characteristics foster OS development and implementation and may create an avenue for such initiatives, and which hinder these efforts and require special managerial attention?*

This paper is structured as follows: first section discusses the industrial context that impacts strategy and then investigates the specific example of strategy – open strategy concept and specific example of the industry – creative industries. The authors explored the CI characteristics that might impact OS and formulated several propositions. Next, the relations between drivers, transparency, and inclusiveness were described and the conceptual framework was developed. Finally, the insights and directions for future studies in the field of OS were provided.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1. The industrial context in strategy implementation**

Previous research on strategy has outlined that strategic choices are highly context-dependent (Elliott et al., 2018; Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). One of the examined contexts is the industry context, which has been studied since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and gained particular importance after Porter's (1980) original concept of five forces analysis was introduced. Following Porter, many authors have highlighted the importance of the industry context in the formulation (Stimpert & Duhaime, 2017) and reformulation (Huff, 1982) of strategy, as well as in firm performance (Sandberg & Hofer, 1987). An industry, defined as a group of firms producing closely related products, can be characterised by a unique set of attributes (Parkinson, 2005). While studying the industrial contexts, there are many features that researchers take into account: industry concentration, number of companies, barriers to entry and exit, level and convergence of costs, price elasticity of demand, type of product, how the product is manufactured, etc. (Lelissa, 2018). Thus, in a broader sense, a characteristic of an industry can be any parameter, both quantitative and qualitative – the only prerequisite is that such an attribute is observable, meaningful, and distinctive. Therefore, the initial assumption was that strategic choices depend not only on the company itself but also on the industry's features (Bogdanova & Karlik, 2020; Erming & Han, 2007).

This study explores industry drivers that may influence a company's strategic choices. Industry drivers and their relations with various strategies and business decisions were investigated previously in the wine industry for sustainability practices (Gabzdylova et al., 2009), in the retail sector for innovation (Pantano, 2014), in the construction industry for green practices (Ying Liu et al., 2012), in the fashion industry for sustainability and innovation (Todeschini et al., 2017), in the energy industry for R&D (Costa-Campi et al., 2014), and in retailing for digitalisation (Hänninen et al., 2017). Therefore, a contextual analysis of industry drivers, the research approach we apply in this study, has attracted some attention. This paper suggests that various industry drivers may foster or hinder open strategy.

### **2.2. Open strategy specifics**

The idea of OS is rooted in the contestation of perceiving the strategy-making process as secretive and elitist, which was introduced by (Whittington et al., 2011). This was further developed by Stack (2013), who launched open-book management, contrary to the traditional approach where the distinction between visionaries (strategy-makers) and employees (strategy-implementers) was clear and supported by the decision-making process. As drivers of such a shift from a secret and exclusive to an open and inclusive process, one could mention the spread of business education, the development of new social media technologies, and the rise of interdependent ecosystems (Whittington et al., 2016).

The OS concept is based on supporting strategic decisions at organizational structure levels and encouraging internal and external stakeholders' participation (Chesbrough & Appleyard, 2007), and thus, it refers to internal and external perspectives (Doz & Kosonen, 2008). A wide range of factors drives both, but the external one has been recognised as that with the most complex challenges (Klimas et al., 2022). This can take various forms including cooptation (acknowledged as a relational

strategy cf. Ritala & Tidström, 2014), crowdsourcing, networking, and disclosing strategic priorities (Pittz & Adler, 2016). Therefore, it integrates aspects of innovation, organizational environment, and network to build a competitive advantage and goes far beyond the traditional concept of strategy (Appleyard & Chesbrough, 2017). Openness gains particular importance when the industry settings apply the pressure to reinvent the existing business model (Dąbrowska et al., 2019). Due to its comprehensive and multi-faceted nature, this topic is still worth exploring (Adobor, 2019), primarily as most research in the OS field is devoted to a single context (Gegenhuber & Dobusch, 2017). Hence, more comparative approaches are required, including various points of view, such as organizational and industry context (Hautz et al., 2017). The discussion about OS needs to cover its two fundamental dimensions, namely inclusiveness and transparency (Hautz et al., 2017).

In exploring inclusiveness, this study focused on the number and type of stakeholders involved in the company's strategic practices. The inclusiveness dimension refers to the process in which an organization consults strategy with internal and external stakeholders who were traditionally excluded (Hautz et al., 2017; Whittington et al., 2011). Based on von Krogh & Geilinger (2019, p. 41), *inclusion is aimed at accessing and learning from internal and external knowledge sources that have traditionally not been included in a firm's strategy practice*. Therefore, inclusiveness refers to the scope of stakeholders involved in the strategy process (who should be engaged) and the type of interactions (how deep and persistent are the relations to establish). Involving stakeholders in strategising can be carried out by participation, recognised by Mantere and Vaara (2008) as a critical issue in strategy research and practice. According to Glew, O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Van Fleet (1995, p. 402) participation can be defined as *a conscious and intended effort by individuals at a higher level in an organization to provide visible extra-role or role-expanding opportunities for individuals or groups at a lower level in the organization to have a greater voice in one or more areas of organizational performance*. This approach limits participation to internal stakeholders only. Meanwhile, the discourse on the organization's strategy should include a broader scope of external stakeholders (Henisz et al., 2014; Laine & Vaara, 2015; Schmitt, 2010).

Transparency is the second fundamental dimension of OS. Two main characteristics are crucial while investigating the transparency level, i.e. the amount and type of information disclosed by the company to its internal and external stakeholders. According to Hautz et al. (2017, p. 229), transparency can be defined as *internal or external visibility of information about an organization's strategy*. Visibility refers to both the strategy formulation process (how much and what kind of information the company discloses from the strategy creation process) and the final result of this process, namely the strategy itself (how much and what type of information about the strategy content the company discloses) (Whittington et al., 2011). According to the approach presented by Baraibar-Diez et al. (2017), transparency can be considered from two perspectives: instrumental (transparency is a tool used to achieve a goal) or purposeful (transparency is an objective itself). Thus, injecting transparency in the strategising process is related to the availability of information, the characteristics of that information (such as quality or quantity), information asymmetries (Baraibar-Diez et al., 2017), and the perception of transparency by stakeholders (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016).

Although scholars have discussed the importance of transparency and inclusiveness for strategy openness, research to identify the interactions between the OS's dimensions and industry drivers is scarce (Luedicke et al., 2017). Most studies applied a single context (Gegenhuber & Dobusch, 2017), and for these reasons, broadening the analysis perspective and considering various contexts, including industrial or organizational ones, was recommended by Hautz et al. (2017). So far, however, references to industries in other research have been limited to primary industrial production (Gregori & Marcone, 2019; Triguero et al., 2020), services, or high technology (Michelino et al., 2014). One can also find single studies that targeted the CI context, willing to explore the open strategy challenges (Radomska et al., 2023). However, further contextual studies are needed.

### 2.3. Context of creative industries

For the context of this research, the authors chose creative industries. The studies on the CI sector have a multidisciplinary nature; according to Comunian (2019), CI research benefits from insights and analysis from geography, sociology, arts and humanities, media studies researchers, economists, cultural theorists, and policy experts. The paradox of the multidisciplinary nature of CI is that knowledge and understanding of how creative industries work are overly fragmented (Comunian, 2019). Following Comunian's (2019) proposition suggesting treating CI as a complex system that can be analysed from various levels, the authors decided on the meso level. They investigated the dynamics and connections linking individuals and companies in the creative industries and beyond. Considering that complex systems are perceived as open (Comunian, 2019), it was assumed that certain features of CI favour the practices of OS, understood as inclusiveness and transparency. The choice of CI as the context of this study was also inspired by the interesting insights from the previous research that suggest links between the CI and OS, for example, knowledge creation and absorption, crucial in CI, are favoured by OS (Pittz et al., 2019).

Moreover, in CI, competitive advantage lies in intangible assets such as creative potential and value creation (Brenk et al., 2018). Chesbrough and Appleyard (2007) noted that open initiatives often emerge in creative communities. Wohl (2022) pointed out that creative producers cooperate with others to create, produce, market, and circulate their products. According to Olk and West (2020), a specific industry structure of creative industries fosters the need to build open relations or to be more prone to focus on individual activity. Moreover, they include various economic activities focused on generating or exploiting knowledge and information (Myburgh & Tamaro, 2013).

There are several definitions of CI, but the classification often includes advertising, architecture, design, fashion, live entertainment, photography, software, and video games (United Nations, 2008). Each of these activities differs in their business ecosystem. However, they are similar in some respects (e.g. ideas generation, imagination, copyrights, intellectual property). These similarities make it interesting to make the CI an example of investigating industry factors that have an impact on the process of opening up the strategy to understand the drivers that may hinder or foster its implementation. Two types of drivers may affect openness: technological (Klimas et al., 2022) and non-technological factors (Dobusch & Dobusch, 2019; Whittington, 2019). Creative industries face both as they are driven either by technology or creation embedded in the social and relational capital. Therefore, a more in-depth investigation of transparency and inclusiveness, and more broadly, on OS in the context of CI characteristics, was then carried out.

The research gap the authors wanted to address was to comprehend how the characteristics of CI relate to the two OS dimensions, therefore, the following research question was proposed:

*What are the drivers of CI that may enable OS implementation?* To answer this question, the authors further reviewed some core characteristics of CI and investigated possible relations between these characteristics, as well as transparency and inclusiveness.

## 3. Conceptual development

This section overviews the creative industries' characteristics discussing their impact on OS drivers and their two dimensions: inclusiveness and transparency. Based on this, several theoretical propositions were developed.

This study used a scoping review to synthesise evidence. According to Munn et al. (2018), a scoping review is valuable for a researcher to identify and examine characteristics or factors related to a particular concept. Scoping reviews can be treated as 'reconnaissance' when the researcher wants to clarify the conceptual boundaries of a specific topic (Peters et al., 2015). As the main goal of the conceptual development was to identify key drivers of CI related to an OS concept, the scoping review proved to be a fitting approach.

To answer the research question, the authors used the Web-of-Science database to locate the relevant papers and focused on gathering high-quality articles related to the research. The authors searched works from 2000-2022 using main keywords (located in the titles) such as *creative industry/industries and creative sector/sectors*, and then identified works relating to *drivers, characteristics, and factors* and reviewed cited works of interest. This approach allowed us to identify the following CI drivers that are related to OS: symbolic and personalised output; creative, non-routine input; failure-tolerant leadership; internal passion as motivation; collective effort; challenger mindset; fluid boundaries; capricious demand causing periods of overload and downtimes; regular networking; permanent innovation. The next section of the article describes each of the mentioned drivers, using illustrative examples of practices applied by three companies representing creative industries: IDEO, Freitag, and Pixar.

### 3.1. Symbolic and personalised output

The symbolic, aesthetic, and socio-cultural value of CI and the products manufactured in these industries are an essential and distinctive feature (Frey, 2013; Lin & Lee, 2015) as the production of symbolic goods results in the generation and transfer of the meaning so that their economic value is derived from their cultural significance. Innovative output in creative products requires a constant search for inspiration (Khaire, 2017), which is enabled by the inclusiveness of various stakeholders and reliance on external sources of knowledge (Beyerlein et al., 2006). As the product is increasingly personalised, the information flow is embedded in its nature (Throsby, 2000). IDEO, a design consultancy agency known for popularising design thinking, admits that every design project extends beyond the brief and unfolds new contexts during the creative process, requiring networking (Amabile et al., 2014).

Therefore, the authors suggest that innovative and symbolic output is a feature that fosters both inclusiveness and transparency and proposes the following statement:

*Proposition 1. An industry where the product is personalised is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.2. Creative, non-routine input

The most crucial CI inputs are the creative competencies of human capital (Puchta et al., 2010; Šlehoferová, 2014). Creativity is closely linked to innovativeness as they are both based on the same or similar competencies and are supported by diversity (Hewlett et al., 2013; Prabhakar et al., 2019; Steele & Derven, 2015). As IDEO puts it: *we are creating something new to the world* (Amabile et al., 2014). Similarly, employees' creativity is positively linked to transparency, especially relational transparency, reflected by truthfulness in close relationships (Gardner et al., 2005). External transparency is also observed as CI companies publish information about completed projects, even pointing to individuals who have contributed to the success, i.e. architectural offices publish information about their previously completed or unrealised projects (Mitrache, 2012).

Freitag admits that transparency is required in their marketing, as customers need to know how they produce the goods (Budgen, 2017). Many CI companies publish more detailed information about the production process to share the knowledge and know-how with potential cooperators (Frick, 2010). Such actions are significant as they are part of the knowledge co-creation process, where transparency positively impacts the willingness to exchange resources (Haukkamaa et al., 2010). Hence, the following proposition can be offered:

*Proposition 2. An industry with more creative input required is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.3. Failure-tolerant leadership

The tolerance for experimentation and acceptance of failure are an integral part of the innovation process, which involves encouraging risk-taking and learning from one's own mistakes (Farson & Keyes, 2002). In CI, given the importance of innovation and creativity, such an approach to leadership seems particularly important and will contribute to higher transparency. Openness and honesty in communicating failures or mistakes increase trust and less formal, closer relations with stakeholders (Radomska et al., 2019). For example, in Pixar, the company's founder often comes to sessions for all new employees and talks about the mistakes Pixar has made. Such an approach aims to ensure that people do not assume the company is infallible (Catmull, 2008). IDEO also admits that teams work more effectively when people feel safe discussing mistakes and problems with one another (Amabile et al., 2014). It is also vital to perform post-mortem analyses, which may lead to exploring new areas of innovation and avoiding the duplication of mistakes (Myllyaho et al., 2004). Pixar calls the post-mortems 'the lessons learned' (Catmull, 2008). The relation between this leadership style and OS can be summarised in the following proposition:

*Proposition 3. An organization with failure-tolerant leadership is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.4. Internal passion as motivation

Internal motivation results from individuals' spontaneous need to be engaged and involved, search for challenges, and contribute with their skills and knowledge (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017). External motivation methods negatively affect internal motivation and creativity (Amabile & Fisher, 2015). As outlined by Sandoval (2018), passion and love for one's work in creative industries are supported by working conditions where the cooperation of employees with incorporated practices of democratic decision-making are mutually beneficial. Therefore, in organizations where creativity is substantial, attention is paid to support passion for work, defined as the *accumulation of the passion of individuals centralized in one location that can be noticed as 'something in the air'* (Bhansing et al., 2018 p. 9). Naturally, such a climate results in higher inclusiveness and would also increase transparency as creative individuals share their enthusiasm through engaging storytelling. Pixar is described as *a vibrant community where talented people are loyal to one another and their collective work, everyone feels that they are part of something extraordinary, and their passion and accomplishments make the community a magnet for talented people* (Catmull, 2008). It is similar to IDEO, which developed an environment where people can do their best, attract others, and keep them engaged (Amabile et al., 2014). Freitag suggests that *nobody works here just to make a lot of money. Many join us because here you can help shape things and have inspiring colleagues* (Hornung, 2020). Such a climate also attracts customers and cooperators to the brand and builds its image (Lieb, 2012; Pulizzi, 2013). Therefore, the authors propose the following:

*Proposition 4. An organization where motivation is based on internal passion fosters OS initiatives.*

### 3.5. Collective effort

Innovation in the CI is often a collective process where many heterogeneous actors and informal knowledge communities are involved (European Commission, 2016), as the extended cooperation to create innovations that meet clients' needs plays a significant role in creative companies. This is confirmed by some research results where 44% of all creative enterprises reported cooperation with partners in innovation activities. Those partnerships usually involve other enterprises from the creative sector (56%), followed by customers (47%), competitors (37%), and suppliers (36%) (Kreativwirtschaft Austria, 2017). In Pixar, every member of the production group (200-250 persons) is expected to make suggestions, so the ideas do not come just from the director or the other creative leaders. For this company, it is crucial to create a culture where the natural barriers that divide disciplines are being dismantled (Catmull, 2008). Such a collective mindset is also essential for IDEO, where Brown described what he finds attractive during job interviews: *I listen for a couple of things. When people repeatedly say 'I', not 'we', when recounting their accomplishments, I get suspicious* (Amabile et al., 2014). In Freitag, cooperation is linked to transparency

goals. The company admits that wage transparency was an important issue from the beginning, and they organised an interdisciplinary team to deal with it (Hornung, 2020).

The main benefits of the developed cooperation are obtaining the essential impulses for innovation activities such as relying on external inspirations and giving priority to the cooperation partners (Kreativwirtschaft Austria, 2017). CI companies often form clusters for cooperation, providing access to skilled staff, distinctive knowledge, and shared services, capturing valuable knowledge spillovers, and fostering innovation (Aldianto et al., 2020; Chapain et al., 2010; He & Huang, 2018). Functioning in multiple clusters allows for the flow of new ideas from one cluster to another, which enables the adoption of emerging ideas and their recombination to form novel products (Vedres & Stark, 2010). Based on the above, the following statement was formulated:

*Proposition 5. An industry with more collective nature of work is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.6. Challenger mindset

Challengers can be described as *having a disruption gene* (Snyder, 2019), which pushes them beyond their comfort zones and traditional routines. Therefore, the challenger mindset is required to perform a disruptive innovation (Christensen et al., 2006). Amabile and Gyskiewicz (1989) pointed out that 'challenge' is one of the qualities of environments that promote creativity, therefore questioning the status quo is one of the core competencies in CI (Laitinen & Meristö, 2019). This is built around considering various perspectives to question the assumptions once taken for granted. For Pixar, it is essential to embrace change and challenge the status quo – one way of achieving this is a regular injection of outsiders (Catmull, 2008). Hence, the challenger mindset can foster inclusiveness from an organizational standpoint by allowing multiple stakeholders to embed their ideas into the creative process. Thus, the authors propose the following:

*Proposition 6. An industry where challenger companies dominate is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.7. Fluid boundaries

CI companies are characterised by their willingness to break down the organizational 'silos' which is a barrier to knowledge sharing (Ardichvili et al., 2003), in line with introducing flexible labour structures where mobility and the collaborative creation of knowledge are emphasised (Creus et al., 2020). Pixar confirms that these barriers are obstacles to producing excellent outcomes in a creative business, therefore they do everything to tear them down (Catmull, 2008). This is similar to the approach in IDEO, where opportunities and spaces are created so people across disciplines and functions can interact informally and frequently (Amabile et al., 2014), Freitag also reveals 'having done away with these classic hierarchical levels' and no longer use any hierarchical names for positions (Spötter, 2021). Previous research shows that when managers allow knowledge to flow across the firms' organizational boundaries, it affects their survival. Such an outcome happens due to the development of the ecosystem of collaboration, user involvement, and an open environment (Eftekhari & Bogers, 2015). Hence, the authors suggest the following:

*Proposition 7. An organization with fluid boundaries is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.8. Capricious demand causing periods of overload and downtime

Demand in CI shows an exogenous pull for change rooted in consumers' purchasing power mixed with the endogenous need for novel forms of expression (Jones et al., 2015). Moreover, creative practice is blended within a system of relations between individual, social, and cultural factors that foster or hinder creative opportunities (Kerrigan et al., 2020). Pixar confirms that their customers want to see something new every time they go to the cinema (Catmull, 2008). It may be difficult to predict the demand for creative products and anticipate market development (Harc et al., 2019), mainly because of the constraints accompanying the possibility to predict the customer reaction, called *nobody knows* (Caves,

2000). Pixar revealed that at the outset of making their movies, they did not know if they would work (Catmull, 2008). It was the same for IDEO, as the company admits that when creating something new to the world, there was not enough feedback to lead their decisions (Amabile et al., 2014).

In the case of CI, one may observe non-objective preferences because the attributions of products are not based on objectively quantifiable parameters, making the consumption analysis more complex (Troilo, 2015). The stakeholders are included in the product development stage to reduce the risk involved. Their ideas are the innovation drivers of a product creatively adjusted to the customers' demand (Müller et al., 2009). The user-driven demand is a stimulus for product innovation, but one can also observe a client-inspired push to minimise the cost (Miles & Green, 2008). Therefore, the necessity to cope with the challenge of dealing with both periods of overload and downtimes in the production process is seen (Harc et al., 2019). Such solutions are called flexible workflows (Basu et al., 2015). Taking into account the fact that in the CI, *the very act of consumer choice is governed not just by the set of incentives described by conventional consumer demand theory, but by the choices of others (...) and that individual choices are dominated by information feedback over social networks rather than innate preferences and price signals* (Potts et al., 2008, pp. 169-170), the desire to minimise the impact of radical uncertainty of demand will encourage CI companies to be more open through the embeddedness in the social networks, where customers look for inspiration to make their own purchasing decisions. Based on that, the authors suggest the following:

*Proposition 8. An industry with a more capricious demand is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.9. Regular networking

In the case of CI, internal and external ties foster knowledge-seeking and develop organizational and social capital (Turner et al., 2013). Particular configurations of social networks enable CI companies to make innovative products and facilitate their circulation on the market (Dahlin, 2014). A loose network is crucial for small producers, who can match the skills and competencies to provide short cycles of products allowing them to deal with 'demand capriciousness' (Jeffcutt & Pratt, 2002). Therefore, the relation between various stakeholders in the network relies on information and talent sharing, interconnecting novel ideas and contexts, and shaping the typical creative process (Lampel & Germain, 2016), fostering transparency and inclusiveness. Pixar encourages their technical artists to publish their own studies and participate in industry conferences, as it keeps the company connected with the academic community (Catmull, 2008). IDEO is also actively engaged in knowledge sharing and relations with the academic community by partnering in d.school at Stanford University. In Freitag, skills of internal knowledge sharing are related to salary (Hornung, 2020). In their maturity phase, CI entities organise platforms dedicated to customers that support their processes of developing and testing new creative ideas and solutions (Landoni et al., 2020). Thus, these companies draw inspiration to create innovative solutions from the network of relations in which they are embedded (Montanari et al., 2021). Based on the above, the authors suggest the following:

*Proposition 9. An industry with a regular practice of networking is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

### 3.10. Permanent innovation

To increase the ability to operate under higher demand uncertainty blended with the high volatility of tastes, creative companies must constantly provide a high level of originality and novelty (Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2007; Jones et al., 2012; Montanari et al., 2021). Therefore, permanent innovation is a core requirement of their competitive advantage (DeFillippi et al., 2007; Wu & Wu, 2016), resulting in a higher need to cope with others and fill the ongoing need to seek inspiration. Moreover, as outlined by Koen et al. (2011), incremental technological innovation involves the refinement, improvement, and exploitation of existing technology, and gradually revealing the innovation may bring more profits even if a complete introduction is risky. Based on this, the authors suggest the following:

*Proposition 10. An industry where innovation is permanent is more favourable for OS initiatives.*

An overall summary of CI specifics and their relation with OS is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. CI specifics and key findings for inclusiveness and transparency

CI specifics	Key findings for inclusiveness	References	Key findings for transparency	References
<i>Symbolic and personalised output</i>	The constant search for inspiration requires building the inclusiveness of the various stakeholders and reliance on external sources of knowledge.	Khairi, 2017 Beyerlein et al., 2006	The personalised nature of the product requires transparency of the creation process.	Throsby, 2000
<i>Creative, non-routine input</i>	Creativity is closely linked to innovativeness by using the same or similar competencies – both skills are supported by diversity.	Hewlett et al., 2013 Prabhakar et al., 2019 Steele & Derven, 2015	Organisations are more prone to show the production processes with or without revealing sensitive data, publishing information about completed and unrealised projects and revealing the individual contribution.	Galavan et al., 2008 Johnson et al., 2008 van Gelder, 2005 Mitrache, 2012 Frick, 2010
<i>Failure-tolerant leadership</i>	Tolerance for experimentation and acceptance of failure is an integral part of the innovation process, which involves encouraging risk-taking and learning from one's mistakes.	Farson & Keyes, 2002	A willingness to perform post-mortem analysis and communication of failures to avoid further mistakes is observed. Openness and honesty in communicating failures positively impact on trust in relations between the organization and its stakeholders.	Myllyaho et al., 2004 Radomska, Wolczek, Soloduchko-Pelc, et al., 2019
<i>Internal passion as motivation</i>	Openness is supported by the willingness to search for stakeholders of similar characteristics. Attention is paid to supporting the passion for work, which enhances the chances of effective creative processes resulting in marketable products.	Bhansing et al., 2018	Sharing passion and storytelling attracts customers to the brand and builds the company's image.	Lieb, 2012 Pulizzi, 2013
<i>Collective effort</i>	Innovation is often a collective process that involves many heterogeneous actors and informal knowledge communities. As a result, it is necessary to set a context that supports joint organizational efforts and integrates social processes.	DeFillippi et al., 2007	Companies that undertake collective efforts very often form clusters as forms of cooperation, which brings access to skilled staff, distinctive knowledge, and shared services, as well as the opportunity to capture valuable knowledge spillovers, fostering innovation.	Chapain et al., 2010 Vedres & Stark, 2010 He & Huang, 2018 Aldianto et al., 2020
<i>Challenger mindset</i>	Questioning the status quo is found as one of the drivers of OS. It is built around considering various perspectives to question the assumptions once taken for granted.	Christensen et al., 2006 Laitinen & Meristö, 2019 de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009	Brands entering the market or market challengers willing to improve their competitive position must break established conventions. To be noticed, they are more open in their communication and more transparent, as their goal is to catch the customer's attention.	Morgan, 2009 de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009 Lindegaard, 2010
<i>Fluid boundaries</i>	Open strategy is driven by the willingness to introduce flexible organisation of teams, flat organisational structure, shared leadership, and knowledge sharing. As a result, building an ecosystem of collaboration, user involvement, and an open environment is observed.	Ardichvili et al., 2003 Foster, 2014 Eftekhari & Bogers, 2015	In case of loose organizational boundaries, it may be difficult to manage internal and external transparency. There are also challenges to communication among growing or often virtual teams.	Montoya et al., 2009 Whittington et al., 2011
<i>Capricious demand</i>	Changing expectations forces greater customer involvement in designing products/services. Employing freelancers and searching for talent is necessary to cope with an uncertain demand for products and services.	Müller et al., 2009 Caves, 2000 Harc et al., 2019 Basu et al., 2015	The customer needs require providing more data to be satisfied. Trustworthiness is a core approach to dealing with unstable demand. One may also observe the dilemma of retaining the most important employees/cooperators during the downturns period and recruiting competent employees/cooperators during the overload period.	Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016 Györy et al., 2012 Glassner et al., 2011
<i>Regular networking</i>	To deal with ambidextrous tensions, it is recommended to introduce a cooperative approach where dense social networks are used. Trust plays a vital role in establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with stakeholders. Internal and external ties foster knowledge-seeking and develop organizational and social capital.	Reagens & McEvily, 2003 Radomska, Wolczek, & Silva, 2019 Turner et al., 2013 Dahlin, 2014	The relation between various stakeholders involved in the network relies on information sharing. The higher degree of the social network increases the firm survival by minimising asymmetric information, which requires more information to be disclosed.	Ullah et al., 2019 Lampel & Germain, 2016 Landoni et al., 2020 Montanari et al., 2021
<i>Permanent innovation</i>	To increase the ability to operate within high demand uncertainty, more substantial volatility of tastes, and higher risks, companies must constantly provide a high level of originality and novelty. That results in the need to fill the ongoing necessity to seek inspiration, being more open to including the internal and external stakeholders' ideas and concepts in their strategic decisions.	Rozenitale & Lavanga, 2014 Townley & Beech, 2010 Alvarez et al., 2005 Cooke & Lazzarotti, 2007 Jones et al., 2012 Hotho & Champion, 2011	Transparency in this area may adversely affect the company's competitiveness as the risk of mistiming occurs and makes the disclosure of sensitive information crucial for competitors. There is also the dilemma of keeping control over the process. Moreover, revealed gradually, the innovation may bring more profits than a complete introduction.	Miles & Green, 2008 Koen et al., 2011

Source: own elaboration.

## 4. Conclusions

This paper investigated the context of a specific industry willing to shed light on the factors that may have impact on OS and analysed the characteristics of CI by focusing on the dynamics and connections between individuals (creative practitioners) and companies in the CI and beyond (Comunian, 2019). This study responds to the research calls of OS scholars who suggest addressing various industrial or organizational contexts when investigating OS (Hautz et al., 2017), as well as scholars outside the OS domain, who also highlight the benefits of context-embedded research (Gümüşay & Amis, 2021; Michailova, 2011; Tsui, 2007). The study explored to what extent a particular type of industry might influence organizations' specifics and contextually promote or inhibit OS (Matzler et al., 2014), aiming to gain a deeper understanding of how specific characteristics of CI may drive the development of OS. Based on the literature review and theoretical development, the authors identified and discussed several drivers that seem to impact on open strategy implementation. This paper is the first step in attempting to understand the OS drivers in industrial settings, and build the theory by offering propositions regarding previously unexplored relations.

### 4.1. Theoretical contribution

Two main theoretical insights result from this study. The first one regards the contribution to OS literature within the studied industrial context. The authors revised a universal (context-excluded) OS theory by highlighting how particular industrial context might affect endeavours towards implementing this strategy. Notably, the managerial decision to open the strategy might not be related not only to organizational capabilities, but also to some industry characteristics. Due to their specific features, industries may either serve as more friendly environments for OS initiatives or be more challenging in this area. Previous studies showed that transparency in the tobacco and oil industries is more challenging to accomplish (Lee & Comello, 2019). In a similar vein, not all industries are prone to OS at a comparable level. However, the earlier research did not include a comparative analysis, which could be a clue for researchers and managers in this field to address this gap and highlight which industries require special attention in OS. Such an extreme case analysis could indicate the industries that seem particularly hostile and friendly in terms of OS. Due to their characteristics, some industries may have more considerable potential for companies trying to open up their strategy. Therefore, this study opened a new direction for the OS research stream, where a more contextual analysis would be required. The current findings add to a growing body of literature on the drivers and barriers of OS, as other industries may create additional obstacles that should be also analysed and properly managed. It is worth examining whether any other industry specifics affect the introduction of transparency and inclusiveness among the CI, which should also be further extended to other industries.

OS industry drivers	Unfavourable conditions		Conducive conditions
<b>The nature of a product</b>	standardised	←→	personalised
<b>Required input</b>	routine	←→	creative
<b>Nature of leadership</b>	effect-driven	←→	failure-tolerant
<b>Type of motivation</b>	external incentives	←→	internal passion
<b>The nature of work</b>	individual	←→	collective
<b>Competitive approach</b>	incumbent	←→	challenger
<b>Organizational boundaries</b>	rigid	←→	fluid
<b>Type of demand</b>	stable	←→	capricious
<b>Frequency of networking</b>	incidental	←→	regular
<b>Frequency of innovation</b>	incidental	←→	permanent

Figure 1. Open strategy drivers

Source: own work.

The second theoretical insight spans beyond the industrial context and may advance further studies in the OS domain outside the empirical setting of the investigated CI context. The authors offer the framework for presenting OS drivers based on the extended analysis. As a result of this investigation of industry characteristics, two main themes emerged in this area: unfavourable and conducive. The factors that could be observed in both conditions are presented in Figure 1 showing the identified drivers of both categories.

The conceptual framework shows how particular drivers can influence the transparency and inclusiveness of the strategy. It may also serve as an initial concept of providing insights into building OS and bring some explanations that could be further explored in other industries. The authors believe that the drivers described could be involved in decision-making while resolving the organizational dilemmas of being open.

## 4.2. Limitations and further research

There are several limitations of this study. Firstly, the authors discussed an example of one industry (although it represents different activities), which requires further investigation via qualitative studies among managers representing various creative industries. Secondly, the general characteristics of the industry were examined, but without addressing the organizational perspective. Future studies could explore the cognitive foundations of managers' decisions regarding the open strategy, the challenges experienced, and how the industry characteristics impact these processes. More comparative analysis between various industries may bring new insights into delineating a more specific set of industry drivers that undermine or enhance OS efforts.

Further studies could also focus on investigating the relations between the factors proposed in this framework and their impact on the level of openness. Therefore, broader quantitative studies could be performed aiming to measure the level of openness, and the impact of various drivers based on these scales developed. It would also be valuable to learn whether any OS drivers are easier to develop, namely if it is easier to foster inclusiveness or transparency. It would also be interesting to assess if the same factors impact on inclusiveness and transparency, or if various drivers are more important for each OS dimension.

Moreover, various drivers of open strategy may bring several organizational tensions, which could be addressed in future research to extend the knowledge on dilemmas faced by companies, while injecting openness into their strategising process.

Finally, further research could also explore the moderating role of a company's size, as it may also be the factor that impacts the OS drivers. In this vein, it would also be interesting to investigate the managerial perspective and consider the role of managers in the open strategy process. The authors see great potential for further research in this area to be continued through in-depth qualitative research.

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