The Perspectives of Students on the Lecturers' Creativity: A Qualitative Analysis of the Data from Private Higher Educational Institutions in China

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Private higher educational institutions (PHEIs) have always been an essential part of the education industry, and lecturers are a necessary driving force for development. However, there are few studies on lectures' creativity in PHEIs. This study recruited 30 students to participate in a semi-structured interview based on the creativity component theory to explore the connotation and the influence factors of lectures' creativity. By utilizing Nvivo12, it processed the data by performing the word frequency analysis, the correlation analysis, and the hierarchical analysis. It proposes a conceptual framework related to lecturers' creativity. The research revealed that the lecturers' creativity contains domain-related and creation-related skills. The study demonstrates that students' perception of lecturers' creativity comes from teaching practice. Students can explain the composition of lecturers' creativity from the part of domain-related skills and creation-related skills. Furthermore, the research discovers that the creative and youth personality characteristics affect the lecturers' creativity. Finally, it suggests that Chinese PHEIs should encourage lecturers to be more creative in teaching practice, an important strategic measure to strengthen the construction of lecturers and improve the competitiveness of the industry.

Keywords: lecturers' creativity, private higher educational institutions, domain-related skills, creation-related skills, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, individual creativity has become the foundation of an organization (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020), a unique skill that any organization, including higher educational institutions (Fischer, Oget, & Cavallucci, 2016). Around the world, national and individual educational institutions are calling for a shift from "traditional" pedagogy and standardized testing to a more "creative" educational paradigm (Patston, Cropley, Marrone, & Kaufman, 2017). Creativity is a process that reinforces thinking skills to lead to a whole new approach (Tanggaard & Beghetto, 2015). It is original and effectiveness (Bicer, Lee, Perihan, Capraro & Capraro, 2020). The practice has proved that the innovation of the Higher

Educational Institutions' management system is a breakthrough, and the development of scale must adapt to the guarantee of education quality (Pehlivan & Cicek, 2021). In particular, lecturers play a pioneering role in innovation development because the quality of higher education is always closely linked to the quality of lecturers (Borrego & Henderson, 2014; Bui, 2019).

For various reasons, higher education systems worldwide are moving toward a greater emphasis on creativity in the classroom (Vrielink, Jansen, Hans, & van Hillegersberg, 2019). This paradigm shift raises essential questions for lecturers (Patston, Cropley, Marrone, & Kaufman, 2017). The studies mentioned above suggested that lecturers' creativity is a necessary condition for meeting the needs of the 21st-century classroom (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Previous research indicates that the lecturers' creativity results in a higher evaluation of their own teaching experience (Benedek et al., 2016). Furthermore, lecturers' creativity can cultivate and encourage students' creativity (Borodina, Sibgatullina, & Gizatullina, 2019). In addition, Agustina & Rismantono (2020) suggest that lecturers have to be creative to impost a positive impact on students. Meanwhile, people with more expertise or experience in creative fields are more likely to be good at evaluating ideas in those areas (Cseh & Jeffries, 2019).

The creative patterns used by lecturers in their teaching and learning activities are an exciting and necessary topic (Daly, Mosyjowski, & Seifert, 2014). However, not all lecturers can manage distance learning well during the COVID-19 pandemic (Daniel, 2020). Lecturers cannot use all learning modes because distance limits interaction with students (Hebebci, Bertiz, & Alan, 2020). Therefore, there is a need for creative use of different learning models, such as blended learning, to cope with the situation during a particular period (Galvis, 2018). Online learning replaces face-to-face (traditional) models (Favale, Soro, Trevisan, Drago, & Mellia, 2020). creativity also affects academic performance and has a direct and indirect impact on the improvement of educational quality (Tawafak, Romli, bin Abdullah Arshah, & Almaroof, 2018). However, given that students possess different skills, the learning process requires lecturers to "use" methods, time, and materials to simplify creativity to generate creativity, process quality, and high-quality learning outcomes (Puangrimaggalatung, 2021).

Creativity makes lecturers flexible and independent and helps them be more effective in students' learning (Dewi, 2019). Lecturers and learners need to consider their perceptions and feelings about creativity (Kettler, Lamb, Willerson, & Mullet, 2018). Creativity is an individual behavior (Ivcevic, Moeller, Menges, & Brackett, 2021); many scholars support subjective evaluation (Jahanzeb, Fatima, Bouckenooghe, & Bashir, 2019). Through self-evaluation, researchers commonly capture individuals', especially employees' creativity (Xiaojun K & Hongmei Y, 2021). Individuals are best pleased to self-assess their creativity because they are best aware of what they do at work that can be considered creative (Rubenstein, Callan, & Ridgley, 2018), which provides a reference for the research on lecturers' creativity.

Some scholars also support the indirect evaluation method of creativity through colleagues, leaders, or other stakeholders at work (Carmeli, Gelbard, & Reiter-Palmon, 2013). Besides self-evaluation, additional research reveals an alternative indirect evaluation method made by colleagues, supervisors, and other stakeholders. Therefore, this study focused on students as participants to understand the creativity of lecturers. This study will solve the following questions:

1) Which aspect(s) of the lecturer's creativity is mainly reflected in their work?
2) What are the components of the lecturer's creativity?
3) What are the factors that influence the lecturer's creativity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

More and more scholars have been committed to studying the Chinese PHEI context. Significantly, the representative of Zhejiang Shuren University published the *Chinese Private Higher Education Research Index* in 2018-2022. Scholars are mainly concerned with external competition and internal construction (Dean, Arroyo-Gamez, Punjaisri, & Pich, 2016; Pinheiro, Langa, & Pausits, 2015), such as innovative development, recruitment and employment, student management (Jin, 2018), and lecturers' team construction (Bu, 2020).

Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs)

Since 2015, the state has guided and promoted the transformation of HEIs into application-oriented institutions (Na, Topimin, Fabeil, & Buncha, 2020). However, restricted by history, resources, social and other factors, Chinese PHEIs are still vulnerable to competition from the public (X. Wang, 2010). How to build application-oriented higher educational institutions and what kind of development strategy to implement are the core issues that should be re-examined and defined in the new era of PHEIs in China (Liu & Chen, 2021).

When profound changes occur in the "Internet plus" era, private higher education must be bold in innovation to achieve the leapfrog development (Wang, 2021). Lecturers' creativity is an important driving force in promoting the innovative development of private higher education. Faculty team building is also the core factor affecting the development of PHEIs in China (Rahardja, Moein, & Lutfiani, 2018). Therefore, this study will focus on the lecturers' creativity and provide support for promoting the development of PHEIs in China.

Creativity

Employees' creativity is critical for all organizations (Tse, To, & Chiu, 2018). Employees' creative thinking ability is considered the primary source of organizational success (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020). To adapt to these changing environments, these organizations rely heavily on the creativity of their employees (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Creativity at the individual level plays a crucial role in enterprises' competitive advantage and competitiveness and is related to the long-term survival of various organizations (Arsawan et al., 2020).

Creativity is the ability to produce something new in the form of ideas, inventions, products, and works through knowledge, information, and experience oneself (Benedek et al., 2014). It results from one's accumulation of creativity, that is, one's ability based on past practice and expanded knowledge (Muñoz-Pascual & Galende, 2020). A person's level of competence can be in the way each person presents their work, takes risks to generate new ideas, overcomes problems caused by some difficulties, and becomes a role model for good creativity (Byrne, Fattoum, & Diaz Garcia, 2019). Creativity comes up with new and valuable ideas in a particular field (Lu, Bartol, Venkataramani, Zheng, & Liu, 2019).

The two main components of creativity are novelty and practicality (Richardson & Mishra, 2018). Specifically, novelty refers to combining existing things in a new way or developing entirely new things (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Practicality is the direct or indirect value that the idea of creativity brings to the organization in the short and long term to improve or change an existing one (Khessina, Goncalo, & Krause, 2018). The value of creativity is in solving the organization's problems and helping individuals complete assigned tasks and achieve work goals (Basadur, Gelade, & Basadur, 2014).

Creativity has become a consideration in all occupations in the last decade because "creativity becomes a great value force when applied to causes that benefit humanity and the whole world" (Livingston & Boyd, 2010). There is much support for empirical research on creativity (Hon & Lui, 2016). Personality traits, including upbeat personality, individual motivation, cognitive style, learning tendency, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, goal, and value, etc. (Miao, Komil ugli Fayzullaev, & Dedahanov, 2020; Z. Wang, Bu, & Cai, 2021) and organizational characteristics, including organizational atmosphere, leadership style, task characteristics, colleague support, etc. (Cai, Lysova, Bossink, Khapova, & Wang, 2019; Makumbe, 2021) have a direct impact on employees' creativity. Person-organization fit has become a new perspective that has gradually aroused scholars' interest (Xiaojun K & Hongmei Y, 2021).

Creativity plays a leading role in education, attracting many learners and lecturers (Ghazanfari, Mortazavi, Tabatabaei Yazdi, & Mohammadi, 2021). Therefore, creativity makes lecturers flexible and independent and helps them be more effective in students' learning (Dewi, 2019). Lecturers and learners need to consider their perceptions and feelings about creativity (Kettler, Lamb, Willerson, & Mullet, 2018). Lecturers' creativity is an essential driving force in promoting the innovative development of private higher education. In addition, faculty team building is also a core factor affecting the development of PHEIs in China (Rahardja, Moein, & Lutfiani, 2018).

Lecturers' Creativity

As the demand for creativity in the workforce increases, the response of educators to this phenomenon becomes more critical (Király & Géring, 2019). Most creativity researchers believe that creativity is teachable, learnable, and improvable (Cayirdag, 2017), and there exists empirical evidence of the effects of creativity training (Mullet, Willerson, Lamb, & Kettler, 2016). Lecturers develop practical and novel solutions in various situations, consistent with most concepts of creativity (Eragamreddy, 2013), which indicates the importance of creative teaching ability (Retnawati et al., 2018). In addition, several studies have found (much like well-known creators) that lecturers are qualified as strong judges of creative work, demonstrating their expertise in identifying creativity (Patston et al., 2017).

Lecturers are knowledgeable professionals who are given creative autonomy and can improvise in the classroom (Mæland & Espeland, 2017). HEIs play an essential role in fostering creative thinking, and lecturers should promote creative thinking in classroom activities (Harris & De Bruin, 2018). Lecturers' beliefs about the teaching and learning process influence their ability to foster a classroom's creative atmosphere. It paves the way for creative teaching (Subekti, 2019). Creativity is a critical criterion in selecting lecturers in most educational institutions. Innovative technology enables learners to acquire knowledge of a subject effectively and attentively (DeSchryver & Yadav, 2015).

In creative lectures, teaching courses in a monotonous way will result in students lacking enthusiasm and motivation, resulting in students lacking confidence and motivation to learn (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2020). In addition, creativity leads to highly competitive performance in educational settings (Malik, 2018). Therefore, in any educational environment, lecturers' creativity needs to be a critical factor in enabling learners to master the subject with creative thinking through abundant activities in classrooms (Al-Zahrani, 2015).

Cremin (2015) describes opportunities to create as active participation, free choice, and knowledge and skills to reflect on the learning experience (Cremin, Glauert, Craft, Compton, & Stylianidou, 2015). Creative lecturers are those who master science (experts) and have autonomy (learning) in the classroom (Ismail, Ruswandi, & Erihadiana, 2020). In addition, creative lecturers solve classroom problems with different and diverse solutions to promote students' educational success (Henriksen, Richardson, & Mehta, 2017). However, highly creative lecturers are needed when designing entrepreneurship education to achieve the desired goals (Apriana, Kristiawan, & Wardiah, 2019). The interaction of the lecturer-student energy dynamic produces classroom creativity that the lecturer willingness to promote (Agustina & Cahyono, 2016).

Scholars mainly focus on improving lecturers' creativity (Amtu, Siahaya, & Taliak, 2019). However, in the same stream of research on employee creativity, from the individual's perspective, teaching activities (Kettler et al., 2018) can affect lecturers' creativity. From the organizational perspective, organizational culture (Makhrus, Sunardi, & Retnowati, 2022); knowledge management (Rafiee & Khorasgani, 2018) also affect lecturers' creativity. From an integrated perspective of individuals and organizations, scholars have also proposed the influence of person-organization fit on lecturers' creativity (Ke & Yang, 2021).

At Chinese PHEIs, full-time lecturers are primarily young and newly graduated, lacking teaching experience and research capabilities (Eralievich, Tursunmurotovich, & Mukhamatsultonovna, 2020). On the contrary, part-time lecturers are mostly retired public lecturers with high professional titles and rich experience in teaching. However, their more traditional teaching methods lack creative thinking components (Figlio & Schapiro, 2021). The retired professors and seasoned faculties transferred from other HEIs are most likely positioned at the top tier, and young and fresh lecturers are placed at the bottom (V. L. Baker & Manning, 2020).

Theoretical Basis

Amabile (1983) proposed the creativity component theory to promote creativity and innovation, a classic theory of creativity research focusing on the individual factors that constitute one's creativity in a professional context (Chang, Takeuchi, Jia, & Cai, 2014). Creativity is "novel and useful ideas produced by individuals or small groups of people working together" (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Implementing such creative ideas constitutes organizational innovation (Chen, Li, Wu, & Luo, 2017).

The creativity component theory includes domain-related skills, creation-related skills, and intrinsic task motivation (Sääksjärvi & Gonçalves, 2018). Domain-related skills such as factual knowledge, domain-specific talents, and technical skills are foundations for creativity (Foster & Schleicher, 2022). Creative-related skills play an essential role in generating creative output from domain-related knowledge. These skills include personal traits such as self-discipline, perseverance, social skills, risk-taking, diversity of experiences, and unique strategies that help individuals take a new perspective on tasks (Puente-Díaz, 2016). Task intrinsic motivation refers to the individual's essential attitude and perception of the task (Gheitani, Imani, Seyyedamiri, & Foroudi, 2018).

The higher the person-organization fit, the higher individual creativity and organizational innovation (Shahzad, Xiu, & Shahbaz, 2017). This theory paved the foundation for this study. In addition, Amabile & Pratt (2016) added extrinsic motivation and meaningful work to the model. Extrinsic motivation refers to the external factors, including rewards and recognition, that motivate individuals to complete tasks (Asaah, Yunfei, Wadei, & Nkrumah, 2020). In contrast, meaningful work relates to significant and positive outcomes for individuals (Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, & Tay, 2019). Therefore, according to the creativity component theory, from the students' perspective, conduct empirical research on lecturers' creativity in PHEIs in China. This theory will provide available ideas for this study.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method is frequently used to study human behaviors, and in-depth interviews are the most popular. The purpose is to understand that people construct specific facts in certain situations (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Taylor & Bogdan (1984) believed that an in-depth interview is a face-to-face conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee to understand the point of view of their life, experience or situation expressed and provided by the interviewee in his language (Mahat-Shamir, Neimeyer, & Pitcho-Prelorentzos, 2021). Based on the guidance of qualitative research methodology, this study adopts an in-depth interview method by using a Nvivo12.0 data analysis tool.

Interview Preparation

Interview Outline

Define the interview content based on the research questions and be concise. For example, "Which lecturer is the most creative in your current study?" "In what ways is his/her creativity reflected?" "What are the traits of a creative lecturer?" "What kind of lecturer is more creative?"

The interview outline (Appendix A), used as a supportive tool, consisted of a list of questions grouped in three sections. The introductory one comprises inquiries related to demographic issues and individual study or living conditions of the participants. The second section refers to the research-related questions. The questions from the third part are the conclusions of the interviewer and addressed thanks to the interviewee.

Interview Techniques

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study, with 30-60 minutes for each participant. Based on the actual situation of the answers provided by the respondents, interviewers are powered to adjust questions for the sake of effectiveness.

Recruit Participants

Goalkeepers are recognized and well-connected people in the community being studied, such as village chiefs, lecturers, monks, priests, and community leaders (McGrath, Palmgren, & Liljedahl, 2019; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this study, lecturers acted as goalkeepers and directly supported recruiting participants.

Sampling

Most scholars argue that saturation is essential when mulling over sample size decisions in qualitative research (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Some experts in qualitative research avoid the topic of "how many interviews are enough," and there is variability in what is a minimum (Galvin, 2015). Many articles, chapters, and books recommend guidance and point to anywhere from 5 to 50 participants as adequate (Dworkin, 2012). Thirty undergraduate students, 14 males, and 16 females, with an average age of 19 from 12 majors, participated in this study. Researchers randomly assigned each of them to a number between 1 to 30. The characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Major	Participant Number	Gender	Age	Major
1	Female	19	Philosophy	16	Female	19	Sociology
2	Female	18	Management	17	Female	21	Pedagogy
3	Female	20	Management	18	Male	19	Psychology
4	Male	19	Art	19	Female	19	Economics
5	Male	21	Linguistics	20	Male	18	Law
6	Female	19	Literature	21	Male	19	Law
7	Female	19	Pedagogy	22	Male	18	Mathematics
8	Male	19	Pedagogy	23	Female	18	Anthropology
9	Female	20	Sociology	24	Female	19	Economics
10	Male	18	Philosophy	25	Male	18	Management
11	Male	18	Art	26	Female	18	Linguistics
12	Female	19	Literature	27	Female	19	Psychology
13	Female	18	Management	28	Female	21	Economics
14	Male	19	Linguistics	29	Male	19	Philosophy
15	Male	20	Sociology	30	Male	19	Psychology

(Source: elaborated by this study)

Appointment Participants

Determine the time and format of the interview, including face-to-face or online interviews. Specific information will be communicated to participants before the interview. Notice that the researcher should arrange face-to-face interviews place in advance. The face-to-face contact method is usually a norm for in-depth interviews. However, phone or virtual methods are also accepted when the interview participants are limited by distance and other conditions to meet in person (Johnson, Scheitle, & Ecklund, 2021). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, online and offline interview formats are used in this study.

Reliability and Validity

The following steps were carried out to ensure the reliability and validity of our measurements. Firstly, the survey instruments were drawn from previous in-depth interview studies on creativity draws on previous in-depth interview studies on creativity. Secondly, the interview outline was revised after being reviewed by experts and professors in management, pedagogy, psychology, and other fields. Thirdly, an English lecturer translates the system to avoid the difference in language expression caused by translation between Chinese and English. Fourthly, two students were randomly selected to conduct a pre-test before the formal study. Finally, the interview outline was revised and confirmed.

Interview Process

Firstly, at the beginning of the interview, start the conversation as naturally as possible based on the specific situation of the interviewee (Qu & Dumay, 2011), such as asking about the recent personal study or life, to make the atmosphere more relaxed and enhance the harmonious relationship. Secondly, introduce the topic and purpose of the research and enter the interview content. Thirdly, record the interview registration form. Include basic information about participants (gender, age, major, etc.), brief written descriptions of core content, and identify participant serial number code. It is essential to record the interview with the consent of the participant.

Data Analysis

After the interview, the researcher sorted and classified the interview records. First, check the original words and interview recordings, and sort out the comprehensive interview contents into written descriptions. Secondly, the information distinguishes different categories to code the data and the valuable information to mark with specific colors sign. Finally, to classify the data, the similar or identical data is consolidated through a coding database to distinguish different data (Richards, 2020).

This study used Nvivo12.0 version software as the data processing tool. Furthermore, content analysis and lexical cloud technology process the topic text and analyze the results through word frequency, correlation analysis, and hierarchy analysis.

Word Frequency

These include a descriptive section related to word frequency and an analytic-descriptive area corresponding to the encoding of interview data developed from the reviewed literature (Nasr, Mirshahjafari, & Liaghatdar, 2016).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient measures whether two data sets are on a straight line. It measures the linear relationship between fixed distance variables (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018).

Hierarchical Analysis

Hierarchy charts are a way of visualizing hierarchies to see coding patterns and sources. For example, use size to represent the amount of coding at each node.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the in-depth interview process, ethical considerations should be considered (Arifin, 2018). Before the interview, establishing a rapport with the interviewees was critical. In a face-to-face interview, providing participants with a safe, comfortable, and relaxed environment is conducive to easing the atmosphere in the discussion. In data processing, anonymity and confidentiality of participants are warranted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed 30 in-depth interviews of full-time undergraduate students at private HEIs in China. Among them, 22 were conducted online, and eight were face-to-face. All the interviews were completed during the first ten days in December 2021. To minimize participants' response bias, we drew 16 male and 14 female students studying in 12 different majors from 3 different institutions. Then, this study uses content analysis and lexical cloud technology to process the topic text by using the exploration function in Nvivo12.0 version software and a total of 30 codes. Then, word frequency, correlation analysis, and hierarchical analysis analyze the following results.

Words Frequency

NVivo 12.0 to organize words and generate a cloud in this study. These include a descriptive section related to word frequency and an analytic-descriptive section corresponding to the encoding of interview data developed from the reviewed literature. In this section, excerpts from the interview record mainly include content related to the code category by analyzing the influencing factors of perceived lecturers' creativity from students' perspectives. "Creative" is the keyword, a central theme of this study. Lecturers, students, knowledge, contents, change, communication, and other research-related words are also well-reflected. Complete matches show that the main themes are creativity, lecturers, students, knowledge, change, contents, and education. Relevant learning, methods, communication, and personality were also reflected, as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS' CREATIVITY OF LEXICON CLOUD—EXACT MATCHES THE RESULTS

(Source: elaborated by this study)

As can be seen in Figure 1, the study on "creative" is most evident in the "lecturer" and "student." Students believe that lecturers should have domain-related skills, including "knowledge," "profession," "ability," and "education," which are the most basic requirements. "Teaching" is the primary content of the lecturer's work, and it is also the most direct embodiment of the student's perception of the lecturer's creativity. By "changing" the teaching "method" and "content," the creativity level of lecturers can be improved. Creative lecturers should have "personality," "active," and "communicate" with students, which can be interpreted as creation-related skills. There are three words related to the research topic, including "creative," "lecturers," and "students." It can be inferred from other terms that the composition of lecturers' creativity mainly includes "knowledge," "change," "content," "education," and "teaching." The responsibility of a lecturer is to impart knowledge to students to grow up. Lecturers should have the knowledge and education required by the position, which students consider the premise of creative behavior. Then, changes in teaching methods, especially those based on traditional teaching, will make the teaching content more exciting and the classroom atmosphere more active. Therefore, students believe that changes in teaching methods and contents are the composition of lecturers' creativity. "Creative" is an essential factor affecting lecturers' creativity.

This study obtained different results from the specific matching function for processing (Figure 2). Lexicon cloud showed that "teaching" is an essential core word; in addition to "creative," "lecturer," and "student," the other terms include "learning," "knowledge," "methods," and "experience" are also reflected. In addition, the "experience" gradually emerges. To sum up, based on students' points of view, lecturers' creativity is explained mainly through teaching.

FIGURE 2
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS' CREATIVITY OF LEXICON CLOUD—WITH SPECIALIZATION MATCHES

(Source: elaborated by this study)

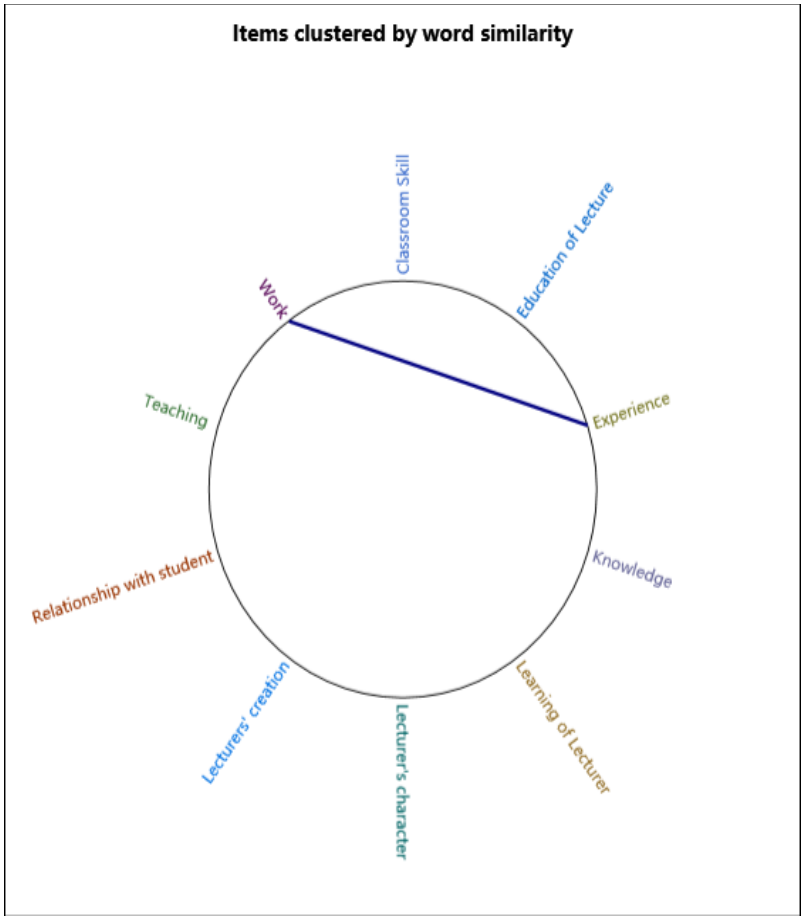
It can be concluded from Figure 2 that the exploration of the lecturers' creativity from the perspective of students is mainly related to "teaching." That is where most interaction and communication occur between lecturers and students). Teaching is the core of a lecturer's work and the best direct embodiment of self-creative. "Learning," "knowledge," "methods," and "experience" are the essential factors that affect "teaching." Compared with Figure 1, "experience" is new. Students believe that experienced lecturers usually have a more positive class atmosphere and show better creativity in their teaching.

In conclusion, the analysis of Figure 1 and Figure 2 demonstrate that "creative" and "teaching" are the most important keywords of the lecturer's creativity. From the student's perspective, lecturers' creativity resides in the teaching process. This process found relevant information, including "lecturers," "students," "knowledge," "content," "change," "learning," "communication," "methods," "personality," and "experience." These components of the lecturer's creativity can be explained well in domain-related and creation-related skills. Among these related words, "contents," "change," and "methods" are also essential embodiments of teaching practice.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient measures whether two data sets have a linear relationship. Figure 3 describes the relationship between work and experience.

FIGURE 3
PEARSON CORRELATION OF PERCEPTION TOWARDS LECTURERS' CREATIVITY FROM STUDENTS



(Source: elaborated by this study)

It can see from Figure 3 that the dimensions of work and experience are in a straight line, indicating that these two variables are closely correlated. Generally speaking, work is a process of experience accumulation, especially for the profession of lecturer, whose work is relatively stable and the core content of the job is teaching. Therefore, to a certain extent, the length of work time equates to the degree of experience. Appointments may not be so stable for freelancers and those who frequently change their jobs or switch among different industries. Then there is no correlation between their experience and the accumulative length of work time.

Hierarchical Analysis

The hierarchical analysis shows the components and influencing factors of lecturers' creativity (see Table 2). This table contains the number of files and references for each code.

TABLE 2
THEME CODES OF PERCEPTION TOWARDS LECTURERS' CREATIVITY FROM STUDENTS

Code (Dimension)	Files	References
Classroom Skill	12	16
Education	8	11
Experience	12	18
Knowledge	11	13
Learning	11	19
Lecturer's character	16	39
Lecturers' creativity	10	11
Relationship with student	8	12
Teaching	18	50
Work	10	19

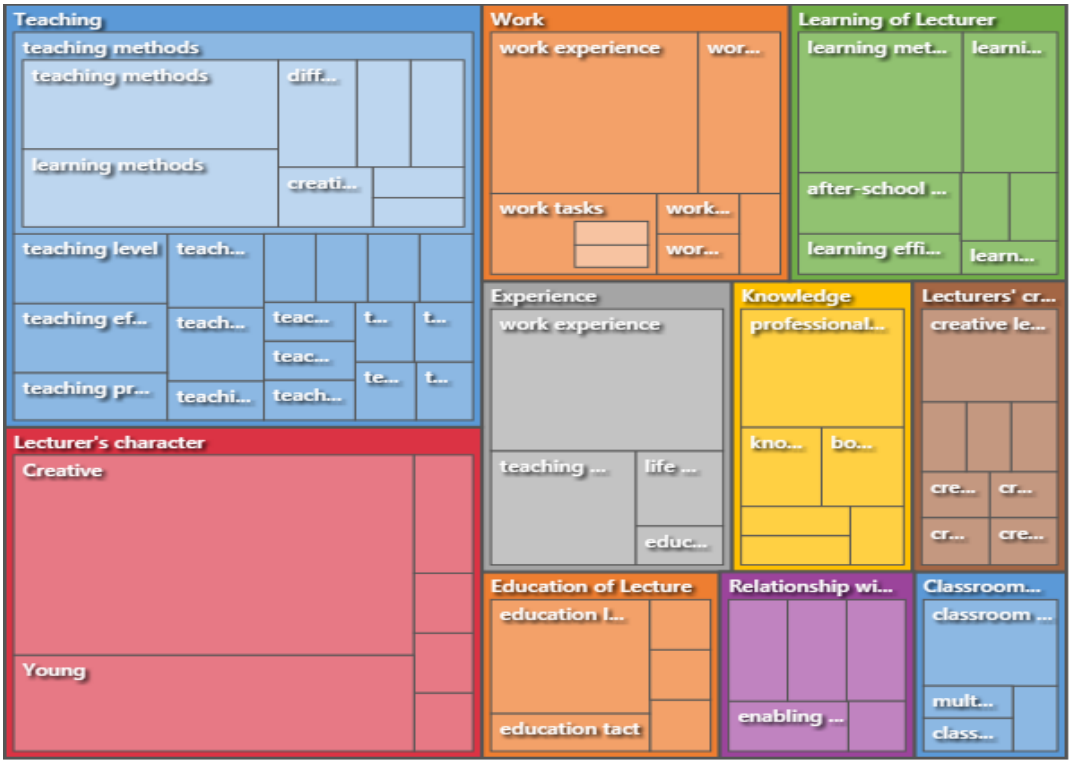
(Source: elaborated by this study)

As shown in Table 2 above, the code of "teaching" has the files and references. Students perceive the lecturer's creativity as the primary source in the lecturer's teaching process, also reflected in "classroom skill." In this process, "lecturers' character" is also significant. It can be interpreted as personal abilities and skills, which are the most basic requirements for work, including the embodiment of "knowledge," "learning," "education," and "experience." These codes are also highly cited in this study. "Lecturers' character" also included descriptions of creation-related characteristics, such as "creative," which "lecturers' creativity can explain."

Moreover, some students believe that "relationship with students" promotes communication between lecturers and students and is more interested in classroom participation. From the student's perspective, the influence on lecturers' creativity is mainly reflected in the lecturers' character. The personal characteristics of a person's knowledge, learning, and education have been the most prominent. Moreover, teaching, classroom skill, work, and experience are the most prominent job characteristics. These are consistent with the above word frequency analysis. Some students believe that a friendly relationship with the lecturer can help students focus more on class participation.

By comparing the reference numbers of different codes, we can see the levels of codes of other disciplines. Figure 4 illustrates that the lecturers' character has the most significant number of codes, indicating that the lecturers' character is a critical influencing factor of lecturers' creativity, which is interpreted from students' perspectives.

FIGURE 4
CODING HIERARCHY OF PERCEPTION TOWARDS LECTURERS' CREATIVITY FROM STUDENTS



(Source: elaborated by this study)

In addition to the above factors affecting the lecturers' creativity, to our surprise, we found in Figure 4 that "young" is also an essential factor affecting lecturers' creativity, including in the personal individual characters of lecturers. In the previous studies on employees' creativity, scholars pointed out those younger employees are more creative than older employees because young people are more likely to accept and learn new knowledge and skills to apply and change existing and traditional working methods. From students' perspectives, it is found that young lecturers are more creative than older ones. Some students believe that modern teaching equipment, such as online video, adds more interest to the classroom than traditional teaching methods. Young lecturers are generally willing to accept the forms of classroom interaction. These are also essential embodiments of lecturers' creativity.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above research results and discussion, we can draw the following findings: First, students perceive the lecturer's creativity in teaching. Because teaching, as the main content of a lecturer's work, is also the most important embodiment of creativity in his work.

Second, lecturers' creativity consists of domain-related skills and creation-related skills. Consistent with Creativity Component Theory (Amabile, 1983), we conclude that a lecturer's creativity component is compatible with the domain-related and creation-related skills.

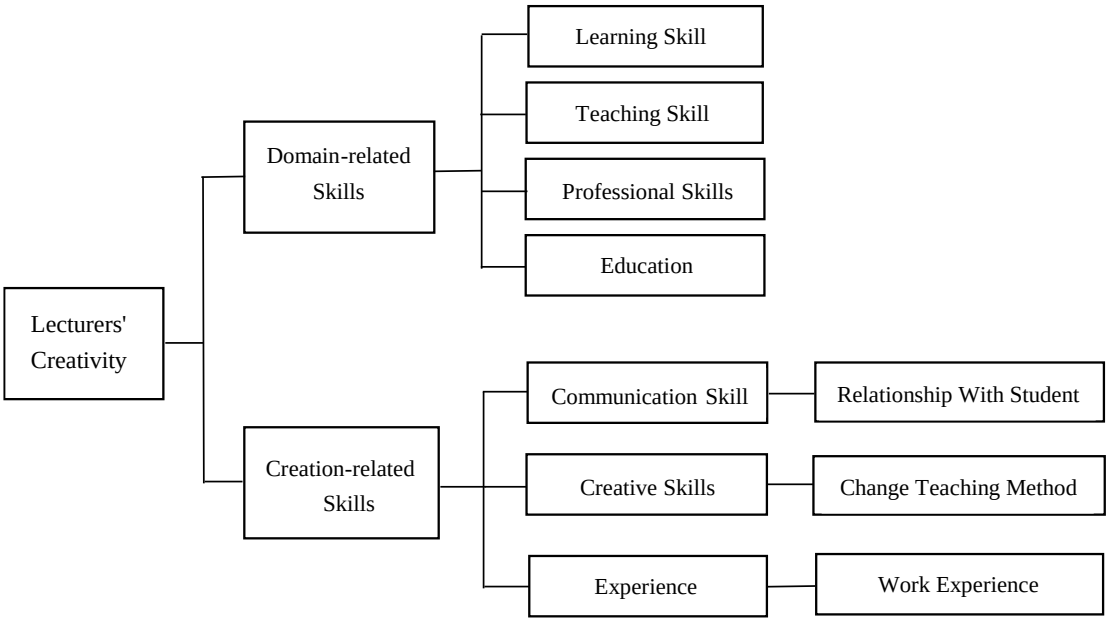
Domain-related skills refer to the lecturers' ability to engage in their field of work. In professional positions, it is found that lecturers are disseminators of knowledge and skills. To better engage in their professional, on top of the required credentials, lecturers are further required to improve their teaching skills and knowledge reserve constantly.

This study found that changing teaching methods makes the classroom more engaging in teaching. Creation-related skills are mainly reflected in the lecturer's creativity, which is conducive to promoting the generation of individual creativity. Relationships with students to increase students' participation in class are conducive to stimulating the lecturer's creativity. Experience is also a creative-related skill, and for lecturers, work experience has a significant impact on teaching and personal development.

Third, personality, creativity, and young are the keywords of individual characteristics that link to lecturers' creativity. In addition to the basic education requirements, knowledge, and professionalism, lecturers with personalities pay more attention to the classroom atmosphere and student interaction. Creative lecturers are more to accept new ways to change teaching methods. Young lecturers are more adept at learning and using new teaching equipment to enrich teaching.

Finally, intrinsic work motivation is also crucial in the creativity component theory; it is not captured in our interviews. This research is based on students' perspectives of the lecturer's creativity. It is beyond the capability of this research for students to perceive the lecturer's internal psychological motivations. Therefore, this study only explains two components of lecturers' creativity: domain-related and creation-related skills. A conceptual framework is proposed here (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5
THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS' CREATIVITY FROM STUDENTS



(Source: elaborated by this study)

Based on the research findings, it is not difficult to find the conclusions and the implications of this study. In terms of theoretical importance, in this study, students, as the research object, indirectly capture the behavior of lecturers' creativity, discuss the embodiment, composition, and influencing factors, and propose a conceptual framework. Compared with previous studies, this is not only a theoretical innovation to provide a new research direction. It is also a theoretical contribution that complements the theoretical analysis of the lecturer's creativity.

As per practical implication, creative teaching can help stimulate students' learning interest, improve student-teacher interaction, and raise overall teaching effects. Creative individuals can have better advantages in their work, conducive to personal career development. From a student's angle, creative lecturers can assist students in achieving better class performance, provide communication, and promote

learning and progress among students. Finally, lecturers' creativity improves teaching efficiency for organizations and encourages staff and faculty's enthusiasm for participation and contribution.

To sum up, this study suggests that Chinese PHEIs should encourage and advocate the creative teaching of lecturers and provide support in teaching resources and equipment. Strengthening the construction of lecturers is considered the key to gaining advantages in the industry competition of PHEIs in China. It also provides a direction for future studies. This study suggests that taking the lecturers as the object of in-depth interviews can directly capture the understanding of the lecturer's creativity. At the same time, it can be considered to broaden the research context and get further research into Chinese public HEIs.

There are two limitations to this study. First, based on the creativity component theory, intrinsic work motivation is also an important component, but it is not captured in this study. As an individual's inner psychological element, inherent motivation is complex for others to capture through direct observation. Secondly, this study is only carried out in the context of Chinese PHEIs. Whether the results of our research can be generalized relies on the test of future studies to an enormous scope of HEIs using the same research questions in this study.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Introduction (5-10 min)

- Welcome and introduction

  Hello! Dear student, welcome to this interview. The topic of this interview is the study of lecturers' creativity. During this process, you can express any ideas according to the interview questions. The interview content is only for academic research reference and will not affect your study and life. With your informed consent, I will record this interview. Your personal information will be kept confidential, and the interview record will be anonymized. The interview will last about 30-60 minutes. So, let's start interviewing.
- Could you please introduce yourself in a few words? How old are you? What is your major?
- How are your study and life recently?

Research-Related Questions (20-40 min)

- Which lecturer is the most creative in your current study? In what ways is his/her creativity reflected? Please introduce it.
- What are the traits of a creative lecturer? Talk about your understanding of the lecturer's creativity.
- What kind of lecturer is more creative?
- In your opinion, what factors affect the lecturers' creativity? Does it help your study or life?
- Do you have any other understanding of lecturers' creativity? Please add other descriptions.

Closing the Interview (5-10 min)

- Final conclusions of the interviewer and addressing thanks to the interviewee.

The above is all the interview content, thank you for your cooperation, enjoy your study and have a good life at your university, goodbye!