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Creativity and Leadership: How the Arts Can Improve Business Strategies

Abstract: *Introduction.* Recent studies consider creativity as a source of innovation for companies but have not yet clarified the key role that it plays concerning management and the underlying organisational processes. Recent studies also provide a foundation for a direct link between creativity, leadership, and corporate innovation. *Purpose and methods.* Therefore, the purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of creativity within the corporate context and stimulate an understanding of the dynamics underlying leadership as a hub for innovative ideas and proposals dissemination in organisations. The scientific research methodology is developed through the theoretical investigation of the theme of creativity with innovation and how it can pervade the organisational sphere through the leadership development. *Results.* The analysis of the main theoretical models allows us to identify strong dynamic connections between creativity, business innovation, and leadership and to develop and improve interventions guided by a different business vision. At the same time, I illustrate how an adequate leadership style can positively influence the work team, producing significant improvements in thoughts, feelings, and subordinates creative performance. *Conclusions.* Leaders who wish to sustain high performance should pay special attention to their daily behaviour towards employees, in particular by contributing to the dissemination of creativity in the company. Shared participation in artistic activities, in fact, by enhancing the individuality of employees, contributes to the strengthening of the management image that supports initiatives and participates in them. Creativity thus finds fertile ground in the goodness of ordinary company practices.

Keywords: creativity, innovation, leadership, artistic intervention, organisational development.

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1. Introduction

The problem formulation. For some years, many industry studies (Schiama, 2011; Berthoin Anthal, 2009; Darso, 2014) have referred to creativity as a source of innovation for companies, but how does it create value for management? Is it possible to influence the processes that govern organisational change, and who is in charge of them?

In the first part of the article, I will briefly discuss the dominant theories of leadership and how I link them to the concept of creativity in the literature. I will also explore the connection between creativity and business innovation, with particular emphasis on how leadership can effectively drive change within organisations. Finally, the contribution of creativity, and the arts in particular, to the development and enhancement of corporate leadership will be analysed, focusing on a case study of artistic interventions carried out in recent years.

State study of the problem. As early as the 1930s, a new business model emerged based on a functional organisation of labour, with an increasingly less informal role and founded more on the construction of an engaging and cooperative environment. This is the business model *à la* Barnard, named after its main theorist, *Chester Barnard* (1970). He focuses his relevant theoretical contribution rather than on the company's production factors and the method of using them efficiently, on people and the complex interactions capable of involving them. For Barnard, there are both interactions organised on specific hierarchical orders, on the specialisation of work, and on the most appropriate-times and methods for the production of the task, and spontaneous interactions that arise due to the specific personalities of the individuals that make up the company's organisational system. To adequately implement these types of interaction, management must understand and analyse their operational modalities. In this context, human resources and their creativity represent essential forces for the pursuit of corporate objectives, according to a bottom-up process guided by capable and inspired management. A good leader should possess professional skills of direction, supervision, coordination, and control, but also strong personal communication and leadership skills.

Management must construct leadership from two key elements:

- 1) creativity, as a distinctive character of the individual in leadership positions, expressed in skills, perceptive capacity, imagination, and the level of knowledge reached;
- 2) morality has the function of separating personal ends from corporate ones.

The true leader, according to Barnard, is the one who includes his collaborators in his decisions, discussing practices and objectives to be realised,

incentivising them, and contributing to their personal and professional growth. In short, the scholar's vision profoundly renewed the hierarchical configuration of the enterprise in its very mechanisms of functioning, through the encouragement of cooperation between people, levels, and factors of production.

George Homans (1961) enriches Barnard's theoretical thinking by emphasising that not only formal role structures exist within organisations but also a spontaneous tendency of participants to join together in informal groups. For Homans, there are typically three variables that characterise such groups:

- feelings, which arise from the psychological dimension of individuals, influencing their behaviour (values, beliefs, sensations);
- activities, that is, the actions performed by each participant within the group;
- interactions, i.e. mutual relations between team members.

The latter is the pivotal element in the functioning of work teams: to be productive and build an optimal environment, the group must have members with strong motivations and external stimuli (feelings), perform satisfactory operations within the work context (activities), and communicate in an organised way (structured interactions). Company management, according to Homans, must therefore be able to value the singularity of the different groups and reward the participants to pursue the company's objectives.

The concept of leadership is understood as the managerial ability to convince and pull the team (Bagheri et al., 2022) does not strictly coincide with the notion of company management.

We can identify several types of leadership styles beyond Homans' and Barnard's theories:

a) In authoritarian Theory X enterprises such as Taylor's or Fayol's, the management fully embodies the concept of leadership and predominantly adopts a top-down relationship with the different organisational levels;

b) Participative-Theory Y (Enterprise à la Barnard or à la Homans) defines leadership as a set of management and creative, participation, and problem-solving skills;

c) Clanistic-Theory Z (Ouchi): in it, groups (or clans) can self-manage, resolving the issue of leadership into self-management;

d) Cognitive: they control the consequences of bounded rationality by disseminating knowledge and organisational knowledge;

e) Remote: the enterprise manages and organises all relationships with partners, suppliers, and customers digitally.

The leadership style applied depends on the organisational context of reference and is, in turn, influenced by situations, the work environment, the legislative system, social and psychological development, and internal company dynamics (Amabile et al., 2004).

By analysing the major literature on the subject of leadership (Khan et al., 2016), it is possible to identify seven dominant theories that can describe the different facets of leadership. They are:

1. *Great Man Theory*. Thomas Carlyle (1888) stated in his theory that basically 'leaders are born' and that only those people endowed with strong heroic potential can become such. This theory was further explored by Sidney Hook (1955), an American philosopher, who broadened the perspective on leadership by emphasising that there is an important difference between the eventful man, i.e., he whose day is full of events, and the event-making man, who can create events himself. Although the eventful man is nevertheless capable of playing a relevant role in a specific historical situation, the event-making man can personally influence its course, even radically modifying it, as a consequence of exceptional abilities of intelligence, will, and character.

2. *Trait Theory*. This theory is based on the belief that leaders possess certain traits, or distinctive traits, that differentiate them from ordinary people. W. O. Jenkins (1947) identified, in particular, two characteristics: emergent (hereditary) traits such as height, intelligence, attractiveness, and self-confidence, and efficacy traits (based on experience or learning) that include charisma as a key component.

3. *Contingency Theories*. No leadership style can be the right one because the internal and external dimensions of the business environment require the leader to adapt to each particular situation. Therefore, the leadership style that works in some circumstances may not be effective in others.

4. *Style and Behaviour Theory*. Style theory recognises that each individual has a distinct leadership style with which they feel most comfortable, a style that may not be effective in all situations. We can distinguish three types of leaders: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Without involving subordinates, the autocratic leader makes the decisions, the laissez-faire leader empowers all his subordinates to decide, thus taking no proper leadership role, while the democratic leader first asks his subordinates, then makes his decision.

5. *Process Leadership Theory*. In this case, the leader focuses on the needs of his followers and helps them become more autonomous and freer, aligning himself or his vision with the other members of the organisation or the community at large. Process leadership theory suggests that the job of leaders is to contribute to the well-being of others with a focus on forms of social responsibility and the interaction of group members, driven by an emphasis on the personal and a deep focus on the organisational function of groups and group processes, and the individual and organisational moral improvements.

6. *Transactional Theory*. We have described transactional leadership as one in which there are a series of agreements between followers and leaders.

This theory is based on the reciprocity of a relationship in which leaders not only influence followers but are under their influence. Leaders monitor and reward followers for the achievement of the agreed goals.

7. *Transformational Theory*. Transformational leadership (Liu et al., 2021; Setiawan et al., 2021) differs from the rest of the previous theories in that it involves the participation of followers in processes or activities related to the personal factor towards the organisation. Transformational leaders increase motivation by engaging in interactions with followers based on common values, beliefs, and goals, thereby influencing performance toward the corporate goal. For this reason, the leader attempts to induce followers to reorder their needs by transcending personal interests and striving for higher-order needs: followers and leaders thus set aside personal interests for the benefit of the group.

Unresolved issues. The analysis of styles and leadership theories illustrates that effective leadership of an organisation depends on the management's ability to build relationships with team members. Amabile's recent work (2008, 2016) reveals a direct relationship between creativity and innovation, which in turn influences leadership and managerial activities. For this reason, this study aims to analyse the most recent theories on creativity in businesses to investigate the reference models based on them and their enhancement in the organisational sphere. Can the development of artistic and creative dynamics in general benefit not only the company on the whole but specifically the management team? What link can it build between the leader's actions and the implementation of actions aimed at the well-being of the work team? It will attempt to provide an overview of the main answers provided by the scientific literature in this field to encourage reflection and open a path for future research.

2. Purpose and methods

The purpose and research tasks. Overall, the results obtained from these studies lead to two critical conclusions.

First, the leadership style is capable of changing the approach to creativity and, consequently, also, to innovation; second, creativity could potentially influence leadership development (Adler, 2006, 2010).

To test these hypotheses, this article sets out to analyse the main theoretical assumptions capable of reconstructing and enhancing the importance of creativity within the corporate context and stimulating the understanding of the dynamics underlying leadership as a fulcrum for innovative ideas and proposals dissemination in organisations.

The primary research tasks were, therefore, to investigate, on a scientific level:

- the dominant leadership styles;
- how creativity influences leadership;
- the fundamental theories on organisational creativity.

Methodology and methods. The research methodology (*Table 1*) adopted is essentially based on a literature analysis aimed at reconstructing the following:

- a. The link between creativity and innovation;
- b. Possible models for identifying creativity in the corporate context, first at the individual level and then at the organisational level;
- c. Mutual influences of leadership, creativity, and corporate development.

Table 1. The research methodology

Assumptions	Research tasks	Methodology	Key points explored
1. Leadership style is able to change organisations' approach to creativity. 2. Creativity could potentially influence the development of leadership	Theoretical analysis of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The main leadership styles; b. The way creativity influences leadership; c. The dominant theories on organisational creativity 	Literature analysis focused on the 2 assumptions and exploring the 3 key points identified	1. The link between creativity and innovation. 2. Possible models for identifying creativity in the corporate context, first at the individual level and then at the organisational level. 3. Mutual influences of leadership, creativity, and corporate development

Source: own development

Starting from how these three dynamics intersect, it will attempt to illustrate the connection between creativity and leadership in the corporate context. In particular, it will also emphasize artistic interventions in organisations (Berthoin Antal, 2009) as approaches capable of fostering communication processes within companies and initiating interchange flows (Biehl-Missal & Springborg, 2016) between the management and staff spheres as the main lever for strategic change (Lee & Kim, 2021).

Information base. Z. Khan, A. Nawaz and I. Khan (2016) identified two different leadership styles that can activate a direct relationship between leaders and team members: the *Transactional Leadership Style* and the *Transformational Leadership Style*. The former sees the leader inclined to reward his team, to repay it for the expectations satisfaction nurtured towards the performance required or desired. He, therefore, uses rewards to increase motivation – in this, he does not greatly favour creative development within the team, which is thus mainly orientated towards the leadership goals achievement.

In contrast, the second style recognises individual talents and creates enthusiasm through the support of values and belief systems, appealing to the desires and needs of individuals. Transformational leaders (Jannah et al., 2021; Kasimoğlu & Ammari, 2020) encourage followers to achieve higher-order needs, such as self-fulfilment and self-esteem; inspirational motivation offers encouragement and challenges the team to achieve their goals, while intellectual stimulation inspires followers to be more innovative in their problem-solving abilities.

Charismatic leaders instill confidence in themselves and others: maintaining self-esteem is a powerful and pervasive social need. These leaders go beyond inner conflicts and direct individual capabilities by becoming role models, stimulating the creation of values, and providing a sense of purpose, meaning, self-determination, emotional control, and mutual trust.

Motivational behaviour leaders inspire and create a vision, establish effective communication, and encourage employees (Sengupta et al., 2021) by working with them and giving them autonomy. They can intellectually stimulate the team, generate creativity, and accept challenges as part of their work. They cultivate the skills present in their workers, developing problem-solving techniques to make complex decisions. The ability to encourage the employees is crucial, along with a propensity for actively involving them in their work. The key indicators of intellectual stimulation are rationality, creativity, decision-making, consensus, coaching, support, continuous challenge, and active team involvement.

It is therefore based on the *Transformational Leadership Style* that the company can benefit to a greater extent from the individual contribution of each team member and trigger a sufficient degree of creativity to improve the organisational environment and the work climate as a whole. Creativity and innovation do not only derive from the company's overall strategy but also from the behaviour of the individual employees who do their work within the organisation every day. The extent to which they produce creative, new, and useful ideas during their daily work depends not only on their characteristics but also on the working environment they perceive around them (Amabile et al., 1996). Of all the forces that affect the everyday experience of people within the work environment in these organisations, one of the most immediate and powerful is certainly the leadership of these teams.

There are essentially three main theories of organisational creativity: the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1988, 1997), the interactionist theory (Woodman et al., 1993), and the multiple social domains theory (Ford, 1996), which have in common the observation that the work environment can exert an influence on employees' creativity.

Of the three, the first most clearly describes the work environment; moreover, it is the only theory of organisational creativity that specifies general characteristics of leader behaviour, both immediate supervisors and senior managers. In it, perceived leader support (defined as encouragement from the supervisor) becomes a characteristic under the more direct control of the immediate supervisor. Therefore, exploring this aspect of the work environment for creativity is interesting for both theoretical and managerial reasons.

The componential theory is based on a mediation model, according to which the leader's actions influence the perceptions of his subordinates, which, in turn, influences corporate creativity. According to this theory, the support provided by the supervisor exerts influence on the subordinates' creativity through direct help with the project, the development of the subordinate skills, and the improvement of intrinsic motivation. Positive supervisor manners consist of planning and setting goals appropriately, supporting the team within the organisation, communicating and interacting well with the team, evaluating individual contributions to the project, and providing constructive feedback (Amabile, 1997). Therefore, the leader's supportive conduct should include both instrumental, task-orientated and socio-emotional or relationship-orientated actions (Fleishman, 1953). Task-orientated behaviour focuses on getting the job done and includes actions such as clarifying roles and responsibilities, planning projects, monitoring work, and managing time and resources. The relationship-oriented performance focuses on the social-emotional aspect: showing consideration for subordinates' feelings, acting in a friendly and personally supportive manner towards them, and being concerned about their well-being. It is important to note that in the leader behaviour literature, the term 'support' generally refers only to relationship-oriented deeds, whereas, in the creativity literature, 'support' refers to all leader actions that could enhance creativity, whether task-oriented or relationship-oriented.

3. Results and discussion

Important studies (Amabile et al., 2004) suggest that only a leader who interacts with his or her subordinates daily can directly influence their perceptions, feelings, and daily performance, ultimately affecting the overall creativity of the work they do (Dampérat et al., 2016). In particular, leaders who show support for their subordinates and their work by monitoring progress efficiently and fairly, consulting them on important decisions, supporting them emotionally, and recognising them for good work are shown to be those who can act on them most strongly.

Some behaviour deserves special emphasis from the leader: communication skills, interpersonal interaction, ability to obtain useful and ongoing

information on the progress of projects, openness and appreciation of subordinates' ideas, empathy for subordinates' feelings (including their need for recognition), and ability to use interpersonal networks to provide and receive project-relevant information. If these actions are permanent, they can produce significant improvements in the thoughts, feelings, and creative performance of the subordinates (Shorthose & Maycroft, 2012). At a broader level, leaders who wish to support high-level performance must pay special attention to the details of their own everyday and seemingly trivial conduct towards employees. In short, creativity finds fertile ground in the goodness of ordinary business practices.

In one of the first studies examining the relationship between leadership and creativity, Pelz (1963) found that something positively correlated the intensity of interaction with group leaders with creativity, particularly for younger scientists. Furthermore, exposure to poor supervision or role modelling, as manifested in leaders' capacity for scientific work, tended to result in unusually poor performance.

Similarly, Tierney, Farmer, and Graen (1999) in their studies examined creativity in employees of a large chemical company, and found that effective exchange relationships produced correlations not only with positive evaluations of creativity and development of new inventions but also with indices of intrinsic motivation and use of cognitive strategies.

Cummings and Oldham (1997) investigated the connection between inventiveness among some manufacturing workers and patent disclosure and found that supporting the supervision of new ideas was associated with indices of innovation and was significantly so for those employees who showed a predisposition to creativity.

The results of Andrews (1967), S. Mednick and M. Mednick (1967) illustrated that effective leadership fosters innovation among creative people and that the leader's supervisory style does not inhibit the new ideas introduction as it directly related original potential to performance.

On the whole, leadership is shown to be correlated with creativity and innovation in operational business contexts; moreover, the tactics used by leaders seem to influence people's willingness to engage in artistic initiatives and, consequently, condition the likely success of such interventions.

The research of Mumford, Scott, Gaddis and Strange (2002) showed that leaders technical competence and creativity correlate strongly with the creative performance (Hoorn, 2014) indices of their teams. Furthermore, it seems that leader behaviour, including intellectual stimulation, support, and involvement, condition people's ability to express their creative competence (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Zurlo, 2019). On the other hand, we argued

that the role of the leader is simply to support or facilitate the creative work of others, meaning that they primarily must acquire resources and encourage the generation of new ideas.

Another common understanding of creative leadership is that the front-runner must inspire people by providing a meaningful and motivating vision of the work and its implications. They also believed that creative leadership must be able to be based on relevant technical skills since it is difficult to evaluate the work of creative people or to direct this work, lacking specific and relevant skills. Leaders must be able to convince different people to work together. They must be able to create adequate care for new risky initiatives and create a climate that supports the generation of ideas from others. All these skills require that the leader possesses more than technical ability, however valuable, to be able to guide the creativity of a team. A model has been hypothesised (Mumford et al., 2002) to capture the different skills a leader should possess to stimulate creativity within a team: the integrative style is used to define that attitude, which allows the leader to guide the creative efforts of his or her team, to orchestrate skills, people, and relationships in such a way as to bring new ideas to life.

This integrative style seems to involve three crucial elements. The first important component is the generation of ideas. Intellectual stimulation, or the application of creative problem-solving techniques, seems to be necessary for people's involvement: not only leaders must help people generate ideas, but they must build an environment in which these ideas can emerge. Therefore, leaders must ensure diversity in the group, open communication, and, through role modelling, crisis management, and policy decisions, try to create a climate and culture in which people are likely to produce and pursue new ideas.

One of the most important findings in recent creativity studies is that ideas, particularly a collection of original concepts, are a kind of a blessing in organisational contexts (Mumford et al., 2001). Therefore, this integrative style implies the definition of a second component: the structuring of the knowledge, i.e. the orientation concerning the technical and organisational merits of the work, output expectations definition, and the identification and integration of the projects to be pursued.

The third aspect of this leadership style is the promotion of the idea, which involves gathering the necessary support within the creative organisation as a whole for the implementation of a specific concept or project. Therefore, an interesting feature of this tripartite model is that it explicitly recognises the complex, perhaps somewhat contradictory, nature of creative leadership: leaders may shift between these aspects depending on the needs of different projects and their place within a broader cycle of creative development. As attractive

and potentially effective as this change strategy may be, it may not always be fully effective. For example, when working on highly complex projects in large organisations, it may simply not be possible for a leader to acquire the advanced technical skills needed to evaluate new ideas and the practical production skills desired to structure production activities. Under these conditions, leaders can cope with these conflicting demands by applying a team approach with the necessary exchange relationships between members of management teams.

3.1. Creativity as innovation

One of the most relevant studies on creativity in business organisations is certainly that of Amabile (1988). Starting from the observation that companies constantly need to innovate to survive, Amabile set about constructing a model that could make explicit how the innovation process develops within companies and what influences it. According to his theory, someone closely linked individual creativity to organisational innovation. Creativity is defined as “the production of new and useful ideas by an individual or small group of individuals working together” (Amabile, 1988, p. 126). Amabile (*ibid.*) noted that for companies to innovate, they need to implement creative ideas within the organisation. These ideas refer to new products, processes, or services on the company's production line or ideas for the new procedures or policies related to the enterprise itself.

Amabile's model identifies a set of qualities that can influence individual creativity within the company and a set of characteristics that, instead, hinder its development. The factors capable of fostering creative development are specific individual personality traits, personal motivation, particular cognitive skills, the propensity to take risks, expertise in a specific area, quality of the workgroup, diverse experience, social relationships, brilliant intelligence, and absence of preconceptions. To be successful, one must demonstrate intellectual honesty, curiosity, energy, enthusiasm for the work to be done, problem-solving, a degree of knowledge specific to the field of activity in question, and a general mastery of other disciplines, while also being able to work in a team and remain open to new ideas.

On the other hand, the factors that seem to limit the growth of creativity are lack of motivation and specific skills, inflexibility, externally imposed motivation, and lack of sociability. Unmotivated, lazy individuals with a lack of specific skills who are inflexible, externally motivated, and unsociable can all contribute to inhibiting creativity in work environments.

3.2. A Model for individual creativity

The set of individual characteristics associated with the development and inhibition of creativity in the company form the basis of the model for individual creativity (*Componential model of individual creativity*) developed by Amabile (1988). This model outlines three main components required for the development of individual creativity in a particular domain: *domain-relevant* (or domain-specific) *abilities*, which form the basis for the functioning of business performance and include practical knowledge, technical competence, and particular talent in the area of work; *creativity-relevant abilities*, which include the aptitude to look at problems from different perspectives, being able to understand complexity, and a general ability to break mental patterns and solve problems. *Intrinsic motivation for the task*, which can be considered one of the most important characteristics, as no domain skill or creative ability can be compensated for by an absence of motivation to perform a duty – it makes the difference between what an individual can do and what he or she will do. Moreover, it is highly dependent on the work environment – therefore, it can be the most directed component to drive the creative stimulus.

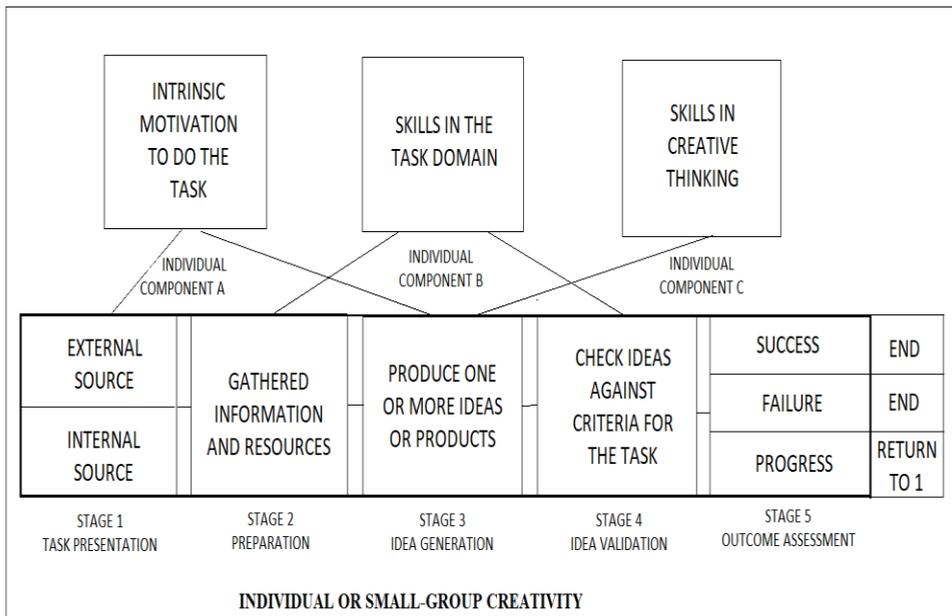


Figure 1. Componential model of individual creativity

Source: (Amabile, 1988, p. 138)

These three components operate at different levels. In the model for individual creativity, Amabile (1988, p. 138) describes how each individual can gather and use the information to arrive at a solution, an answer, or a product. Specifically, motivation toward the task (Siyal et al., 2021) is useful for initiating and sustaining the process and determines whether the search for a solution will begin and continue in a certain way. Individuals can use domain-relevant abilities to determine which path to seek at the beginning and which criteria to establish and set to generate different feasible solutions. Creativity-relevant skills, on the other hand, act as a kind of executive check, as they can influence how the search for the solution will proceed. Two conditions must occur simultaneously for an individual to potentially produce creative solutions: he or she must find the task intrinsically interesting or personally challenging and, at the same time, work within an environment that does not overwhelm his or her intrinsic motivation with external constraints (such as corporate objectives, the external competitive system, economic needs, etc.).

3.3. A model for organisational creativity

The leader exerts a key action (Amabile, 1988) in the development of creativity in the company. He/she must be able to balance certain aspects that tend to be opposite, such as, for example, freedom in carrying out one's task and, at the same time, its total absence. Management must be able to promote creativity by proposing a goal setting that is neither too rigid nor too unregulated. If the leader fails to set a clear direction for the development of a project as a whole, he or she fails to conceptualise the entire mission, generating a fragmented and distorted attitude in employees that risks compromising the ultimate result. If the leader's tight control over the procedures to be followed to achieve the ultimate result demotivates the team and makes them lose genuine interest. The balancing act about the setting of company objectives, therefore, lies in the combination of coordination and freedom.

Corporate management can influence individual creativity by defining the general organisational climate, placing emphasis on promoting inventiveness and innovation, establishing rewards and evaluation systems, and providing adequate resources to repay and perform the required creative efforts. Middle management figures can influence creativity by effectively setting and communicating goals and timelines for different projects, providing feedback, and establishing different levels of freedom and constraints.

In his model of organisational innovation, Amabile (1988, p. 151) includes the process of individual (or small group) creativity in the overall process of organisational innovation. The three basic components of this process are located in the centre of the model.

a. Motivation to innovate: this component consists of the organisation's basic orientation towards innovation. This orientation comes from the top and middle levels of company management, which is also responsible for the interpretation and communication of the objectives.

b. Resources in the task/project domain: this factor includes everything the organisation has at its disposal to work in the domain of the task to be achieved, i.e., the organisation selected the area for innovation.

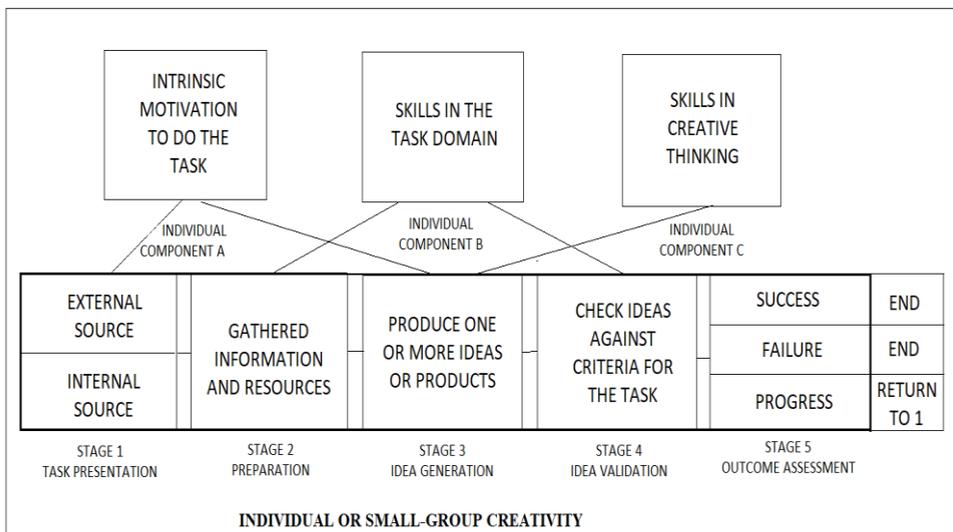
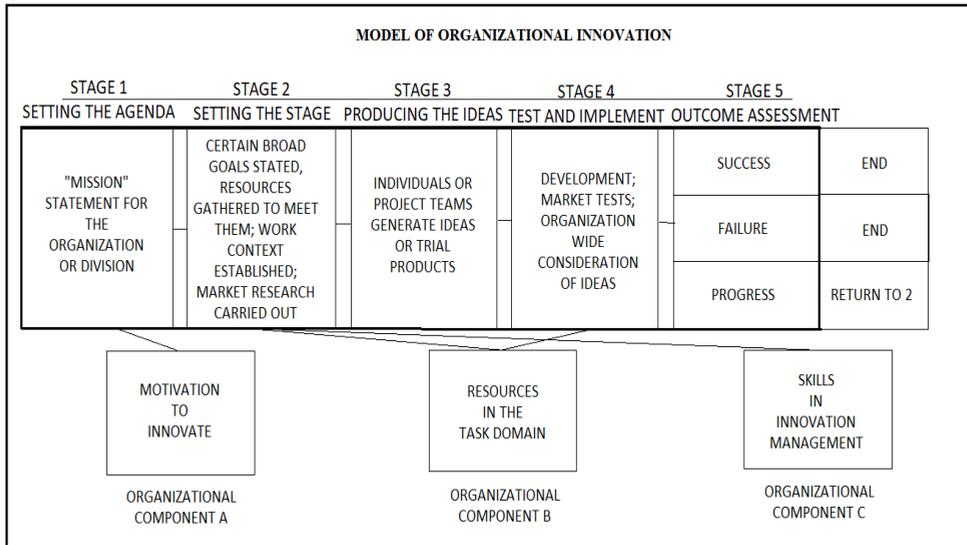


Figure 2. Componential model of organizational innovation
Source: (Amabile, 1988, p. 152)

These resources are people with key abilities in the domain, specific funds for that project, the production system, and the databases of relevant information.

c. Skills in innovation management: this module includes all levels of company management. The capabilities of the leaders, in this case, should be an appropriate balance between freedom and constraints, strict goal setting at the level of the overall mission and slower at the level of procedures and progression towards the same, a high degree of cooperation and participation, allocation of workload in combination with staff skills and interests, frequent and constructive feedback on the team's work efforts, recognition and fair rewards for creative efforts and successes.

3.4. The dynamic model of creativity and organisational innovation

Recently, Amabile has updated its model (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) by incorporating dynamic elements to represent the state of continuous evolution and regeneration of creativity developed within the company. The new model suggests that individual creativity fuels organisational innovation, linking the two together. Without creative ideas, there would be nothing to implement within the company.

Furthermore, employee creativity influences job performance; organisational characteristics, including managerial practices, feed individual and group creativity. In addition to intrinsic motivation, which we have already discussed in the previous model, the social environment – or work environment – now comes into play, which in turn influences creativity in many ways. This is where the role of leadership becomes predominant: high levels of corporate leadership strongly influenced creativity, through the daily practices of managers and the strategies they build, as the policies and values they communicate inside and outside the organisation.

Amabile (2016) constructed her new model with several dynamic elements in the form of progress loops, i.e. regenerative progress in meaningful work: that is, it produced iterative procedures that start with creative processes and do not end with them. It also recognised different interconnections between innovation and creativity: it is the outcome of the entire individual creative development that forms the basis for organisational innovation. At the same time, the latter, by including the work environment, influences the entire creative course. Individual motivation is also subject to various influences, and the role of management becomes essential in driving change. If leaders themselves are sufficiently creative and use this gift to improve management practice, they will encourage employees to develop their methods in a personal and different way.

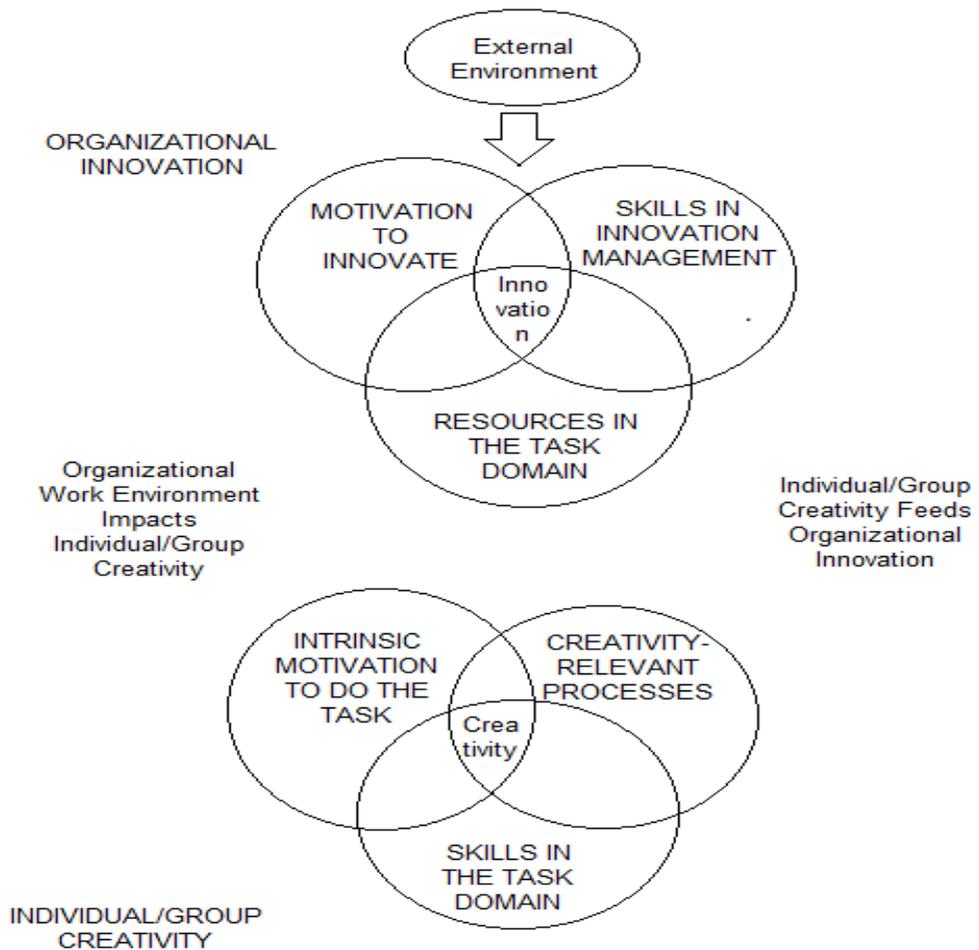


Figure 3. The components that influence business innovation and creativity and how they interact

Source: (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 161)

Psychological factors also influence this dynamic progression: the perception of doing meaningful work, the influence, or impact of the same, and the intuition towards motivation can facilitate the creative development in various ways. Of all the work events that occur repeatedly every day in people's subjective experiences, there is a single predominant occasion due to doing meaningful work: this is what Amabile calls progress in meaningful work.

Motivation increases when individuals feel they are making rapid advancement in their work, and this, in turn, has positive effects on creative development.

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION

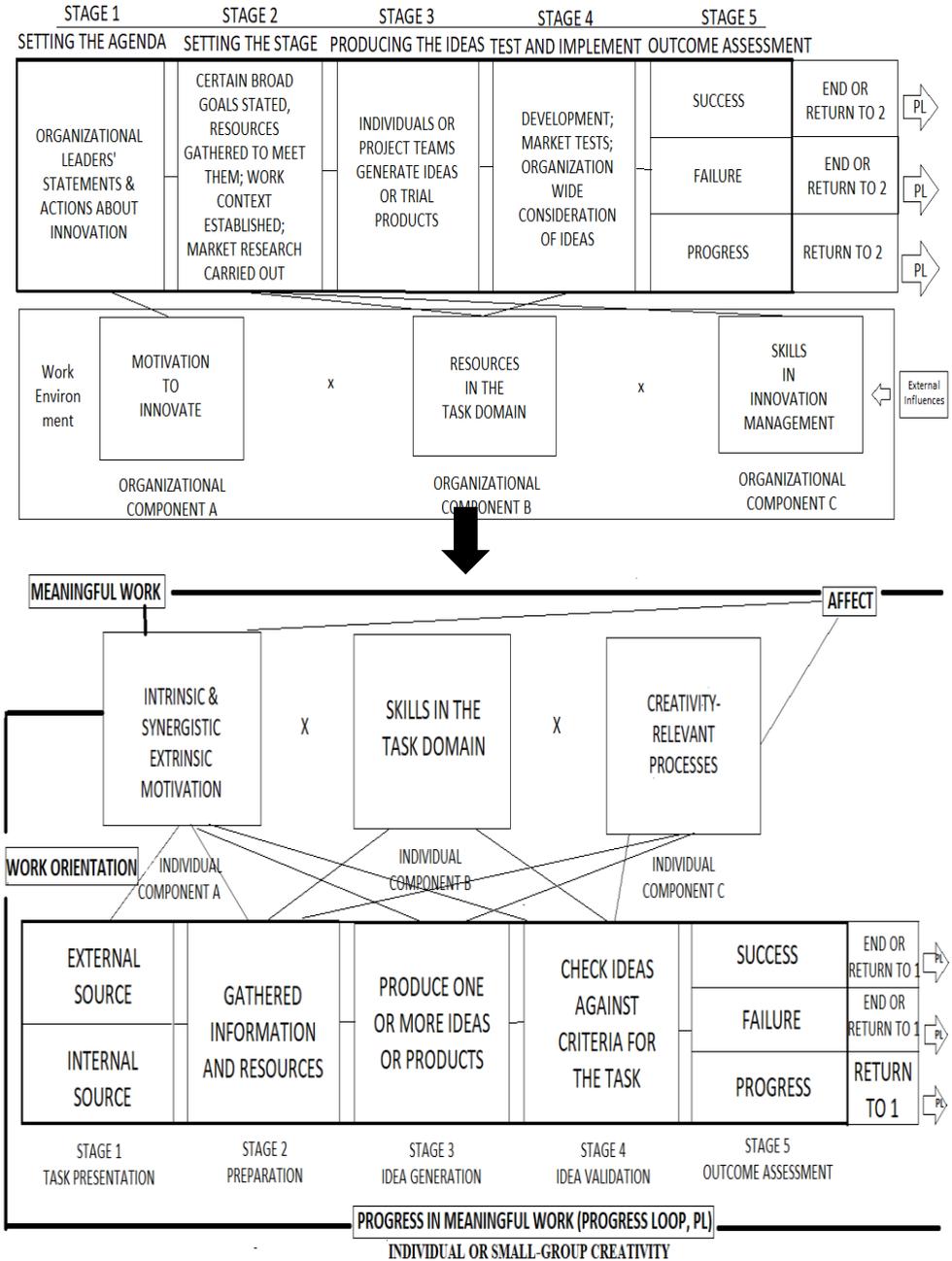


Figure 4. The dynamic, componential model of creativity and innovation
 Source: (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 165)

Individuals and teams can maintain high levels of creative productivity over long periods due to the dynamism of the model, which enables the replicability of virtuous creative cycles within business methods. Implementing new products, services, or processes stimulates corporate motivation to innovate, and a positive employee mood can facilitate the development of more disruptive creative tasks, thus stimulating radical creativity, that is, that radical change from the status quo of business practices and processes.

3.5. Creativity as a leadership development

We have seen how a good leader can champion innovative methods within his or her organisation and foster the development of creativity. But is it possible that the latter, in turn, influences leadership and its characteristics? Lotte Darso (2016) argues that learning and reflection triggered by artistic approaches within companies can foster leadership development: managers who can incorporate artistic outlooks into their organisational thinking and management are more able to encourage innovation and experiment with artistic interventions in corporate spaces. The aesthetic dimension allows one to open up to experience and test with new ways of developing knowledge, opening one's gaze to new visions, and building fresh ways of creating relationships and interacting with people. The artistic interventions in organisations, i.e. those artistic residencies realised in companies whose purpose is to “bring people, products, and practises from the world of the arts to those of organisations” (Berthoin Antal, 2009, p. 4) allow for a learning process that is different from the theoretical one: the body and mind of the participants in the interventions absorb information even unconsciously, simply by letting things happen, reflecting on them afterwards, and experimenting with new practices. Such interventions, which promote the encounter between the art world and the corporate sphere, are partly attributable to the development of learning (Koppett, 2001) in the organisational context, the achievement of specific performance goals, the fulfilment of corporate needs and communication possibilities through the arts; in other cases, they are designed to boost pure experimentation on both sides (Cacciatore & Panozzo, 2021). Where such interventions include the broader field of cultural and creative industries, stimulating collaboration with traditional industries, it is possible to trace spaces of cross-fertilisation guided by artistic thinking (Purg et al. 2021). Opening the space of the company to the arts means welcoming the option of another gaze, the artistic one, on one's organisation, on the opportunity of conceiving work materials differently, our relations with colleagues and subordinates, our bodies differently than in routine (Darso, 2016, p. 32). Therefore, it is possible to speak of *constructive disturbance* (Dars, *ibid.*) to indicate that tension that arises from the encounter between artistic logic

and entrepreneurial rationality: the balance between what is constructive and what is disturbing generates the success or failure of the project. As Amabile argues that intrinsic motivation exerts a powerful influence on employee performance, so Darso asserts that the best leaders are those who can provide inspiring visions for their employees, nourishing their souls with artistic emotions, social relationships, and bold goals. Organisations are created by the energy of people, who in turn need meaning and purpose to enrich their lives: art gives them such experiences and knowledge, thus fostering their intellectual, emotional, and creative development.

3.5.1. Empirical evidence: the TILLT Airis project

But what happens when a manager takes the risk of introducing an artistic intervention within his organisation and at the same time taking part in it? The Swedish organisation TILLT experienced this through the *Airis* (Artist in Residence) *project* from 2006 to 2011. In it, some companies employed part-time artists for about 10-12 months to work with managers and employees, specifying the focus of the interventions, planning the activities, and then realising them together. They systematised and analysed the results of this experiment (Zambrell, 2015).

An important aspect that emerged in the course of the project was that of the managers that were encouraged to 'get involved' in the first person. They put themselves on the same level as their employees in carrying out the required activities (related to the visual arts, dance, and theatre) because, from that point of view, they were in a listening and learning condition on an equal footing with their subordinates: they were in some way all equal before the challenge posed to them by the artists involved. This acting cooperatively with their employees was certainly crucial for building relationships and getting to know each other better. Talking about the results of the artistic interventions, the managers pointed out how they enabled people to cooperate in different ways, building new relationships, and how the proposed activities created a pleasant, creative, and fun climate that strengthened team building.

It is possible to schematise the impact of this aesthetically (Ladkin, 2008) inspired leadership by highlighting the results from both an individual and an organisational perspective (Zambrell, 2015, p. 191).

From the individual point of view, the major results concern the strengthening of relationships and the appreciation of employees; from the organisational point of view, the creation of a fertile environment for new ideas and the building of a creative climate (Isaksen & Akkermans, 2011) stand out. Common to both areas is the activation of extra activities: most of the managers involved combined the ambition to promote new contexts and create a

proactive climate to build relationships and interest on the part of the employees. Importantly, they wanted to win the approval of and in some way please their subordinates: nurturing a creative and fun climate within the company is certainly a way of expressing a positive image of the manager and strengthening his or her leadership.

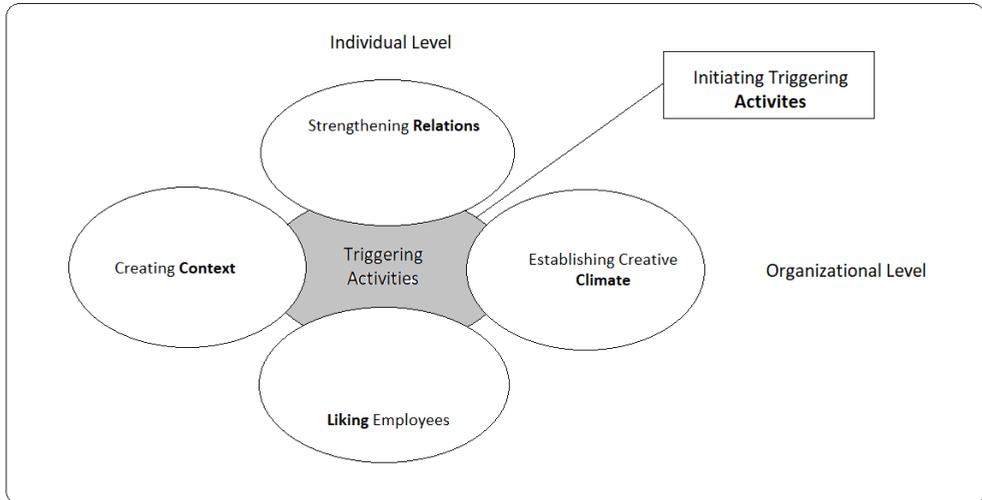


Figure 5. The managers' aesthetic – inspired leadership
 Source: (Zambrell, 2015, p. 191)

The creation of a creative environment within the organisation emphasises management's special attention and care for its employees and their working conditions, promoting a more relaxed and comfortable climate. Management can promote a creative environment by encouraging new ideas and favouring listening to each other. Strengthening personal relationships is also crucial for leaders to learn to consider their employees as people with different needs and skills and to understand how to use this diversity to build a collaborative environment. A shared participation in artistic activities not only enhances the uniqueness of each individual but also reinforces the image of the leader who promotes such activities and participates in them in the same way as everyone else, putting himself or herself at stake and revealing frailties and weaknesses. Endorsing creativity, giving attention to the needs of others, and encouraging playful actions are all actions that, in the eyes of employees, strengthen the leader's role and his or her caring attitude towards them. Leaders who activate artistic projects to enhance individual and creative development within their organisation show that they believe in individual capabilities as a lever for corporate innovation: such interventions then become a journey to

be undertaken together, the outcome of which derives from the very path – individual first, and collective later – developed along the way.

Critical aspects that emerged during the project included managers' expectations not being fully met, resistance within the team in understanding the meaning of the initiative, a low number of participants, and little change produced at the company level. Zambrell (2015, p. 199) reported that at least 30% of the managers involved continued to promote artistic activities within their organisation because they believed these activities could endorse new aesthetic, cultural, and social values, with positive effects on the work climate and the development of product and process innovation.

4. Conclusions

The article provides a theoretical analysis of the relationship between creativity and leadership as a driving force in the perspective of bringing innovation in an organizational context. The study results make it possible to draw the following conclusions.

1. Artistic interventions in organizations, if they actively involve the team and managers, can have an emotional impact on them, and it is this impact that triggers a process of corporate change.

2. The emotional impact generated by the interventions, acting primarily at the individual level before the organisational level, generates different reactions in participants and management, and becomes organisational learning through the transmission of shared knowledge and practices within the team.

3. The effect of the arts on leadership could be changeable, and this could lead to uncertainty within the management sphere.

As has been noted, however (Cacciatore & Panozzo, 2021), if the artistic interventions can, in some cases, bring to light latent aspects in organisations, it can consequently show both strengths and unexplored criticalities, helping management to solve problems that were previously not considered but that could have manifested their effects in the future.

The scientific novelty. The scientific novelty of this paper lies in highlighting the links underlying the role of art and creativity as a driver of innovation for business and as a leadership strategy. As illustrated, creativity plays a very significant role in the diffusion of new ideas and stimuli within organisations and their business models (Amoroso et al., 2021). If the first managerial theories on the subject affirmed the importance of this prerogative in the construction of a leadership capable of tackling organisational change, in more recent times, it has begun to consider this characteristic increasingly relevant for product and process innovation itself. In fact, not only is creative thinking (Proctor, 2021) able to support the design and inventive activities of emplo-

yees, but it can and must, if possible, become a key factor in the development of the strategic dimension of the enterprise (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2021). A good leader must be able to think out of the box and guide the team towards the ever-changing goals achievement, motivating and encouraging them but also fostering their development. If Barnard highlights the aspect of originality and powerful imagination that allows good leadership to flourish, Homans recognise the development of the latter above all in an emotional and informal key, recognising the great value that feelings and interactions between individuals can bring to organisations. Creative skills, therefore, constitute a quality that can encourage the involvement of individuals in corporate change processes, inspiring their growth and mutual interaction. It is, therefore, a participative leadership style that can upgrade creativity and encourage shared values.

It is precisely this aspect that is preponderant in the *Transformational Leadership Style*, in which the leader can recognise the individual talents of employees and creates enthusiasm by encouraging and challenging his or her team to achieve their goals, intellectually stimulating people to be more creative and innovative in their problem-solving abilities.

Charismatic leaders instill confidence in themselves and others: maintaining self-esteem is a powerful and pervasive social need. These leaders go beyond inner conflicts and direct individual capabilities by becoming role models, stimulating value creation (Steed, 2005), and providing a sense of purpose, meaning, self-determination, emotional control, and mutual trust. Creativity and innovation do not only derive from the company's overall strategy but also from the behaviour of the individual employees who do the work within the organisation: the extent to which they produce creative, new, and useful ideas during their daily work depends not only on their characteristics but also on the working environment they perceive around them. Of all the forces that affect people's daily experience of the work environment in these organisations, one of the most immediate and powerful is certainly the leadership of these teams.

Amabile (1988, 1997) identified the *componential theory*, Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993), conceived the *interactionist theory*, and Ford (1996) identified the *multiple social domains theory* as the three main theories of organisational creativity, which all have in common the observation that the work environment can exert an influence on employees' creativity. Only a leader who interacts with his or her subordinates daily can directly influence their perceptions, feelings, and day-to-day performance (Amabile et al., 2004), ultimately influencing the overall creativity of the work they do. In particular, leaders who show support for their subordinates and their work by monitoring progress efficiently and fairly, consulting them on important decisions, supporting them emotionally, and recognising them for good work prove to be those who can act on them most effectively.

The good leader must demonstrate communication skills, interpersonal interaction, the ability to obtain useful and ongoing information on the progress of projects, openness and appreciation of subordinates' ideas and empathy for their moods, and the ability to use interpersonal networks to provide and receive project-relevant information. If this behaviour is permanent, it can produce significant improvements in employee thoughts, attitudes, and creative performance (Ilyana & Sholihin, 2021). On a broader level, leaders who wish to support high-level performance need to pay special attention to the details of their daily attitude towards their work team. In short, creativity finds fertile ground in the goodness of ordinary business practices.

Amabile (1988) set out to construct a model capable of making explicit how the innovation process develops within companies and what influences it. According to his theory, someone closely linked individual creativity to organisational innovation. Amabile's model identifies a set of qualities capable of influencing individual creativity within the company: specific personality traits, strong private motivation, particular cognitive skills, a propensity to take risks, expertise in a specific area, the quality of the working group, a diversified knowledge, social relationships, a brilliant intelligence, and the absence of preconceptions all influence it.

To be successful, one must demonstrate intellectual honesty, curiosity, energy, enthusiasm for the work to be done, problem-solving, possess a degree of knowledge specific to the field of activity in question, have a general knowledge of other disciplines, work in a team and remain open to new ideas.

In her model for individual creativity, Amabile (1988, p. 138) describes how each individual can assemble and utilise information to arrive at a solution, an answer, or a product, thanks to three components operating at different levels. Specifically, *motivation toward the task* is useful for initiating and sustaining an operational process and determines whether the search for a solution will begin and continue in a certain way. Individuals can use *domain-relevant abilities* to indicate which path to seek at the beginning and which criteria to establish and set to generate different workable solutions. *Creativity-relevant abilities*, on the other hand, act as a kind of executive check, as they can influence how the search for the solution will proceed.

Transferring these assumptions to a broader reality, such as that of the entire business organization, it is possible to identify those environmental factors that, on the whole, are capable of promoting motivation and creativity (Amabile, 1988, p. 146). They are a sufficient degree of operational freedom, good project management, adequate resources, encouragement of the team, organisational characteristics marked by cooperation on all levels of the company, recognition of merits, sufficient time to execute tasks, a sense of cha-

llenge in achieving goals, pressure, and the pressure and urgency generated by the external competitive system.

The leader exerts a key action in the development of creativity in the company: he or she must be able to balance certain aspects that tend to be opposite, such as, for example, freedom in the performance of one's task and the total absence of it. Management must be able to promote inventiveness by proposing a goal setting that is neither too rigid nor too unregulated. If the leader fails to set a clear direction for the development of a project as a whole, he or she fails to conceptualize the entire mission clearly, generating a fragmented and distorted attitude in employees that risks compromising the result. If, on the other hand, he or she controls too tightly the procedures followed in achieving the result, the team may become demotivated and lack genuine interest. The balance related to corporate goal-setting lies in the combination of coordination and freedom. Corporate management can influence individual creativity by setting the overall organizational climate (Gao et. al., 2021), putting emphasis on promoting imagination and novelty, establishing rewards and evaluation systems, and providing adequate resources to repay and carry out the required creative efforts.

In his model of organisational innovation (Amabile, 1988, p. 151), Amabile includes a basic structure illustrating the innovation process, a diagram highlighting the components that influence this progression, and an indication of the major forces included in it. The key feature of this model lies in the inclusion of individual creativity in the overall organisational innovation process. Good leadership must know how to create an appropriate balance between freedom and constraints, generate goal setting that is narrower at the overall mission level and lower at the level of procedures and evolution towards them, stimulate a high degree of collaborativeness and participation, allocate the overall workload according to the skills and specific interests of the staff, ask for frequent and constructive feedback regarding the team's work efforts, and fairly and generously recognise a reward for each employee's creative efforts and achievements.

The next model (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) connected individual creativity and organizational innovation. The role of leadership becomes crucial, as managers' daily practices and the strategies they build fuel the creativity of the work team. By developing individual creativity in the business context, the *dynamic model of creativity and organisational innovation* (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) recognises new interconnections between innovation and creativity, and thereby builds organizational innovation.

The significance of the study. Amabile's work, in particular, proves to be of fundamental importance because it illustrates the strong influence that good leadership can have in the diffusion of creativity in the company, and

not only: it outlines how this creative flow can become innovative if properly guided and stimulated at the individual level, first, and then at the organizational level. From such theoretical indication, it is possible to arrive at empirical evidence that also demonstrates the opposite process, namely, that creativity is a virtuous path that can improve and enhance the goodness of leadership. How?

Lotte Darso (2016) argues that learning and reflection triggered by artistic approaches within companies can reward leadership development because managers have, with them, the ability to incorporate “the artistic gaze” into their thinking and management of the organization, and this prerogative puts them in a position to foster innovation and experimentation with artistic interventions in corporate spaces. Indeed, the aesthetic dimension allows them to open themselves to experience and research with new ways of developing knowledge, opening their gaze to different visions, and building original ways of creating relationships and interacting with people.

By analyzing the case study of the *Airis* (Artist in Residence) *project*, it is possible to understand how artistic interventions in organizations can enrich the company and the leadership behind it. Some of the main motivations for leaders to participate in the initiative include (Zambrell, 2015, p. 189): developing the organisation's creative potential, strengthening collaboration and trust among employees, sharing activities with colleagues and subordinates for purposes of enjoyment and fun, and introducing debates and comparisons about corporate values and culture.

The significant aspect of the present study lies in the reconstruction of the processual path that has arisen from the creative act until it reaches the managerial sphere and the implications that specific actions, such as artistic interventions, can have on corporate leadership. Emphasising the close link between creativity and innovation (Baden-Fuller & Stopford, 1995) means realizing a whole series of activities aimed at implementing strategic plans and strengthening the role of management from the creative influences that new practises and new ideas can spread within the work team.

But what has been the major outcomes of the empirical application of creative interventions in the business context? As reported by Zambrell (2015), from an individual point of view, the main outcomes mainly concern the strengthening of relationships and employee appreciation; from the organizational point of view, the creation of a fertile environment for new ideas and the building of a creative climate emerges above all.

The participation in artistic activities not only enhances the uniqueness of each person but also reinforces the image of the leader who wires such events and joins in them in the same way as everyone else, putting himself or herself on the line and revealing frailties and weaknesses. Promoting creative activities, giving attention to the needs of others, and fostering playful goings-on: these are all modalities that, in the eyes of employees, reinforce the leader's role and caring attitude towards them.

Prospects for further research. In conclusion, it is possible to say that good leadership must be able to facilitate the development of individual creativity at different levels and be able to extend it to the entire organization to enhance its ability to compete in the marketplace innovatively. Similarly, fostering the growth of creative flows within the enterprise can generate virtuous paths, in turn increasing and improving leadership. It is thus a two-way process that is based on creativity: personal capabilities become leverage for business innovation when effectively inspired by a good leader; the latter, in turn, gain new strength and greater acclaim by enabling the spread of artistic ideas within his or her organisation.

Future research along these lines could test management's ability to challenge itself and arouse inspired ideas in the same strategic processes: working with artists and fielding arts-based action-research interventions could stimulate the generation of new creative interventions and place companies within a virtuous path of renewal. Qualitative research could gather more evidence on the impact of artistic interventions on corporate management, highlighting the weaknesses of the strategies adopted, the individual aspects of the leaders themselves, and how such interventions were able to meet or not meet the different requirements that emerged. While artistic interventions consent, as we have seen, to excite team-building, they can also open interesting perspectives on the emergence of organizational lacks and problems that are, in fact, still latent.

Some limitations that have occurred, in particular through the study of arts-based interventions developed over the years by Ca' Foscari University (Cacciatore & Panozzo, 2021) concern, in particular, the short-term nature of the effects that single arts events produce within organisations: in such cases, it was precisely the managerial level that was not fully involved, at least not in the first person, and this automatically confers a different commitment, especially in perspective. We need to further investigate the managerial implications underlying the arts-based interventions to give continuity to the strategic and structural aspects stimulated through the arts. Direct observation of arts-based interventions suggests that strengthening vertical/horizontal relationships within the organizational structure fosters the staff coordination and promotes supervisory mechanisms useful in dealing with highly complex tasks.

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