

Leadership and creativity: a performance analysis of the role of creative team managers in Agreste Pernambuco

Liderança e criatividade: uma análise da atuação de gestores de equipes criativas no Agreste Pernambuco

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ABSTRACT

The creative economy and its creative industries are characterized by the presence of creative individuals and teams, who stand out in the job market as sources of competitive advantage. These individuals use creativity as a leadership skill. Thus, the overall objective of this study was to analyze the leadership exercised by managers in the creative economy in its four major areas, in Agreste Pernambuco. Specifically, the study aims to understand the performance of these managers in relation to the elements of creative leadership and the characteristics related to creativity. To achieve this, exploratory and descriptive qualitative research was conducted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five creative economy managers in the city of Caruaru, PE, from the perspective of content analysis. It was concluded that creative economy managers are in the process of transitioning toward creative leadership, making efforts in this direction. Considering the main factors involved in managing creative teams, aspects such as original ideas, organizational environment, resilience, and learning from experience showed greater alignment. Nevertheless, aspects like shared understanding, shared vision, and network activation require attention for improvement.

Keywords: Creativity. Leadership. Creative economy. Creative leadership. Creative teams.

RESUMO

A economia criativa e suas indústrias criativas são caracterizadas pela presença de indivíduos e equipes criativas que se destacam no mercado de trabalho como fontes de vantagem competitiva. Dessa forma, esses indivíduos usam da criatividade como uma competência da liderança. Diante disso, o objetivo geral deste trabalho foi analisar a liderança exercida pelos gestores na economia criativa, das quatro grandes áreas da economia criativa, no Agreste Pernambuco. Especificamente, buscou-se compreender a atuação desses gestores diante dos elementos da liderança criativa e as características relacionadas à criatividade. Para tanto, realizou-se uma pesquisa de caráter exploratório e descritivo de natureza qualitativa. Foram feitas entrevistas semiestruturadas com cinco gestores da economia criativa, da cidade de Caruaru, Pernambuco, sob a ótica da análise de conteúdo. Concluiu-se que os gestores da economia criativa estão em processo de transição em direção à liderança criativa, esforçando-se nesse sentido. Considerando os principais fatores envolvidos na gestão de equipes criativas, os aspectos “ideias próprias”, “clima”, “resiliência” e “aprendizado vindo da experiência” apresentaram maior congruência. Por outro lado, os aspectos “plataforma de entendimento”, “visão compartilhada” e “ativação em rede” requerem atenção para serem aprimorados.

Palavras-chave: Criatividade. Liderança. Economia criativa. Liderança criativa. Equipes criativas.

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Received on: 07/05/2024. Accepted on: 12/18/2024

INTRODUCTION

Creative economy and its associated industries are characterized in the labor market by the presence of creative individuals and teams, serving as a source of competitive advantage (Florida, 2011). These individuals cultivate creativity as a leadership competency, enabling them to extend creative practices from workplace culture to broader communities, thereby reshaping values, norms, and organizational structures (Muzzio; Paiva Júnior, 2014).

The topic of creative teams has gained prominence with the growing discourse on the creative economy in recent years. Creative economy emerged to revitalize traditional manufacturing, entertainment, and service industries in the post-industrial era (Kumar, 2006). Multiple definitions of the creative economy exist: for Howkins (2001), it refers to the commercialization of new ideas, primarily working with intellectual assets to generate both economic and symbolic value.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) emphasizes that creative production is interconnected across four main areas: consumption, media, culture, and technology. As such, this economy is driven by cultural production, in which both economic and symbolic values must be considered as factors influencing not only the productive sphere but also other aspects of production valuation.

In the context of creative economy, the workforce profile has become increasingly diverse, and one of the challenges for those in leadership positions is developing strategies to guide change (Florida, 2011). Given the challenges that creativity presents to organizations, both leaders and subordinates must break paradigms to effectively manage teams within this environment. Consequently, organizations have started to prioritize the inclusion of more creative individuals in their workforce.

In this new context, Miguez (2007) highlights an economy driven by creativity, which has garnered the attention of scholars, as well as governments and civil society worldwide. Studies indicate that high levels of creativity, innovation within work teams, and creative leadership have surpassed the performance expectations set by organizations (Miguez, 2007). Additionally, Florida (2011) and Newbiggin (2010) argue that a new ethos is emerging, which can more precisely be termed "creative ethos." According to these authors, it is within this current framework that the strategic areas of leadership development in organizations focus on utilizing creativity as a vital resource for generating creative teams (Carvalho; Muzzio, 2015).

However, Grinberg (2014) raises questions regarding the meaning of creativity in the corporate world. According to him, regardless of the dictionary definition or the etymology of the term, in a business context, creativity should be understood as the ability to provide alternative solutions to known problems and to develop innovative approaches to emerging challenges. This leads to the questions: What are the skills of a creative leader? How should creative teams be managed?

Considering this, the general objective of this study was to analyze the leadership practiced by managers of creative teams within the creative economy in Agreste

Pernambuco. Specifically, the study aimed to understand the performance of these managers in relation to the elements of creative leadership, the characteristics associated with creativity, and to identify the key factors in managing creative teams. Consequently, the following research question is posed: How is leadership exercised by managers of creative teams across the four major areas of the creative economy in Agreste Pernambuco?

This research is exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative in nature. A non-probabilistic sampling criterion was employed to select participants. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with professionals in the field, allowing for the exploration of respondents' perceptions and experiences. The collected data were then processed using the content analysis technique, ensuring a systematic and in-depth interpretation of the information.

Following this introduction, the article is organized into four additional sections. The second section presents the literature review, covering concepts and studies related to the topic. The third section describes the methodology employed in the research. The fourth section discusses the results obtained. Finally, the fifth section provides the concluding remarks, including the study's conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative economy encompasses a broad array of activities and is one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy. The first effort to guide public policies toward the development of creative economy occurred three decades ago through an initiative by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). According to UNCTAD (2010), the aim was to understand the disparities in cultural resources between countries in the Global North and South, recognizing the economic value of culture and proposing methods of analysis.

The significance of creative economy in history emerged in 1997 with the United Kingdom's innovation in mapping creative industries, recognizing the sector's potential for the economy, particularly its capacity to generate jobs and income. According to Volkerling (2001), from 1990 onward, the idea that creative economy — or creative industries — could serve as a strategy to revitalize post-industrial national economies gained traction. In this regard, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand made concerted efforts to implement policies aimed at fostering creative industries (Corazza, 2013).

The Creative Industry Chain, according to UNCTAD (2010), consists of "the cycles of creation, production, and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs." Thus, UNCTAD (2010) identifies four major areas within creative economy: consumption, media, culture, and technology. This classification serves as an effort to organize a broad field in a way that allows for a more comprehensive understanding through distinct divisions (Muzzio; Paiva Júnior, 2014).

Pratt and Huntton (2013) define creative industries, which form the foundation of the creative chain, as a distinct set of activities driven by creativity, talent, or individual skill. These services and products involve intellectual property and span from traditional activities, such as crafts, to more complex production chains, such as those in the fashion sector.

Therefore, it can be stated that creative economy is characterized by the prevalence of the symbolic dimension emerging from creative sectors. Dantas (2008, p. 4) contributes to this understanding by stating that:

Creative industries are founded on individuals with creative and artistic abilities who, in collaboration with managers and professionals in the technology sector, develop products and services whose economic value lies in their intellectual and cultural properties.

Therefore, the economy resulting from this process is grounded in creativity, skill, and talent distributed throughout society, as production in this context is centered on the mobilization of inexhaustible immaterial resources, such as ideas, knowledge, and culture.

CREATIVE MARKET IN BRAZIL

The creative market arises from the combination of people, ideas, and projects, in which intellectual capital serves as the primary source of raw material for this sector, giving rise to creative industries (Ferreira Filho; Lima; Lins, 2019).

According to the Mapping of the Creative Industry in Brazil by the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – Firjan*) — a survey conducted between 2017 and 2020 —, the share of the Creative Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the national GDP increased from 2.61 to 2.91%. As a result, in 2020, the Creative GDP totaled R\$ 217.4 billion, a value comparable to the production of the construction sector, which also accounted for 2.9% of the total GDP in 2020 (Firjan, 2022).

According to Firjan, from the perspective of the labor market, the Brazilian economy employed over 935 thousand creative professionals in 2020. Consequently, the value generated by creative industries has a direct impact on the income production of workers and the generation of wealth in Brazil (Firjan, 2022).

Thus, the absolute value of creative economy relative to the Brazilian GDP has increased over the three years observed, demonstrating that the creative industries market is both growing and profitable. Furthermore, creative industries are strategic areas with significant economic potential to drive the national economy. As the Creative GDP continues to grow, it indicates that this is a market that justifies investment (Firjan, 2022).

According to Nyko and Zendron (2018, p. 3):

The future trend is for the growth of creative industry to continue outpacing global growth. Brazil demonstrates even greater potential for expansion, reflecting the size of the domestic market, the creativity in generating new products, content, and services, and the country's rich cultural heritage.

Britto (2016) notes that creative economy initiatives contribute to the diversification of regional economies, particularly in developing countries. However, UNCTAD (2010) states that cities are taking a more active role in developing policies to promote the creative economy than federal authorities.

Caruaru, in the Agreste region of Pernambuco, has a creative economy that stands out due to the Caruaru Fair, the Creativity Warehouse (*Armazém da Criatividade*), and *Porto Digital*.

The Fair is not merely a market; it is a space for building cultural identity, distinguished by its capacity for innovation while preserving traditional elements. Recognized as Cultural Heritage by the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (*Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* – IPHAN) since 2006, it stands as one of the most significant symbols of Northeastern culture. Emerging at the end of the 18th century, the fair has established itself as a creative and cultural space in the region, encompassing everything from the sale of handicrafts to food products. As such, it serves as a crucial driver of economic and social development (Iphan, 2021).

Porto Digital is one of the most important technology parks in the country, operating in the fields of Creative Economy and Technology. It is the result of a public policy aimed at integrating Pernambuco into the global technology market (Firjan, 2022). *Porto Digital* also has an advanced unit in Caruaru; *Armazém da Criatividade*, which opened in 2015, features its own incubators, infrastructure, and financial support to develop companies. It manages projects designed to enhance the competitiveness of the Technology and Creative Economy sectors, while also promoting sustainable development initiatives (França, 2022).

In 2025, the *Armazém* will undergo a strategic repositioning (toward the city center), which will enhance accessibility and increase its integration with local initiatives. This requalification aims to transform the central area of Caruaru into an innovation district, fostering more opportunities and collaborations across different sectors of the creative economy. Additionally, *Porto Digital* is expanding its reach within the state, linking regional initiatives to national and international opportunities (Porto Digital, 2024).

Therefore, initiatives such as the Fair, *Porto Digital*, and *Armazém* strengthen Caruaru as a reference in the creative economy sector, promoting sustainable development and generating a positive impact on both local culture and the economy.

With such incentives, Pernambuco accounted for 1.9% of Brazil's creative GDP in 2017 and 2018, and contributed 2% to the GDP in 2020, a value corresponding to approximately R\$4.348 billion of the country's total GDP (Firjan, 2022). This underscores the importance of incentives, investments, and public policies in fostering the regional Creative Economy.

LEADERSHIP

From the 19th century onward, the study of leadership became structured with a focus on identifying the attributes and characteristics of influential personalities, the

situations leaders encounter, the roles they assume, and the actions they take when confronted with challenges. This framework facilitated the theoretical and practical evolution that continues to influence management and organizational effectiveness today.

Despite the extensive literature on the subject, a convergence can be observed in most studies, assuming that leadership involves a process of intentional influence, exercised by one person over others. According to Delfino, Silva, and Rohde (2010), leadership, as a social process, entails the interaction between leader and followers. Aspects such as experience, influence, relationships, and results are identified as common convergent points mentioned by most scholars.

Until 1970, according to Bergamini (1994), researchers in organizational and human behavior identified three key movements in the study of leadership and its impact on organizational environments. These movements are: the trait approach, which emphasizes the qualities of effective leaders, believed to foster better performance in subordinates; the leadership style approach, which focuses on validating or identifying leadership behaviors; and the situational approach to leadership, which incorporates contingency theory and examines the context and environment in which leadership behavior is applied.

Since 1980, according to Stoner and Freeman (1999), studies have focused on investigating the behavior of leaders with a significant impact on their organizations. This approach is referred to as “new leadership,” which encompasses charismatic, visionary, cultural, transformational, and liberal leadership. Chart 1 below presents the conceptual evolution of the topic.

Chart 1. Conceptual evolution of leadership.

Period	Leadership	Characteristics
2300 BC	-	Leadership resulted from something transcendental and supernatural, designating superior qualities.
19 th century to 1940	Trait Theory	Leadership was considered a genetic inheritance and was explained through personality traits or characteristics.
1950	Leadership Style Theory	Impact of the leader's behavior and style on the effectiveness of the group. Leadership is an interactive process between leaders and followers.
1960 to 1980	Contingency Theory	How environmental factors influence the leadership process, the behavior of the leader and the follower, and the organizational environment.
1980 to present	Transformational, Transactional, Visionary, Creative Leadership	Organizations seek leaders with attributes such as cooperation, autonomy, innovation, among new roles and leadership practices.

Source: Adapted from Carvalhal (2012).

Furthermore, Rickards and Moger (2000) view leadership as a process in which the leader's image plays a critical role in facilitating the achievement of team results. According to the authors, leadership and its associated processes are aimed at driving successful organizational innovation.

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

Studying the phenomenon of leadership requires more than an examination of the business environment and its historical evolution. It is essential to consider the perspectives of individuals and society, as well as how these aspects integrate into the topic, understanding their dimensions and intersections in the search for new theoretical and methodological models (Carvalho; Muzzio, 2015). In this context, it is important to emphasize the role of the leader.

Rickards and Moger's (2000) Creative Leadership Theory introduces the Creative Leadership Model (CLM), which emphasizes collective behavior and team management. The model suggests that through creative leadership, leaders and followers can achieve high performance. Based on the CLM, Rickards and Moger (2000) identified seven key factors of creative teams, as outlined in Chart 2.

Chart 2. Seven factors of creative teams.

Factors	Characteristics
Enlightenment Platform	Team members respect each other's perspectives, sharing knowledge, beliefs, values, and convictions. The leader clarifies activities, creating a platform of understanding that drives the development of new ideas.
Shared vision	Team members share a sense of purpose and responsibilities that motivate and sustain the team's progress, with meaningful visions of the future.
Environment	The leader emphasizes the importance of a positive environment, fostering trust among members and encouraging a welcoming approach to stimulate creativity.
Resilience	The leader highlights the importance of seeking alternatives when dealing with unmet expectations, promoting team flexibility in the face of frustrations and obstacles.
Original ideas	Leadership focuses on engaging the team in building ideas, prioritizing those perceived as open to collective engagement to solve task-related problems.
Network activation	Creative leadership facilitates team networking, encouraging the exchange of ideas and mutual support with external individuals, leveraging skills, knowledge, and resources to solve collective problems.
Learning from experience	The leader promotes creative learning, encouraging growth, adaptation, and problem-solving. The team is guided to learn from its experiences, strengthening its capacity for innovation, boldness, and risk-taking.

Source: Adapted from Carvalho and Muzzio (2015) *apud* Rickards and Moger (2000).

A creative leader exercises leadership that extends beyond the scope of classical theory. In this context, the creativity of those being led becomes a variable influenced by the prevailing leadership style. Leadership that fosters creativity and innovation demonstrates that leaders can impact their teams and organizations, either directly or indirectly, through mediating mechanisms such as intellectual stimulation, involvement in creative processes, enhancement of the organizational environment, and promotion of innovation (Figueiredo *et al.*, 2022).

Leadership is a critical driver of organizational creativity, as leaders possess the ability to stimulate creative thinking and foster an organizational environment

conducive to innovation. Consequently, creativity can be understood as a manageable phenomenon, guided by the Seven Factors of Creative Teams, in which leaders play a pivotal role in ensuring its effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory and descriptive qualitative study was conducted using a non-probabilistic sampling method. The analysis was based on qualitative interviews with managers in the creative economy sector in the Agreste region of Pernambuco. These managers hold formal leadership positions in organizations operating within the four areas of the creative economy, as defined by UNCTAD (2010).

The first interviewee was selected based on inclusion and accessibility criteria (which required participants to have held leadership positions for at least 6 months, be over 18 years of age, and work in the Agreste region of Pernambuco). Subsequent interviewees were identified using the snowball sampling method, in which the first participant referred the next. To define and finalize the research sample, a minimum of five interviewees was established as the criterion, following the guidelines of Creswell (2007).

The number of respondents was limited due to methodological and operational factors. The non-probabilistic sampling approach, employing the “snowball” method, constrained participant selection to mutual referrals, which proved effective for targeting specific populations. Additionally, Creswell’s (2007) criterion supports the choice of five interviewees, emphasizing that qualitative research values in-depth individual analysis over sample size. Operational limitations, such as a three-month timeframe for data collection and analysis and the requirement for detailed transcription, also influenced this decision. Lastly, the research’s focus on the Seven Factors (Rickards; Moger, 2000) justified a smaller sample size to facilitate a more thorough exploration of trends pertinent to the topic.

Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews guided by a semi-structured script comprising nine questions, developed based on Rickards and Moger’s (2000) theory of the Seven Factors of Creative Teams. The interviews were conducted via video calls using Google Meet, with each session averaging 24 minutes and yielding approximately six pages of transcribed text per interview. With participants’ consent, obtained through the signing of an Informed Consent Form, the audio recordings were made and subsequently transcribed for content analysis.

The collected data were processed and analyzed during the research phase, which was divided into six parts, as outlined by Bardin (2009). The excerpts were then examined for subcategories, and to construct the final theoretical-methodological framework, the categories were organized to present an overarching view of the meanings emerging from the participants’ discourses.

RESULTS

Five professionals working in the creative economy were interviewed, fulfilling the experience requirements for the phenomenon and the minimum sample

size of five interviewees (Creswell, 2007). The group consisted of an innovation manager with 2 years of experience, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with 8 years of experience, a CEO with 6 years of experience, a CEO with 30 years of leadership experience, and an executive manager with 20 years of experience.

The interviewees are key leaders in their respective businesses: two from the Technology sector, one from the Innovation sector, one from Brand Consulting, and one from Communications and Marketing. Interviewee 2 represents a large company, Interviewee 3 leads a micro-enterprise, and the remaining interviewees manage small businesses, all located in Caruaru.

The elements of creative leadership are detailed below, based on the Seven Factors approach of Rickards and Moger (2000). The categories are explained individually to facilitate understanding, although it is important to note that they are inherently interconnected in organizational practices.

The **enlightenment platform** aims to foster the development of new ideas. To achieve this, team members must comprehend and respect each other's perspectives, as well as share knowledge, beliefs, values, and convictions. In this context, the leader plays a crucial role in clarifying tasks to the team (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

The first interviewee explains that, in addition to maintaining open communication with team members, she also directs them toward the values and vision of the parent company, since:

[...] We don't have those traditional signs with things like mission, vision, values, but these are our values: collaboration, connection, and impact. Our mission is to encourage and increasingly impact the innovation that is created and made here in the Agreste of Pernambuco.

The second interviewee explained that he is responsible for "trying to bring everyone together in the same direction, even if not everyone believes in the same things, and the first thing we did was make it very clear what our values are." To address differences in values and worldviews, they created proverbs to help members absorb and practice the company's values. "It's something we built together with the entire team and have always communicated through all our actions so that people believe in the company's purposes." In addition to meetings and guidance, other activities include scavenger hunts, designed by managers and the culture team, which are held over a 3-month period and based on the company's values. These activities aim to integrate the team by encouraging the exchange of beliefs and knowledge.

Interviewee 3 reports that she and her managers have a clear understanding of the company's values and objectives, and they make every effort to communicate them to employees starting from the hiring process. Additionally, they hold regular meetings with the team, are always available to answer questions, offer support, and organize monthly competitions and integration events. These initiatives aim to promote greater mutual understanding and knowledge sharing among team members.

The fourth interviewee highlighted that the organizational culture in her company is very strong, guiding the entire team and maintaining integration. Additionally, virtual platforms are used for interactions and conversations. Beyond biweekly meetings with managers, everyone gathers monthly during team integration sessions to discuss projects, clients, ideas, and the company's members.

The fifth interviewee explained that, due to the age diversity within the team, they prioritize dialogue as a way of addressing the challenges arising from generational differences. According to the manager:

[...] There's not really a focus on what's right or wrong here, especially since we have different generations working together. To avoid generational clashes, we really try to engage in dialogue, listening to all sides and working together to reach common ground.

Therefore, it is clear that only interviewees 2, 3, and 4 are able to closely align with what would be expected of a creative leader, by promoting the dissemination of the company's values and individual beliefs to achieve a common understanding that fosters the emergence of ideas. However, it is noted that the other interviewees also make efforts in this direction.

Regarding **shared vision**, the leader must instill in team members a sense of purpose and responsibility that drives and maintains their progress, encouraging them to develop visions of the future that are impactful and meaningful (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

Interviewee 1 responded that they share the same values and vision for the future as the parent company, emphasizing the importance of connection and collaboration to foster bonds and relationships.

On the other hand, interviewee 2, building on his previous analysis, communicates the company's plans to his team and clarifies each member's role in achieving these objectives:

[...] I really enjoy sharing with them the vision for the future, where we're headed, to encourage them to focus less on where we are now and more on where we want to go, so they believe they'll grow along with the company's growth. Whether we like it or not, it's about selling a dream, right? I'm selling an idea of the future.

In turn, interviewee 3 and the management team strive to offer new perspectives to employees, guiding them and expanding their worldview, with the aim of creating a beneficial path for both personal and professional development and the success of the company. She explains, "From the analysis process, we have clearly defined our values, our goals, where we want to go, and the positive impacts we want to leave wherever we go. We have our entire objective mapped out." In this context, she makes efforts to communicate both the company's and the team's objectives to her team, aligning them with the personal goals of each employee through a personalized career plan.

Interviewee 4 explained that because the company has a very strong organizational culture, which guides the entire team, there is “an understanding of what you do, who you want to talk to in the market, and how you are going to talk to them.” The leader ensures that the team shares the same vision of the future for the organization, believes in the leader’s purpose, and aligns with the company’s mission.

Interviewee 5 reported a curious issue in the company due to the hybrid work modality of certain teams. Communication between management and members working from home is slower and more laborious, which makes communication among team members moderately difficult. This, in turn, impacts the development of future visions that are impactful.

Therefore, it is observed that leaders face the challenge of simultaneously stimulating motivation and a sense of common purpose in team members. However, interviewees 2, 3, and 4 exhibit characteristics of creative leaders, with well-established objectives, culture, vision, and tasks. In contrast, interviewees 1 and 5 still need to encourage their team members to develop meaningful visions of the company’s future.

Regarding **environment**, the leader must emphasize the relevance of a positive environment, encouraging team members to trust each other and adopt a positive and welcoming approach to promote creativity in the workplace (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

Interviewee 1 employs various forms of motivation, tailoring approaches to each individual employee, as “motivation varies greatly from person to person.” For instance, she emphasizes recognizing the team’s work, creating a work environment that fosters experiences, learning, and a healthier, more collaborative, and welcoming atmosphere, that “allows everyone to be the way they want to be.” Additionally, she encourages participation in events and trips, beyond focusing solely on salary and benefits. In this context, she strives for horizontal management, “having a very unique communication with my team, in which they know they can count on me.”

Interviewee 2 explained that, in addition to offering benefits such as market-competitive salaries, health insurance, TicketNet, and food vouchers, the company strives to create an inclusive and harmonious work environment through empathy, aiming to keep people motivated and engaged. Additionally, they regularly organize games, competitions, and happy hours to further foster team morale.

Interviewee 3 admitted that keeping her team motivated is a challenging task; in her words: “motivation is something that’s a challenge, especially for me as a manager; It’s a challenge, it’s work, and I believe it’s an extremely personal task that requires observation.” To address this, she works closely with the human resources department to better understand the employees and create groups with similar characteristics. Personalized learning and development paths are then designed for both groups and individuals, “it’s a path in which we’ll support as much as we can to help that person achieve the goal they want to reach here within the company.” Additionally, internal investment projects are developed to improve the work environment, ensuring comfort and well-being for employees.

In the case of interviewee 4, the team remains motivated by believing in the company's purpose and trusting the leader. The manager's strategy to maintain a positive atmosphere in the organization is based on caring for employees. According to the interviewee, it is important to:

[...] Having transparency means being there together, having conversations, and asking if everyone is doing well. So, I care not only about whether people are performing their roles but also about their well-being. Because if they're well, they'll obviously perform better and reach their full potential within the company.

For interviewee 5, one of the ways to motivate the team is to recognize their efforts, encourage them by highlighting the good work they are doing, and help guide them through difficulties to make the most challenging tasks easier. Additionally, all issues are addressed through dialogue to build trust among team members and foster collaboration in the construction and delivery of results.

The interviewees share a common goal of creating a work environment in which their subordinates feel a sense of well-being. They emphasize values such as collaboration, transparency, inclusion, and empathy, aiming to foster mutual support and trust.

Regarding **original ideas**, the leader works to foster commitment to generating ideas, encouraging the team to develop and sustain new solutions to task-related challenges. Emphasis is placed on ideas that are perceived as capable of engaging the entire team (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

Interviewee 1 emphasized the freedom to determine how to achieve their goals. While there is guidance on what should be done and the goals to be met, there is autonomy in envisioning and creating the methods to accomplish these objectives. Additionally, she explained that the team has the autonomy to choose partners and decide which audiences to approach for the proposed projects.

Interviewee 2 explained that a dedicated department was created within the company to collect ideas. This is done through a database in which anyone in the company can submit their ideas. Once submitted, the idea undergoes several analyses, and if approved, it is tested, validated, and launched as a new product, business, or opportunity for the company.

Interviewee 3 reported that both she and the management team present several initiatives and actively support employees' ideas, always striving to understand the purpose behind each one.

In turn, interviewee 4 explained that, as she is increasingly in the strategic field rather than the operational one, it has become easier to create new initiatives and ideas; with the support and ideas of the team, new visions and partnerships are formed.

Leader 5 emphasizes that everyone must always be motivated to create because, "in our environment, ideas are necessarily our main business." This motivation often emerges from customer demand or challenges related to deliveries, which keeps all team members outside their comfort zones, constantly

generating new ideas, mainly through the brainstorming technique. After the brainstorming meetings, some ideas are chosen, while others are archived to be revisited in the future.

It can be concluded that leaders encourage their subordinates to collaborate with new ideas. Likewise, managers feel motivated to create their own ideas and are supported by their teams, demonstrating an environment conducive to creativity.

When addressing **resilience**, the leader emphasizes the importance of seeking alternatives when dealing with unmet expectations, promoting flexibility in team members in the face of obstacles and frustrations (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

For Interviewee 1, it is important to understand which action did not produce the expected result and identify the error occurred in the process. To correct these situations and avoid repeating the same mistakes in future projects, “we call it learning from our lessons, from all the projects and actions. We might make mistakes again, but not the same mistake. That’s a principle.”

Interviewee 2 adopts the follow-up meeting strategy:

[...] Everyone has these meetings, sometimes weekly, sometimes biweekly, it really depends on the level of interaction and connection I need. We also have semi-annual reviews. So, we have a routine here of always keeping the employee well-guided in terms of expectations, the direction in which things are headed, etc., so they understand that sometimes frustration is part of the process.

Similarly, Interviewee 3 initially values calmness. She also conducts impact assessments with the team biweekly or monthly, depending on the project, so that the team members understand that they are all in this process together: “we try to deal with it [frustration] in the best way possible, supporting each other, trying to understand where we went wrong, so we don’t make the same mistakes again, and we just keep going.”

Interviewee 4 confessed that “this maturity to deal with something that was not accepted by the client was a very difficult process and still is.” She explained that this understanding was built over time until reaching the point of creating a new project if the proposed one was not accepted. However, according to the manager, “today my team has the following understanding: if it didn’t work out, let’s turn the page and redo it,” as she constantly works on resilience with the team to help them handle frustrations in the best possible way and move forward.

On the other hand, Interviewee 5 emphasizes the importance of resilience to overcome obstacles, in addition to seeking to engage in dialogue with the team about the situation in order to address the necessary issues to solve problems. He explained that they deal with frustrations daily: “I think that we, the department itself, are already very used to dealing with frustration due to the nature of the business,” which is why acquiring the skill of resilience is important in this process.

Therefore, leaders emphasize the importance of resilience in the workplace, particularly in team and project management. They view resilience as crucial for overcoming obstacles and frustrations, adopting various strategies to understand

what occurred, identifying actions to take or change, and ensure that mistakes are not repeated. These leaders consistently approach situations with dialogue, understanding, and collaboration.

Regarding **network activation**, the leader's responsibility is to ensure that team members are skilled at communicating with individuals outside their group, exchanging ideas, and providing mutual support, all with the goal of addressing the team's challenges (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

Manager 1 explained that her teams engage in numerous projects with external partners, making regular communication with other teams a part of their routine. Additionally, she actively encourages her subordinates to attend events, trips, and training sessions to foster connections and build a network of relationships.

Leader 2 stated that they make efforts to prevent the company from becoming overly compartmentalized, fostering a more fluid interaction routine. Additionally, they have created certain routines and committees to encourage collaboration among employees. Quarterly happy hours with games are organized, along with an annual event featuring dynamics and competitions inspired by the company's values, aimed at promoting interaction, engagement between teams, and the dissemination of the company's vision and culture.

Similarly, Interviewee 3 also conducts monthly integration activities, which are administrative networks "to make people talk, converse, express themselves, in whichever way they can express themselves." Every month, a happy hour is held with various dynamics, team-building activities on how to work with projects and groups, with goals of both integration and personal knowledge. In addition, she always encourages participation in lectures, events, and external trips.

The team of Interviewee 4 uses the Discord platform, with rooms, conversations, interactions, and project hubs. Additionally, a monthly in-person meeting takes place with the entire team, during which "we talk about client agendas, about ourselves, it's a moment of team interaction, so these are the ways we seek to stay close."

Manager 5 reported that with remote teams, communication between members happens less smoothly with other departments and is slower compared to in-person teams, "however, our communication overall is good between teams from different sectors, we have good integration among the staff."

It is evident that, for the most part, managers actively encourage their subordinates to build networks of contacts, whether through participation in internal programs and communities of practice within the organization, attending training sessions and events, or engaging in external projects. However, other leaders either face challenges with the hybrid work model or do not promote the creation of external networks.

Regarding **learning from experience**, the leader is responsible for encouraging learning to promote change, growth, adaptation, and creative problem-solving. Team members are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences, which increases their willingness to take risks (Rickards; Moger, 2000).

Interviewee 1 explained that when she doesn't know certain information, she consults her team; as the manager stated: "I ask, I have no problem asking, I don't think this is a weakness." She seeks someone to teach her, always looking for data, results, and solutions with her team.

Manager 2 stated that exercising empathy when making decisions is important. According to the leader, he learns more quickly through practice and relationships. In contrast, some team members learn more effectively by studying, reading manuals, books, or conducting research. As such, learning is encouraged in a way that aligns with each individual's preferred method.

Leader 3 always strives to create triggers that encourage diverse perspectives among team members. When questions arise, she seeks out the individuals on her team who possess the necessary information, develops a plan, and fosters collaboration to find solutions.

In turn, interviewee 4 holds a meeting every two weeks with the company's most strategic team. During these meetings, planning is reviewed, decisions are made, and both information and knowledge are exchanged.

For interviewee 5, it is essential to engage with internal teams to build solutions. If these attempts are unsuccessful, they turn to external agents for further support.

In this regard, it is clear that learning and the search for information and solutions are approached in different ways by leaders and their teams. However, it is evident that all emphasize the importance of collaboration, communication, and adaptation throughout the learning process.

Together, these perspectives highlight the complexity of creative leadership and the various approaches to fostering it, emphasizing the importance of understanding people, communication, and empathy as essential pillars in this context.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the main factors involved in managing creative teams, the aspects of "original ideas," "environment," "resilience," and "learning from experience" showed the greatest alignment between the observed practices and the theoretical principles of creative leadership.

Managers demonstrated the ability to stimulate new ideas and collaboration among subordinates. This finding aligns with Grinberg's (2014) view, which emphasizes that creative leadership is crucial for fostering innovation in dynamic environments. The observed practices also resonate with Howkins' (2001) concept of creative economy, in which the valorization of ideas is a key economic driver.

The pursuit of a work environment that prioritizes well-being, collaboration, and transparency was widely emphasized by managers. This aligns with the theories of Rickards and Moger (2000) and Carvalhal and Muzzio (2015), who highlight the significant impact of the organizational environment on individual performance and creativity.

Resilience, emphasized as a fundamental skill by the interviewees, aligns with the theories of Rickards and Moger (2000), which highlight the need to address obstacles and adapt strategies collaboratively. The process adopted by the managers, which prioritizes dialogue, reinforces the role of the leader as a facilitator in overcoming challenges, as identified by Figueiredo *et al.* (2022).

The appreciation of continuous learning and adaptation to changes is a point of congruence with the principles presented by Carvalhal and Muzzio (2015). The managers' approach, which emphasizes communication and knowledge exchange, also reinforces the view of Delfino, Silva, and Rohde (2010) on the importance of joint experience as a catalyst for innovation.

On the other hand, the aspects of "enlightenment platform," "shared vision," and "network activation" deserve attention from some managers, as they pointed out gaps in the congruence between practices and theoretical models.

In the "enlightenment platform" aspect, despite the effort to align values and beliefs among those led, some managers face difficulties in implementing assertive communication, which is fundamental for a common basis of understanding, as highlighted by Rickards and Moger (2000).

Regarding shared vision, it was observed that, although some leaders demonstrate clear skills in this regard, there are still challenges in motivating their teams to develop a common purpose, a central characteristic for creative leadership, especially in highly complex contexts, according to Carvalhal and Muzzio (2015).

Regarding network activation, internal integration is solid; however, the creation and maintenance of strategic external networks continue to be a point of attention. This aspect is crucial in the context of creativity, as external connections play a fundamental role in generating innovation and competitiveness, as emphasized by Rickards and Moger (2000).

With the general objective answered, it is observed that, among the cases analyzed, interviewees 2 and 3 demonstrate the behaviors expected of a creative leader. In the other cases, many aspects that would characterize creative leadership are identified, although they are not yet fully developed. Therefore, it is inferred that managers in the creative economy are in a process of transitioning toward creative leadership, striving in this direction.

Therefore, it is concluded that this research highlights the viability of managing creativity, as managers demonstrate traits that reinforce the theory of creative leadership. The findings represent a significant advancement in the field of knowledge, deserving attention both in the academic sphere and the organizational environment.

It is suggested that future studies expand the research to different sectors of the economy to facilitate comparisons with the results of this study. This would contribute to the consolidation of knowledge in the area, helping to form a solid knowledge base that benefits both academics and managers.

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Conflict of interests: nothing to declare – **Financial support:** none.

Author's contributions: Barros, B.: Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Resources, Software, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Miranda, H.: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Project Administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – Original Draft.

