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Cultivating Workplace Creativity: A Qualitative Case Study of Leader Perceptions and Practices

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Cultivating Workplace Creativity: A Qualitative Case Study of Leader Perceptions and Practices

A Dissertation

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"Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you."—Misty Copeland

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to "*the parental figures*," Lillie, Ronnie, Jerry, & Bobby. I thank you for all your hard work to help that little girl get to where I am today, living her wildest dream. I could NEVER have made it this far without all your sacrifices and you pushing me to always do my best, never give up, understand what really is important, and value learning. Thank you, and I love you so much! We did it!

Abstract

Creativity is vital to corporate success in a global economy and contributes to employee work satisfaction. Grounded in constructivism, this dissertation advances arguments regarding how organizational policies and leader practices can support workplace creativity. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gather insights into leaders' perceptions of how creativity is fostered in the workplace and develop recommendations to support knowledge industry leaders in cultivating creativity. Findings are based on 10 semi-structured interviews from leaders in one large, knowledge industry corporation headquartered in the United States' mid-Atlantic region. Leaders shared their beliefs and experiences related to creativity in the workplace. Thematic analysis revealed six themes: (a) creativity is a business imperative, (b) the business model can hinder creativity, (c) flattened hierarchy incubates workplace creativity, (d) leader behaviors facilitate a culture of psychological safety, (e) leader behaviors encourage ideation, and (f) individual characteristics contribute to workplace creativity. Study findings highlight the need for leaders to acknowledge the constraints of the knowledge industry business model and actively seek ways to mitigate those challenges to positively impact organizational culture. Eight recommendations to support corporations were provided, three policy recommendations, three practice recommendations, and two focused on future scholarship. Data collected in this study will contribute to existing scholarship on creativity in the workplace and begin to fill a gap in research on workplace creativity in knowledge industry corporations.

Keywords: leader, leadership, creativity, case study, workforce, knowledge industry

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Your workday has been going great. You return from your lunch break to the phone ringing, with your supervisor on the other end. She tells you your help is needed on an issue staff has been grappling with on another project. Your supervisor's supervisor suggested a fresh set of eyes could figure out the problem. Because of your familiarity with the client, the higher-up told your supervisor to put you on it. Your supervisor briefly states the problem and tells you it is time sensitive, "so make it a priority." Her closing comment is, "Be creative." At this point, you wonder what that even means and what "be creative" will look like for this situation. You end the call with a hesitant, "Okay, I'm on it."

You immediately feel overwhelmed and on the spot to figure out a plan of attack and find a solution. Many questions begin to run through your head. *What am I going to do? How am I going to figure this out? Where do I start?* Knowing that organizational leadership has tapped you for the task, you now feel responsible and vulnerable. You start thinking that they are counting on you to get this right, and you begin to fear failure. You feel you have a good relationship with your supervisor and believe she trusts you to solve the problem, but you wonder how she expects you to figure it out alone, and you instantly feel pressure. After that moment passes, you acknowledge it is always easier to solve problems with a thought partner and begin to brainstorm who you can reach out to and bounce ideas off.

This type of scenario plays out every day in workplaces across the planet. In this hypothetical scenario, the leader does not play a prominent role; she only explains the current situation and need for a resolution, and then she steps away to leave the employee to do the work. There is very little information to indicate whether this leadership approach will be effective for the employee. However, in real-world situations, we can observe and understand the

context and the relationship the leader has with the employee and how that leader communicates and supports employees in their day-to-day efforts. For organizations to remain successful and carry out their mission, I believe they need a workforce with the skills, abilities, and dispositions to solve complex problems and be creative. Additionally, organizations require leaders with the knowledge and skills to cultivate and foster continued skill development in their workforce. The findings from the following study may help inform the needs of organizations seeking to advance creativity. In the following section, the key terminology used in this dissertation is defined.

Definition of Terms

This section provides operational definitions to create a shared understanding of essential terminology used in this dissertation.

Creativity: A process that allows individuals to see what is possible by generating ideas and alternative ways of doing things and implementing those ideas to solve problems (Anderson et al., 2014).

Knowledge industry: An industry that generates revenue by receiving, generating, or sharing knowledge and utilizing that information to transform ideas into value for their clients. Examples of knowledge industries include consulting, finance, information technology, and communications (Machlup, 1987).

Leader: An individual at any level of an organization who influences others to attain a common goal (Northouse, 2018).

Leadership style: A person's approach and behavioral patterns attempting to influence others, including how they motivate and guide (Northouse, 2018).

Line of business (LOB): A corporate subdivision that focuses on services or products that meet a specific need (Law Insider, n.d.).

Utilization: The amount of time an employee is working on project tasks that can be billed to a client out of the total number of hours the employee is available to work (Odewale et al., 2020).

Setting the Stage

To further introduce this study, the overarching framework for this dissertation will be outlined. I will begin by briefly discussing the need for and purpose of this research on creativity in the workplace, including its significance for leadership and workplace scholarship. Then, I will present the research questions that guide the development of the dissertation research and the design used to carry out the study. Lastly, an overview of previous scholarship and the conceptual framework for my examination of cultivating workplace creativity will be offered.

Puzzle Statement

Corporations require a workforce that can help them not only maintain relevance but also remain on the cutting edge. As the foundation for effective problem-solving and innovation, creativity is vital for organizational success. Creativity must be valued and fostered to remain relevant, outpace the competition, and facilitate ongoing success (Kremer et al., 2019). Corporations need employees with higher-order and abstract thinking skills and dispositions to analyze situations and work collaboratively (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). Yet there are indications that such skills are lacking, as more than half of the respondents to the 2012 American Management Association (n.d.) *Critical Skills Survey* revealed their workforce is "average, at best" (p. 1) in meeting these critical skills. With the majority of employees apparently lacking the skills required for creativity, it is imperative that leaders know how to actively cultivate creativity in the workplace.

Numerous articles have been written about how some corporations in the creative sector have built a creative organizational culture (Alhajri, 2018; Catmull, 2008; Steiber & Alänge, 2013). However, the question remains: How have some organizations successfully created a culture of creativity while others have not? More specifically, in this dissertation, I investigated what actions corporate leaders in the knowledge industry have taken to ensure they create and nurture a creative culture in the workplace. A creative workplace would encompass experiences in which employees have the flexibility to explore alternate ways to complete tasks, time to work collaboratively to brainstorm and problem solve issues, and the freedom to work cross functionally and interact not only with their peers but also with organizational leadership (Amabile, 1988; Amabile et al., 1996; Collin et al., 2018; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Meinel et al., 2017).

Study Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand how leaders build and nurture a creative workplace culture. Toward this end, I explored leader beliefs and behaviors about creativity and their leadership styles. I aspired to illuminate leader practices that can support creativity in the workplace. This study adds to the existing literature on workplace creativity and fills a gap in the literature on creativity in the knowledge industry. My hope is this research will support increased awareness of how organizations can promote creativity. I aim to share this information broadly with organizations, helping to support their workplace creativity and innovation initiatives, which can positively impact their success and increase employee experiences and satisfaction in their position.

Significance of the Study

Creativity in the workplace is significant at a variety of levels (Allahar, 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Anderson et al., 2014). Organizational leaders need employees who can independently and collaboratively handle problems in their daily work (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). At the employee level, an employee's job satisfaction and longevity can be based on their sense of belonging as an empowered, valued member of the organization (Amabile et al., 2004; Hirudayaraj & Matić, 2021; Kremer et al., 2019). At the organizational level, creativity allows the organization to be nimble and remain relevant in a fast-paced, digital economy (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Kremer et al., 2019; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019). Creativity in the workplace is also significant for the overall population because it enables the development of new innovations and valuable resources for people's daily lives (Allahar, 2018).

Through this dissertation, I intended to contribute to the conversation about cultivating workplace creativity in knowledge industry corporations. This study is important because creativity is vital to corporate success in a global economy, and it contributes to employee satisfaction with their work (Amabile, 1988; Amabile et al., 2004; Gupta & Chadha, 2017; Kremer et al., 2019). The findings from this study have the potential to make a direct impact on workplace culture by presenting insights on how corporate leaders cultivate creativity and recommending strategies leaders can implement to foster it. Understanding factors that contribute to a culture of creativity has the potential to improve workplace environments, inform workforce development, and impact organizational success (Allahar, 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Carnevale et al., 2017; Chughtai, 2016; Kremer et al., 2019; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Siyal et al., 2021).

Leadership Mission and Values

My mission and values emphasize the significance of relationships, collaboration, and respecting individuals and their opinions while fostering a "community of learners" culture. I am an authentic leader who encourages, collaborates, and empowers others to transform systems by seeking reflection, understanding, and improvement opportunities. Being mission-driven allows me to articulate my purpose, guides my efforts, and ensures my behaviors align with my core values. My values are C.L.E.A.R.: to challenge others to seek innovative solutions, lead with integrity while relying on my moral compass, engage others as partners and collaborators, adapt to the situation through reflection and adjustment of practice, and respect and value all people and all perspectives. My tagline, *empowering others to discover what's possible*, brings my calling to life by providing a directive to build the skills and confidence of others to broaden their ability to see what is achievable.

My passion and leadership interest helped shape the focus of my dissertation, which focuses on how leaders foster creativity in the workplace. My scholarship contributes to the bodies of literature on leadership and creativity in the workplace. I hope the findings from my study will positively impact day-to-day employee experiences. In addition, my leadership knowledge and skills increased from studying what other scholars have said, allowing me to implement new practices to promote creativity in teams I lead and across my peer network interactions.

Research Design and Research Questions

This study employed a qualitative case study design (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Maxwell, 2013) to draw out the beliefs and experiences of leaders to better understand how they foster creativity in the workplace. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information on

the beliefs, perceptions, and actions of leaders in an American-based, knowledge industry

corporation. To gather diverse perspectives, the organizational leaders selected for this study

served a variety of roles and had multiple responsibilities in the organization. At the time of the

research, most leader participants sat within one division of the organization. Two additional

leaders were chosen from outside the division based on their corporate-level roles in designing

organizational efforts for leadership growth and promoting innovation across the organization.

This study sought to answer the following four research questions:

1. What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?

2. What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on
   creativity in the workplace?

3. What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to
   cultivate workplace creativity?

4. What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?

These research questions are important, as the answers can help frame how leaders can

promote creativity across their organizations and impact organizational competitiveness. In the

next section, I will describe the proposed setting and context for my research study.

Research Site, Context, and Participants

I chose to situate this dissertation research study in a large, American-based international

knowledge industry consulting corporation headquartered in the mid-Atlantic region of the

United States. The corporation currently has thousands of employees who are geographically

dispersed across the country and internationally, as are company clients. The corporation

supports a variety of industries including technology, education, health services, and energy,

while working to improve outcomes for their clients and the greater good. The company is

organized with a complex hierarchy of groups, divisions, and lines of business (LOBs). LOBs

are clusters of projects in the same field of study. The number of LOBs varies within each

division. This organization was selected for the study for the following reasons: (a) the types of

work the organization completes for its clients, (b) the geographic diversity of the organization's

employees, and (c) the growth the organization has seen over the past 5 years. Figure 1 depicts

the organizational structure within the company.

Figure 1

Corporate Organizational Structure
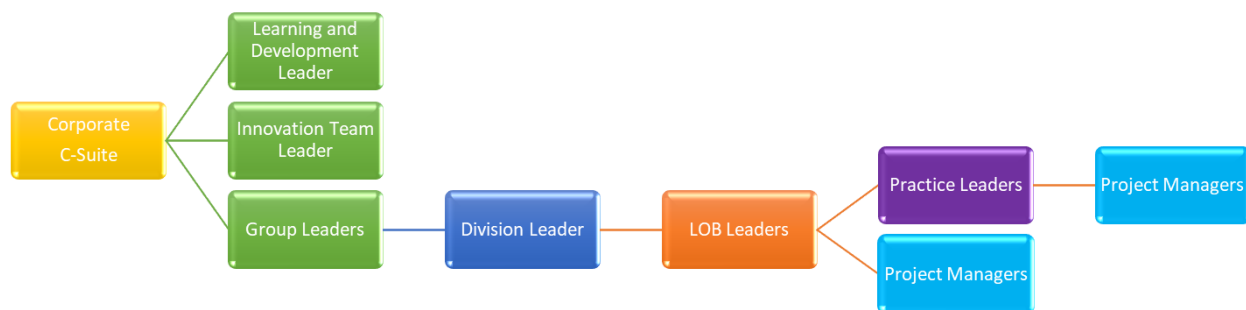
A total of ten corporate leaders were recruited to participate in this study. Each

participant was an employee of the organization and identified as a "people manager" in the

organization. A division within the company was identified to participate in the study, including

the divisional leader. In addition to these eight participants, one corporate leader responsible for

the development of professional development opportunities for leaders was identified. Further,

based on information derived during participant interviews, another corporate leader, responsible

for innovation efforts across the organization, was identified and recruited to participate,

bringing the sample total to 10. According to one of the company's monthly division newsletters,

as of October 1, 2023, the division had a total of 1,365 staff members; of those, 238 were

employed in the selected LOB (personal communication, October 18, 2023). At the time of the

study, participants resided and worked in eight states. Table 1 below portrays the demographic

data of the study participants, including their gender, organizational longevity, position within

the organization, and whether they were matrix staff, meaning their time was allocated across a

number of projects. In the next section, as an employee in the organization, I will discuss my

positionality as the researcher.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Participant	Gender	Years at Organization	Position Level	Matrixed Employee
April	Female	8	Project Manager	Yes
Christopher	Male	18	Division Leader	No
Jeffery	Male	3	Project Manager	Yes
Lane	Female	15	LOB Leader	No
Logan	Male	1.5	Project Manager	Yes
Lorelai	Female	17	Project Manager	Yes
Mufasa	Male	11	Corporate Level Leader	No
Paris	Female	2	Project Manager	Yes
Rory	Female	27	Corporate Level Leader	No
Sophie	Female	16	Project Manager	Yes

Position of the Researcher

My experiences as an employee in the corporate sector, specifically in the knowledge industry for the last 10 years, fueled my curiosity about leadership, relationships, and how individuals go about their daily work. As a member of the knowledge industry workforce and an employee of the organization being studied, I understand the inner workings of the organizational structure and culture. My role in the organization is as a people manager responsible for supporting my team in carrying out their project responsibilities and promoting their growth and development. I am intimately familiar with how divergent cultures exist and are created by the tasks and responsibilities of each organizational unit. Each organizational unit possesses its own cultural norms and mores.

This insider knowledge provided advantages and disadvantages for my research project, which must be acknowledged. In-depth industry knowledge allowed me to construct meaningful interview questions and understand industry and organizational jargon. It also allowed me to quickly build rapport with the participants and understand when asking probing questions was beneficial. However, I had to remain mindful not to ask leading questions and refrain from assuming that I knew what the participants' intentions were without asking follow-up questions.

Overview of Previous Research

An in-depth discussion of the previous literature is presented in Chapter Two. As discussed there, this study is grounded in three bodies of literature. The first body of literature centers around the *workplace culture for creativity*. This scholarship investigates the workplace psychological environment by exploring both how scholars' conceptions of workplace creativity have progressed and by examining organizational infrastructure and norms. While this scholarship is fundamental in shaping the study, the second body of literature, *employee*

characteristics that foster creativity, adds contextualized understanding of individual characteristics employees carry into the workplace, such as their perceptions, temperament, mindset, and motivation, which all impact their workplace behaviors and relationships. Lastly, the addition of the third body of literature, *leadership styles and creativity,* explores the characteristics and nuances of leaders' leadership styles and how they influence creativity in the workplace, and it also examines the relationships leaders form with employees. The literature presented in Chapter Two is essential for understanding current knowledge regarding the context and complexities associated with the relationships leaders form to foster creativity in the workplace. In the following section, I will detail how these bodies of literature were used to build frameworks to envision this study.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

This study was constructed with both a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework. The conceptual framework that guided the research was built on previous leadership and creativity research and my own experiences. This conceptual framework provided focus and rationale for the study, aided in communicating my concept of the project, and laid a solid foundation for my research by supporting the development of my research questions, informing study design, and analyzing data (McGregor, 2017).

To understand how creativity is fostered in the workplace, it is important to consider three bodies of information, which function as lenses that frame this study: workplace culture, individual characteristics of employees, and leadership style theories. Relationships that foster employee creativity require elements of all three; therefore, this is located at the center of the diagram. Figure 2 depicts the relationships among these three core ideas.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framing of the Study
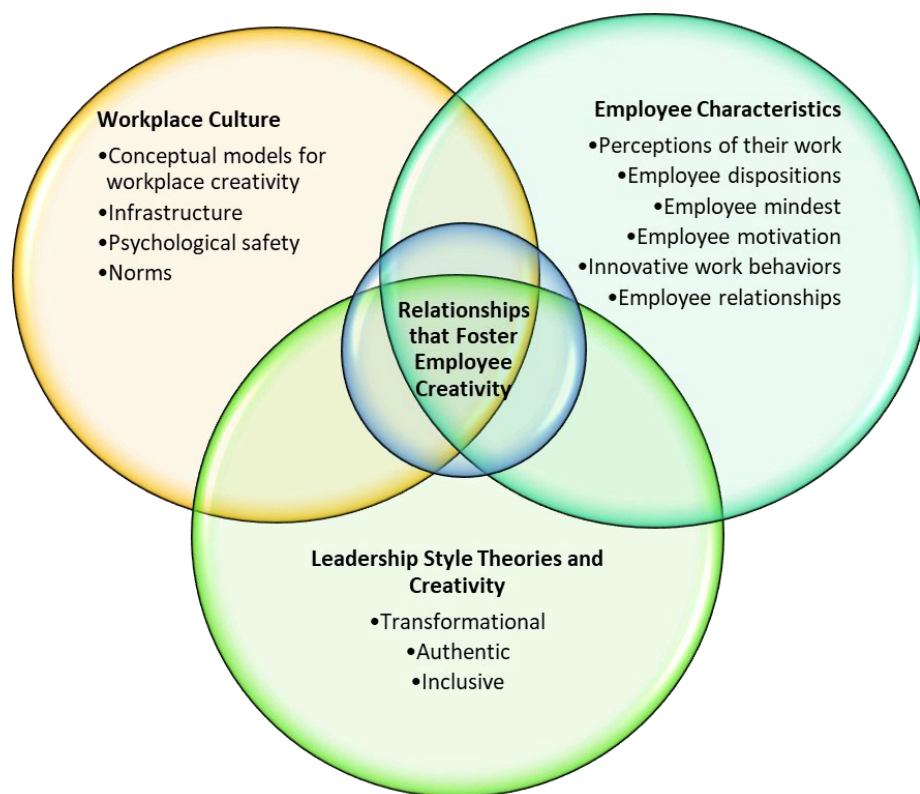
The theoretical framework of this case study is built on Bolman and Deal's (2017) Four-Frame Model of Successful Organizational Leadership, which aids in understanding how employee creativity is fostered in the workplace from employee and leader perspectives. Bolman and Deal (2017) argued each frame is its own lens and offers a unique perception of reality, and using multiple perspectives allows us to think holistically. Figure 3 depicts the Bolman and Deal model, which comprises four frames: the structural frame, human resource frame, political frame, and the symbolic frame.

Figure 3

Theoretical Framing of the Study: Bolman & Deal's Four-Frame Model of Successful

Organizational Leadership

Structural Frame	Human Resource Frame
Understanding how people and resources are allocated, organizational hierarchy, roles, expectations, and policies related to efficiencies, quality and profitability	Understanding people, their needs, skills and abilities, feelings and fear and how they align with their roles and organizational needs
Political Frame	**Symbolic Frame**
Understanding power dynamics and the impact of leader-employee relationships	Understanding shared values, motivation, core activities, rituals within the leader-employee relationship

The structural frame enables researchers to look at how the organization allocates people

and resources to complete the work and how efforts are coordinated to meet organizational goals.

In considering creativity in the workforce, the structural frame promotes examination of the

"social architecture" that fosters workforce creativity by exploring the hierarchy, roles,

expectations, and policies, including efficiency, quality, and profitability. The human resource

frame is built on understanding people, their needs, skills and abilities, feelings, and fears, and

includes relationships and how those align with current roles and organizational needs. This

frame's considerations help support workplace creativity and ensure employees are empowered

and grow their skills and abilities through professional development. The political frame

investigates the power dynamics within leader-employee relationships and how that impacts

workforce creativity. Lastly, the symbolic frame considers how meaning is made in the

organization by exploring shared values, motivation, and core activities and rituals within the

leader-employee relationship as well as within the line of business and division. Using this multiframe lens allowed me to analyze the study data from various organizational perspectives.

Conclusion

Through this study, I examined how leaders cultivate creativity in the corporate workforce. In this first chapter, I introduced the research topic and established the significance of the study. Then, the four guiding research questions were presented, along with a brief introduction to the case study research design, followed by an overview of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

In the next chapter, an in-depth examination of literature related to workplace creativity will be presented. Chapter Three will then describe the methodology used to gather participant data, while Chapter Four will outline data analysis. Finally, Chapter Five will provide conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

In today's fast-paced, digital economy, corporations require a workforce that can help them maintain relevance and gain and sustain a competitive edge. Corporations need employees with higher-order and abstract thinking skills and the dispositions to analyze situations and work collaboratively (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). These skills are "manifestations" of creativity (Collin et al., 2018, p. 6). Creativity has been identified as a 21st century skill, essential for success in post-secondary education and the workforce (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). Organizational success depends on creativity, as it is the foundation of problem-solving and innovation (Amabile et al., 1996; Kremer et al., 2019). Creativity has been called a "potent competitive weapon" for organizations (Amabile, 1988, p. 87).

Following the rollout of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a diverse group of business leaders, educators, and policymakers formed the Partnership for 21st Century Learning to promote its goals (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). The organization's mission focuses on advocating for a robust set of skills and abilities that promote student achievement and future success, known as 21st Century Skills. These core skills and abilities were deemed essential for classroom success and future competitiveness in a fast-paced work environment in the global economy.

This literature review seeks to further explore how leaders can positively impact creativity in corporations by answering the following question: *How do scholars understand workplace creativity, and how can leaders create and foster a culture of creativity?* To answer this question, I examine three scholarly approaches. The first approach, *the workplace culture for creativity*, is scholarship focused on understanding the psychological and cultural environment,

in which creativity happens. While this foundational scholarship is critical to framing the study, the addition of the second body, *employee characteristics that foster creativity*, is necessary to add contextualized understanding of the characteristics and beliefs employees bring to the workplace. Lastly, the addition of the third body, *leadership style theories and creativity*, explores scholars' findings, characteristics, and nuances of leaders' styles that foster creativity and examines the relationships leaders form with frontline employees. At the intersection of the three bodies, I intend to examine how corporate leaders can foster creativity in employees. I hope my research will support increased awareness of how organizations can promote creativity. Eventually, I aspire to share this information broadly with organizations and help to support their workforce creativity and innovation initiatives, which can positively impact their success and increase employee experiences and satisfaction. In the next section, I briefly outline the century-long quest to understand creativity.

Historical Background

The quest to understand the creative construct is not new; scholarship on creativity traces back to just after the turn of the 20th century with Henri Poincaré's 1913 "Mathematical Creation" lecture (Sawyer, 2012). In 1937, General Electric Corporation recognized the importance of creativity and initiated the first employer training on creativity (Sawyer, 2012). However, it was not until the 1950s that the modern interdisciplinary focus of creativity research gained momentum (Sawyer, 2012). Over the decades, creativity research progressed from investigating the personalities of those believed to be great creators, known as Big C Creativity, to exploring how creativity manifests in everyone, referred to as little c creativity (Karwowski et al., 2020; Sawyer, 2012). Creativity research progressed in phases, beginning with the exploration of the mental process of creativity, then investigating how the social and cultural

context affect creativity, and lastly combining both into an interdisciplinary approach (Amabile, 1988; Sawyer, 2012).

Scholars study the creative construct at three levels: individual, team, and organizational (Allahar, 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Anderson et al., 2014). Creativity and innovation occur at and across levels, triggering recognizable creative gains at one or more of the three levels (Anderson et al., 2014). To establish a culture of creativity, creativity must be nurtured across all three levels to develop novel "ideas and approaches" (Allahar, 2018, p. 56). Amabile (1988) posited small changes can yield increased creativity.

Despite the vast research, scholars lack a recognized, uniform definition for creativity (Amabile, 1988; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Plucker & Beghetto, 2004; Runco & Beghetto, 2019; Sawyer, 2012). Consensus on a definition is not essential, although ambiguity is prone to misinterpretation. Conceptually, creativity is defined as either an individual's characteristic, a process, or a product of efforts (Amabile, 1988; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Fischer et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2016; W. Zhang et al., 2019). The common thread through the definitions of creativity is the generation of new, valuable ideas. However, the remaining definitions are nuanced, including how scholars differentiate creativity and innovation. Amabile (1988) defined creativity as "the production of novel and useful ideas" at the individual and team levels, while innovation is "the successful implementation of creative ideas" at the organizational level (p. 126). Idea generation is considered the product and the initial step to innovation. This definition is credited as the most widely used definition of creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Woodman et al. (1993) later expanded the definition of creativity and included its existence at the organizational level. In addition to new, valuable ideas, they concluded creativity could manifest through a "product, service, idea, procedure, or process . . . in a complex social

system" (Woodman et al., 1993, p. 293). Anderson et al. (2014) further expanded the definition as a creative process consolidating creativity and innovation. They argued creativity and innovation are stages of the same process that can occur at any level or a combination of levels of the creativity construct. Anderson et al.'s (2014) definition of the creative process is used for the purpose of this scholarship.

Scholars have worked to define the creative construct for over 100 years. Today, creativity is understood as an interdisciplinary, multi-layer construct. In the present global economy, the importance of employee creativity is amplified as organizations attempt to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. As scholars continue to examine workplace creativity, a deeper understanding of the approaches organizational leaders employ to create and foster a creative culture is imperative. The next section explores the complex situational dynamics of the workplace that influence creativity.

The Workplace Culture for Creativity

For over three decades, scholars have widely explored workplace creativity (Anderson et al., 2014). Their scholarship investigated situational dynamics that promote or hinder employee creativity within complicated social systems such as the workplace (Woodman et al., 1993). Scott and Bruce (1994) characterized workplace culture as the spoken and unspoken messages employees receive about behavioral expectations and consequences in the workplace. Fu et al. (2022) illuminated the point that workplace creativity is important across every sector. Woodman et al. (1993) argued many scholars have taken a "fragmented approach" by investigating isolated aspects of creativity without considering the "subtle nuances" of a complicated process (p. 316). Efforts to better understand the workplace context are instrumental in investigating how organizational leaders can positively impact creativity.

Through review of this body of literature, three key aspects of the workplace culture emerged as beneficial to workforce creativity. The first aspect is exploring the evolution of how scholars conceptualize workplace creativity. The next aspect is examining how an organization's infrastructure, including its hierarchical structure and availability of resources, fosters creativity. The final aspect is the establishment of healthy workplace norms, which are the cornerstone of an organization's culture.

Conceptual Models for Workplace Creativity

Scholars developed theoretical models to aid in their exploration and explanation of the complicated inner workings of workplace creativity. Early models grew out of organizational behavior research; organizational scientists Amabile and Woodson, Sawyer, and Griffin developed their theoretical models based on the contextual environments that enabled workplace innovation to grow from individual creativity (Amabile et al., 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Woodman et al., 1993). In her seminal work, the Componential Model of Creativity and Innovation, Amabile (1988) distinguished three environmental elements that affect workplace creativity: motivated employees, necessary organizational resources, and organizational leadership actively nurturing employee creativity. This model remains the most widely cited (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). The premise of the intersectional model is that the greatest creativity occurs at the intersection of all three elements.

Over time, models of workplace creativity have become more complex. Woodman and Schoenfeldt's Interactional Model of Organizational Creativity broadens the scope of influence to include individual, group, and organizational characteristics. The complex interactions that occur between people and situations produce creative outcomes (Collin et al., 2018; Woodman et al., 1993; Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi (2014) asserted when an individual

is working creatively, they continuously reflect on previous knowledge and experiences to help construct their work. Likewise, dialogue and collaboration with others are critical to testing, broadening, refining, and enhancing ideas (Collin et al., 2018; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Although creativity occurs at the individual level and is influenced by individual cognitive abilities and knowledge, personality traits, and intrinsic motivation, it is a result of the environmental context (Woodman et al., 1993).

Since the creation of Amabile's original 1988 model, creativity scholarship increased significantly, leading Amabile and Pratt (2016) to revisit and expand the model, establishing the Dynamic Componential Model. Four major modifications were made, three additions and one revision to a foundational assumption. The new model recognizes creativity is cyclic; acknowledges that the meaningfulness of the work matters and plays a key role; emphasizes emotions are important; and adds affect to the attitude, cognitive, and behavioral elements of the model. New understandings of motivation called for adjusting the previous "near exclusive focus on intrinsic motivation" to add extrinsic motivation (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 158). This expanded conceptual model of workplace creativity is the most complete to use in understanding workplace creativity and influenced the development of this literature review.

Organizational Infrastructure

One of the factors impacting employees' ability to be creative is the organizational infrastructure, defined as the systems and processes in place within an organization that facilitate its day-to-day operations. These components are foundational to employees' ability to execute their duties and, therefore, implement a creative work process. Aspects of infrastructure include how the organization is organized and the accessibility of resources to the workforce (Collin et al., 2018).

Organizational Hierarchy

An organization's hierarchy is the contextual setting for creativity to occur. Top leaders of an organization are responsible for creating a culture and establishing how creativity is fostered across the organization (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Collin et al., 2018). There is agreement in the literature that the way leaders structure organizations for collaboration and cooperation can influence employee creativity (Amabile, 1988; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Chughtai, 2016). When organizations have a tight hierarchy, work can be siloed due to efforts to maximize productivity and performance. This strict adherence to a formal work process focused on quantifiable deliverables creates a culture of minimizing deviation, the opposite of creativity (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Siyal et al., 2021).

In corporations, this division of tasks can balance the friction between administrative and management aspects of the work and the tasks associated with carrying out the day-to-day work (Bérubé & Demers, 2019). If an organization has decentralized power and operates with a more horizontal configuration, eliminating bureaucracy in favor of collaboration leads to greater workforce creativity (Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Ogbeibu et al., 2018). Limited hierarchical structure distributes leadership and can empower employees and foster collaborative decision-making by gaining various points of view, allowing employees more freedom and autonomy to develop ideas and products, as well as promoting team support and respect (Bérubé & Demers, 2019; Collin et al., 2018; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019).

Scholars have disagreed on the importance of team composition for creativity. For example, W. Zhang et al.'s (2019) study of Chinese creative industries developed a theoretical model connecting the relationship between diverse teams and team creativity; they found teams with different personalities are linked to greater creativity. Scholars have suggested an

individual's level of creativity can be influenced by their colleagues' "attitudes and behaviors, through dyadic interactions and team dynamics" (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 160). Some scholars have contended that building a team of diverse members is essential to form creative teams (Kremer et al., 2019; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; W. Zhang et al., 2019). However, Lu et al. (2018) disagreed; findings from their China-based research suggested intercultural diversity hindered creativity in teams. They found communication to be a barrier due to team members' hesitation to openly share information, which resulted in lowered creativity. Nembhard and Edmondson's (2006) American-based research indicated professional status differences in cross-disciplinary teams, such as medical teams of doctors and nurses, may be overcome to facilitate "meaningful engagement" (p. 958).

Employee Access to Resources

In addition to autonomy mentioned in the previous section, scholars have found other resources aid in the promotion of creativity. Information sharing with collaborators and adequate financial support considerations—including time, materials and equipment, and professional growth opportunities—are necessary resources to encourage creativity in the workforce (Amabile, 1988; Collin et al., 2018; Khattak et al., 2017; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Contrary to previous research, Woodman et al. (1993) postulated that when resources are readily available, creativity is enhanced. Later research confirmed organizational leaders enable creativity by ensuring employees have adequate resources to conduct work activities (Amabile et al., 2004; Collin et al., 2018; Sanda & Arthur, 2017; Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Time is one of the most valuable resources in the corporate sector; as the adage goes, time is money. However, the creative process takes time (Amabile, 1988; Collin et al., 2018; Meinel et al., 2017; Sanda & Arthur, 2017). Employees need ample time to focus and think about

problems or issues and explore possibilities (Amabile, 1988; Meinel et al., 2017). The process of

thinking, reflecting, and cultivating ideas, along with opportunities to facilitate interactions with

others both formally and informally to refine ideas, requires time (Meinel et al., 2017). It takes

time for colleagues to share, discuss, and refine ideas. Rushing the creative process or imposing

unrealistic time frames restricts the amount of time colleagues can interact, which then hinders

employees' creative abilities (Amabile, 1988). Chaudhary and Panda's (2018) inquiry into

India's engineering and automobile industry noted a significantly positive relationship between

sharing of ideas with others and creativity.

Another resource to support employee creativity is professional growth opportunities. By

providing professional development opportunities, organizations continue to grow and develop

the workforce. Findings from a Pakistani banking sector inquiry claimed professional

development builds confidence and reduces workforce apprehension, thus creating a pleasant

work experience (Khattak et al., 2017). In formal learning settings, employees sharpen their

skills, increase process efficiency, and further develop their creative potential (Morlà-Folch et

al., 2019). Increasingly, organizations have identified the benefits of investing in their

employees.

Additionally, informal learning opportunities positively impact creativity through

knowledge gain, opportunities for feedback, and reflection (Q. Zhang et al., 2021). Examples of

informal learning in the workplace are coaching and mentoring in unstructured relationships

where strategies and insights are shared by colleagues, mentors, or other leaders. When leaders

serve as coaches, model creative behaviors, and encourage continuous learning, they promote

idea generation and build a climate that embraces new ideas (Khattak et al., 2017). Nembhard

and Edmondson's (2006) research indicated leader behaviors can potentially derail team status

indifferences and promote shared learning by "improving the climate for learning" (p. 958).

Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) also highlighted the importance of informal leader-facilitated

collaborative learning opportunities providing clarity and constructive criticism.

Finally, Amabile (1988) included adequate facilities as a resource needed to promote

creativity in the workplace. The impacts of physical workspace design on employee creativity

have been studied extensively (Meinel et al., 2017; Thoring et al., 2021). Scholars have devoted

a large amount of time identifying aspects of how and to what degree workplace design factors

impact creativity. However, environmental factors affecting employee creativity are much

broader than the physical workspace's acoustics, furnishings, and decor elements. As noted by

Thoring et al.'s (2021) multinational research, the people, not the space, are the most important

aspects of creating a culture. Likewise, in my dissertation, I will focus on human beings rather

than elements of the physical environment that foster creativity.

Workplace Norms That Foster Creativity

Norms are guiding principles for people's day-to-day behavior across the organization.

Agreed-upon acceptable behaviors significantly create the cultural climate and potentially reduce

social conflict (Kremer et al., 2019; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Siyal et al., 2021). Leaders work

across organizations to establish organizational norms. According to Scott and Bruce (1994), one

such norm is a leader's expectation that employees are creative. Norms such as respect, empathy,

vulnerability, open-honest communication, and collaboration may appear to be interconnected.

Norms should closely align with the vision and values of the organization. (A. S.-Y. Chen &

Hou, 2016; Chow, 2018; Sanda & Arthur, 2017; Siyal et al., 2021; Steiber, & Alänge, 2013).

Yet, scholars caution implementation of norms may need to be flexible and not rigidly adhered

to, based on the situational context, which may negatively impact creativity (Amabile, 1988; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Woodman et al., 1993).

The culture of organizations is based on behavioral norms that often overlap across psychological and social phenomena. Norms establish and promote relationships and a culture of mutual trust. In his investigation of Chinese manufacturing firms, Chow (2018) found the antecedents of trust are respecting individuals and the previously discussed perception of organizational support. Scholars argued trust is a product of the workforce being secure in their capabilities, their colleagues, and leadership (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Lyndon et al., 2020). This security creates cohesion and provides the workforce with a sense of belonging.

When employees feel secure and empowered, psychological safety is created and employees openly share their ideas and opinions (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; A. S.-Y. Chen & Hou, 2016; Siyal et al., 2021). Psychological safety has a significant impact on employee creativity. In a psychologically safe culture, the workforce is more likely to take risks to find new and better ways to accomplish tasks (Sanda & Arthur, 2017).

One aspect of risk-taking is the phenomenon of employee voice. Employee voice is critical to the creative process (Carnevale et al., 2017; A. S.-Y. Chen & Hou, 2016; Kremer et al., 2019). Employee voice promotes hearing and exploring a range of possible ideas and working together to find novel solutions (Siyal et al., 2021). Workforce voice behaviors that evoke a creative culture include embracing the unknown, taking the initiative to question the status quo, analyzing situations, and generating new possibilities without criticizing (Allahar, 2018; Carnevale et al., 2017; Siyal et al., 2021). When employees are observant and take initiative to question and analyze situations, it allows for easy recognition of issues and enables them to create solutions (Siyal et al., 2021).

When organizations establish the expectation that everyone's voice should be heard, people are comfortable asking questions, voluntarily sharing ideas and opinions, and voicing concerns (Carnevale et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2019; Kremer et al., 2019; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Employee voice promotes psychological safety and is essential to creativity (Kremer et al., 2019). By creating a culture of safety, leaders create spaces where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas, questioning ideas and rationale, and offering differing opinions and diverse perspectives. This open dialogue creates active involvement and is a problem-solving exercise to consider and refine ideas through collaboration. A. S.-Y. Chen and Hou (2016) asserted voice links the leadership process with employee creativity. Creating a culture where the workforce feels safe, valued, and empowered is integral to creative organization operations and occurs through building healthy relationships.

Scholarship in this body of literature exhibits a singular focus on the situational dynamics that impact workplace creativity. Scholars have devoted considerable efforts to better understand the creative construct in the context of the workplace and how organizational infrastructure and workplace norms influence the creative culture. However beneficial, this limited perspective does not account for human characteristics and behaviors that stimulate creativity in the workplace. In the next section, scholarship detailing employee characteristics that cultivate creativity is discussed.

Employee Characteristics That Foster Creativity

Corporations are in business because of their employees; employees carry out the day-to-day operations of the business and often are those interacting with clients (Amabile et al., 2004). Frontline employees carry out the operational tasks to accomplish the work, and leaders are responsible for oversight to ensure the work is complete. In her seminal research, Amabile

(1988) argued employees need to possess creative abilities to produce creative work. Scholars later broadened the lens and stated individuals' emotions and creative thoughts are intertwined and influence their work experiences (Amabile et al., 2005).

Employees bring their whole selves to the workplace; their dispositions and skills impact their behavior and how they carry out their daily tasks. Substantial scholarship has focused on investigating individual creativity (Amabile, 1988; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Sawyer, 2012; Slåtten et al., 2019; Q. Zhang et al., 2021). Scholars have investigated and analyzed psychological, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of employees' creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Q. Zhang et al., 2021). Five key employee characteristics emerged from the literature and will be explored. First, this section will illuminate the connection between an employee's psychological connection to their work and their creative process. Next, this section will detail three employee characteristics—disposition, mindset, and motivation—that emerged as aspects enhancing an employee's creativity in the workplace. Finally, this section will describe how employee behaviors affect their creativity.

Employees' Perceptions of Their Work

Scholars have thought about an employee's psychological connection to their work in three ways: the employee's perceptions that their work has meaning, their perception that the work they do is challenging, and the perception that their employer views them as a valued member of the organization. In the evolution of workplace creativity scholarship, the importance of employee perceptions of their work has become more pronounced. Amabile's (1988) original Componential Model lacked a reference to employee's work; however, perceptions of challenging and interesting work are captured in Amabile's KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity assessment (Amabile et al., 1996; Dodge et al., 2017). Staw is credited with

introducing meaningfulness in his 1990 theory; most recently, meaningfulness became a prominent addition in the Dynamic Componential Mode (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Strong associations exist between the psychological connections employees have with their work and their creativity. When employees have an emotional connection with their work, such as the perception that their work is stimulating and meaningful, creativity is fostered (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; Slåtten et al., 2019). Scholars explained meaningful work motivates employees, stimulating and sustaining their engagement (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). In their diary study used to develop the Dynamic Componential Model, Amabile and Pratt (2016) noted the key discovery was the "progress principle" (p. 166). Employees detailed positive experiences when the work they were doing had meaning and they were making iterative progress in accomplishing the task either individually, as a team, or at the organizational level. These positive feelings, associated with recognizing the importance of their work, generate motivation.

More broadly, findings from several studies suggest challenging work motivates employees and can be instrumental to employee creativity (Amabile, 1988; Dodge et al., 2017; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018). According to Ribeiro et al. (2018), "creative employees are continually looking for challenges, striving to meet set targets, and thereby increasing their performance" (p. 1599). Dodge et al.'s (2017) research took it a step further and identified challenging work as having the most important impact on cultivating a creative culture. Complex, constraint laden work such as a lack of resources including people, time, and money, contract restriction, or a lack of buy-in can "spark" creativity as employees strive to seek solutions and achieve "aggressive goals" (Dodge et al., 2017, p. 26). Challenges can enhance

employee knowledge and stretch their abilities, which can stimulate creative thinking and actions (Amabile et al., 1996).

Employees' perceptions of their value and the significance of their contributions to the organization boosts psychological connection, thereby increasing their likelihood to engage in creative work (Inam et al., 2021; Slåtten et al., 2019). When employees feel valued, it increases their creative self-efficacy and "psychological availability" to perform creatively (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018). Moreover, employee perceptions of control over their workflow—in other words, determining how they carry out their daily duties—promotes creative behaviors (Amabile, 1988; Sanda & Arthur, 2017). Aside from the intrinsic, psychological connections to their work, scholars postulated employee creativity can be fostered by their emotions and temperament.

Employee Dispositions

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defined disposition as a "prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination" or "temperamental makeup." Previous scholarship found an individual's mood and emotions are powerful and influence their thinking and work behaviors (Amabile et al., 2004; Collin et al., 2018; Slåtten et al., 2019). Positive affect functions as an antecedent to workforce creativity through a simple linear relationship and negative affect also impacts employee creativity (Amabile et al., 2005). Existing psychological scholarship theoretically and empirically demonstrates the direct connection between creativity and emotional state (Amabile et al., 2004; Slåtten et al., 2019). Consequently, affect was added to the Dynamic Componential Model of Workforce Creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Amabile and Pratt (2016) cautioned that while many studies had shown a positive relationship between affect and creativity, others had shown the opposite effect.

Another employee disposition fostering creativity is proactive personality. Proactive personality refers to a "stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations" (Seibert et al., 2001, p. 847). A scarcity of scholarship surrounding this employee trait and its relationship with creativity has been noted (Karimi et al., 2022).

Individuals with a proactive personality are more inclined to have greater creativity (Gupta & Chadha, 2017; Karimi et al., 2022; Seibert et al., 2001; Slåtten et al., 2019). They view challenges as opportunities and actively seek them out. Employees demonstrate creative behavior by pursuing solutions to potential problems, which supports work engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018; Gupta & Chadha, 2017; Karimi et al., 2022). With a proactive personality, individuals have higher levels of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, both contributing factors to employee creativity (Karimi et al., 2022). Being proactive is built on an employee's mindset and how they think about their abilities. In the next section, connections between employee mindset scholarship and creativity are further explored.

Employee Mindset

Extensive scholarship has been conducted on individual mindsets. To date, Dweck's 2006 book, *Mindset*, has been cited over 16,000 times (Google Scholar, n.d.). In this text, Dweck (2006) addressed mindset being a continuum from fixed to growth; however, Zhou et al. (2020) stated they were separate but interrelated entities. A growth mindset increases the likelihood the person will participate in opportunities for continued learning and improvement (Caniëls et al., 2018). When individuals have growth mindsets, they exhibit greater beliefs in their abilities to be creative and creativity becomes part of their identity (Zhou et al., 2020).

Attitudes impact how people think about their creativity. Creative mindset "may be malleable and influenced by even quite subtle external influences" (Karwowski et al., 2020, p.

364). External influences could influence growth mindset with the potential to strengthen creative activity engagement. How creativity is defined impacts people's perception of their creative abilities (Karwowski et al., 2020).

Growth mindset enables the continued development of creative ability and positively relates to creative self-efficacy (Caniëls et al., 2018; Yodchai et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2020). Both growth mindset and creative self-efficacy can impact individual creative abilities. Scholars also noted that a fixed mindset negatively relates to creative self-efficacy (Karwowski et al., 2020; Yodchai et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2020). Recent scholarship has focused on creative self-efficacy and its function in creative outcomes (Karwowski et al., 2020). When employees have a higher creative self-efficacy, leaders can nurture an employee mindset that translates to creative ability (Karwowski et al., 2020).

When mindset and leadership style align, proactive personality-engagement relationships are impacted (Caniëls et al., 2018). "Mindsets may create expectations about personal abilities and employees may be discomfited by situations in which a leader exposes different expectations" (Caniëls et al., 2018, p. 58). However, mindset does not determine employee engagement (Caniëls et al., 2018). In the following section, one factor that does influence employee engagement, motivation and its impact on employee creativity will be discussed.

Employee Motivation

Meeting the individual needs of the workforce establishes feelings of value and belonging, motivating employees to be actively engaged. For most Western European employees, feelings of value and belonging present as being accepted for who they are, valued as an individual with unique skills and abilities, treated equitably, and feeling supported. Motivation is a fundamental aspect of and directly influences creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016;

Siyal et al., 2021; Q. Zhang et al., 2021). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation impact creativity

(Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Fischer et al., 2019), and employees' motivation is dependent upon the

work environment at the domain and task level (Amabile, 1988).

When people are intrinsically motivated, they display more creative behaviors (Fischer et

al., 2019; Morlà-Folch et al., 2019; Siyal et al., 2021). When employees feel a sense of intrinsic

motivation, they "enjoy their work, value their personal investment, and dedicate more time to

their activities . . . and service to others" (Fischer et al., 2019, p. 9). Intrinsically motivated

employees prefer unique, novel activities over mundane activities, and in situations where the

leader and employee are both intrinsically motivated, creativity is amplified (Siyal et al., 2021).

Chow (2018) found that employees who are curious, open to learning, and willing to try new

things are motivated to learn and will express creativity in their work. The author explained

curious employees have a tendency to be autonomous; they excel in environments where they

understand the significance of their work and when they feel their work is meaningful and

challenging (Chow, 2018).

In Amabile's 1988 study, she posited extrinsic motivation hindered creativity. However,

as discussed previously, she reversed her opinion in the Dynamic Componential Model (Amabile

& Pratt, 2016). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can influence each other for a positive effect,

known as synergetic motivation (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Amabile and Pratt (2016) defined

extrinsic motivators as "factors that provide information and thus, support a person's sense of

competence or enable the person's deeper involvement with the work without undermining the

person's sense of self-determination," including rewards and recognition (p. 176). They further

explain the meaning an individual attaches to the extrinsic motivator determines if it serves as a

motivator. Fischer et al. (2019) argued the most important contribution of their research is the

significantly positive relationship between the extrinsic motivator, intrinsic motivation, and the creativity process. Their study suggested employees with higher intrinsic motivation will be more creative, confirming previous scholarship that intrinsic motivation is a substantial predictor of creativity (Fischer et al., 2019).

Amabile (1988) asserted motivation is more important than domain and creative skills. She contended, "No amount of skill in the domain or in methods of creative thinking can compensate for a lack of appropriate motivation to perform an activity" (Amabile, 1988, p. 133). Conversely, she maintained that a highly motivated individual could compensate for a lack of expertise or creative abilities (Amabile, 1988).

Employee Innovative Work Behaviors

Organizations depend on employees' creative behaviors to maintain their competitive edge (Siyal et al., 2021). Prior scholarship confirmed the significant importance of innovative work behaviors (IWBs) to employee creativity (Javed et al., 2019; Kremer et al., 2019; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Many employee behaviors are instrumental to creativity: autonomy, employee voice, curiosity, idea creation, and information sharing behaviors (Kremer et al., 2019). Scholars identified additional employee behaviors that foster creativity, including issue identification, risk-taking behaviors, confidence, and independence (Collin et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Leader support is essential to enhance IWBs (Amabile et al., 2004). In the next section, relationships within the workplace will be further explored.

Workplace Relationships

Workplace relationships have been analyzed for their impact on employee creativity (Carnevale et al., 2017; Gupta & Chadha, 2017; Zhao et al., 2014). Relationships exist across all levels of the organization, with both colleagues and leaders. In leadership scholarship, this

research is often categorized as leader membership exchange (LMX), or the relationships between leaders and employees (Zhao et al., 2014). LMX scholarship considers the quality of the relationship based on the unique interactions between the employee and leader (Zhao et al., 2014).

When leaders establish healthy relationships with their workforce, they are setting the stage for the organization to thrive. Healthy relationships are described as respectful, honest, genuine, and supportive (Ogbeibu et al., 2018) and are necessary to establish and foster organizational creativity (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; Chow, 2018; Khattak et al., 2017; Lyndon et al., 2020). Khattak et al. (2017) found a solid relationship fosters workforce creativity, while tension and anxiety negatively impact creativity. The quality of the relationship employees have with a leader impacts how they view themselves; when employees view themselves as insiders, creativity increases (Zhao et al., 2014).

Relationship quality influences employee creativity (Carnevale et al., 2017; Gupta & Chadha, 2017). Carnevale et al. (2017) found LMX most strongly relates to idea generation. Evidence suggests there is not a substantial variation in the impact of relationships between middle and upper managers on employee creativity (Gupta & Chadha, 2017). Employees noted higher LMX increases their participation in the creative process (Huang et al., 2016).

Lastly, scholars have examined how LMX interacts with organizational norms. Secure relationships produce mutual trust. Lyndon et al. (2020) discussed trust as a product of the workforce being secure with the capabilities of their colleagues and leadership. Security creates team cohesion and provides the workforce with a sense of belonging, thereby encouraging interaction and collaboration while also promoting psychological safety (Siyal et al., 2021). Chaudhary and Panda (2018) found psychological safety had a significant impact on employee

creativity. Essentially, creativity cannot exist in a workplace where psychological safety does not exist. Additionally, scholars found healthy relationships, or LMX, positively predict employee voice, proactive personality, and employee empowerment (Carnevale et al., 2017; Chughtai, 2016; Gupta & Chadha, 2017). In other words, LMX both directly and indirectly impacts employee creativity because of employee psychological empowerment (Chughtai, 2016).

Scholarship in this body of literature focuses on the individual characteristics employees bring to the workplace, including their beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions. The importance of workplace relationships is also introduced. Yet, it fails to address the process of how individuals influence others. Furthermore, much of this research was conducted via surveys using a quantitative, post-positivist lens and lacks the richness and depth of qualitative research. The next body of literature examines what scholars have said about how leaders influence the creativity of others through their leadership styles.

Leadership Style Theories and Creativity

Leadership is a widely studied social construct. Scholars recognize leaders play a key role in fostering employee creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Amabile et al., 2004; Northouse, 2018; Randel et al., 2018). Scholars have examined various aspects of how leaders' individual styles affect their interactions with others in the workplace. Amabile and Pratt (2016) asserted leaders assemble a creative culture "through the strategies they set, the structures and policies they establish, and the values they communicate" (p. 160). Moreover, Amabile et al. (2004) postulated a leader's behavior is a key factor in the work environment that determines creativity among individuals. Just as there is an absence of a uniform definition of leadership, a universally accepted categorization and common terminology of leadership styles does not exist.

Current scholarship suggests there are multiple ways leaders guide the workforce, known as their leadership style. Leadership styles outline behavioral approaches used to influence others (Northouse, 2018). Individual leadership styles dictate how leaders approach their relationships with the workforce. Scholars suggested some leadership styles create optimal situations for fostering workforce creativity (Bass, 1985; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Northouse, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2020).

In this body of literature, three relational leadership styles compatible with encouraging creativity in the workplace are discussed: transformational, authentic, and inclusive. Individual leadership styles dictate how leaders approach their relationships with their workforce. Although some scholars have argued ethical leadership is a leadership style that fosters creativity, I argue ethical leadership is not a separate leadership style; rather, it is embedded in all leadership styles. This section will introduce defining characteristics and behaviors of each leadership style and analyze how these leaders influence employee creativity.

Transformational Leadership

Scholars have been investigating transformational leadership style for over four decades (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2018). Burns (1978) coined the term transformational leadership in his book *Leadership,* in which he drew a distinction between transactional and transformational leader behaviors. Building upon Burns' work, Bass (1985) contended transformational leadership inspires employees to exceed expectations in accomplishing organizational goals. Bass and Avolio (1995) further developed the phenomenon by asserting the four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Leaders with a transformational leadership style enhance employees' characteristics by creating a supportive culture (W. Zhang et al., 2019). Transformational leadership "creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality" (Northouse, 2018, p. 164). This culture is built on transformational leaders encouraging employees' curiosity and idea generation by creating psychological safety, encouraging their employee voice, and creating a collaborative culture (W. Zhang et al., 2019). Transformational leaders understand the importance of being available and having frequent interactions with employees (W. Zhang et al., 2019). Maintaining ongoing, one-on-one relationships increases transformational leaders' understanding of employees' unique needs, which fosters trust and promotes employee creativity (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Khattak et al., 2017; W. Zhang et al., 2019).

Individual and organizational level creativity are positively impacted by transformational leadership (Chow, 2018; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Khattak et al., 2017). Leaders foster employees' confidence in implementing creativity through modeling creative practices and coaching employees in developing their creative skills (Khattak et al., 2017). However, Chow (2018) noted leadership style alone does not impact employee creativity; creativity can manifest in an individual's work only within the context of a trusting relationship with leadership, when an employee remains curious, is motivated to learn, and willing to take risks.

Employee creativity is fostered through transformational leadership's intellectual stimulation dimension (Bass & Avolio, 1995; L. Chen et al., 2016; Khattak et al., 2017; Q. Zhang et al., 2021). Leaders accomplish this by communicating purpose, vision, expectations, and possible rewards (L. Chen et al., 2016; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). Transformational leadership increases employee knowledge (L. Chen et al., 2016); leaders provide opportunities for and inspire frontline employees to develop and share new ideas (W. Zhang et al., 2019). In addition

to the understanding of transformational leadership's influence on employee creativity, scholars have identified other relational leadership styles that impact creativity. In the next section, creativity-enhancing aspects of authentic leadership are discussed.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is a complex, positive leadership approach with deep roots in humanistic psychology (Avolio & Gardner, 2005); this leadership style has gained momentum in recent years (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Avolio et al. (2004) concurred with previous assertions that authentic leadership marries ethical leadership and transformational leadership theories. Authentic leaders display intrinsic qualities—including integrity, honesty, and impartiality—that promote creativity in their employees (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2020; Sanda & Arthur, 2017). Over time, these leadership traits can be nurtured within ongoing interactions and established relationships (Northouse, 2018).

In addition to sustaining strong relationships with employees, authentic leaders promote employee's feelings of worth. Northouse (2018) explained authentic leaders work to align employees behind a common goal. These leaders welcome opposing viewpoints and use information gathered in the decision-making process. Honest, respectful relationships are a cornerstone of authentic leadership and promote psychological safety, encouraging creativity (Malik et al., 2016; Ribeiro et al., 2018). These relationships allow employees to "feel more confident, flexible, and original," all behaviors that positively affect creativity and job performance (Ribeiro et al., 2018, p. 1599). Chaudhary and Panda's (2018) conceptual framework visualizes authentic leadership's effect of "directly and indirectly" impacting employee's creativity by establishing a sense of value in their work, which leads to greater absorption in their duties (p. 2082).

Authentic leaders create a culture that promotes creativity (Mubarak & Noor, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2020). They employ a moral compass to guide interactions with frontline employees, demonstrating their ethical foundation (Northouse, 2018). Scholars have shown that authentic leaders are self-aware and transparent with employees sharing the positive and negative aspects of themselves (Ribeiro et al., 2020; Sanda & Arthur, 2017). When employees perceive leaders as authentic, they can relate to them more easily, and creativity is fostered (Malik et al., 2016).

Leader transparency promotes employee engagement because of enhanced loyalty to the organization (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2020). When team members perceive leaders to be authentic, it ignites their affective commitment, boosting their creativity (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Employees are more engaged and feel psychologically empowered when their leaders have an authentic leadership style (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2020). This perception creates employee commitment that fosters engagement and loyalty while boosting individual creativity and contributing to organizational success (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Conversely, Chaudhary and Panda (2018) contended a leader's authentic leadership style and employee work engagement do not promote psychological safety. Chaudhary and Panda (2018) are not the only scholars who have raised concerns about authentic leadership.

Some scholars have criticized authentic leadership as a "fad" (Dominguez-Escrig et al., 2022, para. 40). Scholarly discourse around authentic leadership has illustrated conflicting views on its effectiveness. However, Ribeiro et al. (2020) argued compelling evidence exists on the value of leaders who care about and engage others, demonstrate their authentic selves, and build secure relationships that stimulate creativity and positively impact organizational operations. They further recommended organizations seek out and cultivate authentic leaders. In the next

section, aspects of the third relational leadership style, inclusive leadership, that foster creativity in the workplace are discussed.

Inclusive Leadership

Numerous scholars have found the inclusive leadership style nurtures creativity (Amabile et al., 2004; Carmeli et al., 2010; Javed et al., 2019; Qi et al., 2019). However, Siyal et al. (2021) maintained inclusive leadership is the optimal leadership style for increasing creativity and innovation in the workforce. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), two management scholars, introduced the inclusive leadership construct.

Inclusive leadership positively impacts workforce creativity through their openness to and value of employees' ideas (Qi et al., 2019; Siyal et al., 2021). Previous research found inclusive leaders strive to understand others' ideas, insights, and opinions while demonstrating approachability, sincerity, and availability to discuss new ideas with employees, which cultivates employee voice and psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). Employee voice and psychological safety are IWBs that produce employee creativity (Carmeli et al., 2010; Javed et al., 2019; Siyal et al., 2021). The social-exchange theory states when employees feel valued and involved in the decision-making process, they tend to reciprocate and demonstrate IWBs (Carmeli et al., 2010).

When leaders solicit employee input, psychological safety is fostered, sending the message that their input is appreciated and valued (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Qi et al., 2019). Siyal et al. (2021) found this increases the number of new ideas generated, which affords employees the autonomy to take initiative in recognizing problems, developing possible solutions, and freely sharing those ideas. These behaviors allow the workforce to carry out their duties and contribute to organizational success.

Scholars have argued inclusive leaders care about and meet the needs of employees (Carmeli et al., 2010). Inclusive leaders promote "fairness, trust, respect, and collaborations with the followers" (Fu et al., 2022, p. 4). Fu et al. (2022) found inclusive leaders provide support to employees, even when the support falls outside their professional purview. This behavior was found to encourage employees' engagement in activities above and beyond the scope of their responsibilities, including creativity.

Creative expectations may spur creative performance (Amabile, 1988; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tierney & Farmer, 2004). Leaders have the potential to "stimulate or stifle" employee creativity based on their beliefs and behaviors, particularly when employees question their creative abilities (Tierney & Farmer, 2004, p. 428). Evidence confirmed earlier research that self-efficacy is required for creative behavior (Tierney & Farmer, 2004). Employee creative self-efficacy is tied to their interpretations of leader behaviors, their understanding of leader messages around the expectation to be creative, and their confidence in their ability to meet expectations (Tierney & Farmer, 2004).

Leadership style scholarship focuses on how leaders build connections and collaborate with others in the workplace to foster creativity. According to Collin et al. (2018), "This is not a question of a certain leadership style ruling something out, or even destroying creativity, but creativity exists amid all leadership styles—its forms just alternate" (p. 12). However, authoritative and transactional leadership destroy creativity (Khattak et al., 2017).

Leadership style scholarship introduces the leader-follower dynamics (Northouse, 2018). Leader characteristics and behaviors based on their preferred leadership styles can help shape employees' creativity in the workplace. Three relational leadership styles were discussed within the context of the workplace. Similar to the scholarship on the employee characteristics that

foster creativity, the majority of the research was conducted via questionnaires with quantitative epistemology. This body of literature is limited by the depth of information about the experiences of those in the workplace. Likewise, the scholarship offers a weak American corporate perspective.

Conclusion

Workforce creativity plays a key role in corporate competitiveness in a global economy. Scholars continue to evaluate antecedents that foster and enhance employee creativity. Globalization requires corporations to ensure frontline employees are creative. As Amabile (1988) stated, "It is impossible to escape the reality that corporations must be innovative in order to survive" (p. 124). Although fostering creativity begins in childhood, corporations benefit when leaders take steps to continue fostering creativity in their workforce. A leader's traits, beliefs, and actions, which outline their management approach, directly influences the creativity of frontline employees. Although much research has been conducted on leadership styles, it is heavily quantitative, missing the rich, in-depth qualitative data on the lived experiences of leaders and the workforce.

This chapter presented an analysis of relevant workplace creativity scholarship. This scholarship introduced the creativity construct, explored the cultural context of creativity in the workplace and employee characteristics that foster creativity, and ended with an examination of three relational leadership style theories that foster creativity. Although the scholarship on creativity in the workforce is robust, there are gaps. While a considerable amount of scholarship focuses on the private sector, much of this research is in industries considered to be in the creative sector—such as architecture, research and development, high-tech, and marketing and development—identifying a research gap of experiences in the knowledge industry. Another

identified gap is the lack of qualitative research illuminating in-depth human experiences. Finally, there is a dearth of research in this area with an American corporate culture perspective.

Findings from this scholarship analysis will be used to inform future chapters of this dissertation research study. At the intersection of the three bodies of literature presented, I intend to examine how corporate leaders can foster creativity in employees. Chapter Three will describe the methodology of this research study on creativity in the corporate sector, including the research design and research questions that have been partially shaped by the information in this chapter and the gaps in the literature. Chapter Four will summarize study findings, and Chapter Five will discuss the contributions of this scholarship to the field of educational leadership.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Part I: Introduction to Research Methods

Introduction

Previous chapters have discussed the importance of leaders cultivating creativity in the corporate knowledge industry workplace and provided a broad review of the literature. In this chapter, I outline the proposed methodology of my study and the subsequent methods actually used to execute the study. The chapter describes the qualitative research design used to examine leaders' beliefs and experiences in cultivating workplace creativity, along with the methods for data collection and analysis strategies.

Research Design

To achieve the goals of this study, a qualitative case study design was used to capture an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of corporate leaders in the knowledge industry. The research design of this dissertation shifted as the study took shape as a result of three unforeseen factors. First, the individuals who volunteered to participate in the study and the flattened organizational structure in the line of business. Second, time constraints related to the dissertation process foreshortened the data-gathering and analysis window. Finally, the data were drawn from one point in time rather than longitudinally due to the availability of sufficient historical data in organization artifacts. In this section, I present both the proposed research design and the final case study design that was implemented.

Proposed Research Design

Initially, I proposed the use of a comparative case study (CCS) approach to explore the research questions through a constructivist epistemology and process theory lens (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2023). CCS most closely aligns with and remains true to the qualitative research

principle of the researcher remaining flexible and allowing the study to evolve (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017).

The case study is a well-established research methodology spanning numerous disciplines. Case study research varies in epistemologies and methods; traditional case studies adopt "a positivist epistemology, a variable-oriented theory of causation, and social scientific notions of validity and reliability that obfuscate the very advantages of case studies" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 7). Case studies investigate a static culture to develop meaning.

Conversely, CCS is grounded in constructivist epistemology with a process-based theory explaining "the how." Constructivist philosophy is based on the idea that "what people perceive and believe is shaped by their assumptions and prior experiences as well as by the reality that they interact with" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43). Process-oriented case studies "tend to see the world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; the explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations and events influence others" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 29). Further, Maxwell (2013) noted, "Qualitative researchers . . . tend to ask how x plays a role in causing y, what the process is that connects x and y" (p. 31).

Traditional case study research begins with and maintains the importance of bounding the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2015). Creswell and Poth (2018) noted a challenge in designing case study research is determining the case. However, Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) contended CCS's more heuristic approach of discovery to identify linkages is most beneficial. Further, in contrast to traditional case studies, in which generalizability and replicability are goals, CCS's value of real-world, complex, social interactions allows researchers to "extract and generalize from" (p. 2) a variety of contexts to identify patterns in the

phenomenon (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2023). These properties of CSS were initially thought to make it more appropriate for the topic of investigation in the proposed project.

There were additional advantages driving the proposed CSS design. Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) postulated "comparative case studies are an effective qualitative tool for researching the impact of policy and practice in various fields of social research" (p. i). CCS employs an "iterative, emergent research design," a trademark of qualitative research (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2023, pp. 6–7). CCS adopts a heuristic approach as a "process of discovery and problem-solving… not a recipe or a set of rules" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 7). Contrary to common case study researcher beliefs, engaging in a contextual-focused study does not prohibit an appreciation for comparison (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). CCS is grounded in understanding culture, context, comparison, and power. Another deviation from the conventional case study approach is that CCS does not require cases to be bounded prior to beginning the study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Comparative case studies separate the phenomenon of study from the context.

The CCS approach is based on a comparison of three axes: horizontal, vertical, and transversal. Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) advised it was optimal to employ the use of all three axes to conduct a comprehensive investigation and while considering perspectives gained through the comparison of all aspects to gain the full story. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the three axes of the CCS approach and how this approach was to be applied to my study. The horizontal axis analyzes commonalities and variances across "distinct, socially-produced locations that are connected in multiple ways" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 51). In my proposed study, the various projects across the two identified LOBs were to be represented on the horizontal axis identified by the LOB. Each project is connected within the overarching leadership of the LOB, however, operates independently with separate project managers, staff,

tasks, and budgets. This individual operation can impact the oversight and implementation of project goals and employee experience. In the initial study plan, the horizontal axis would have allowed for identification of similarities and differences via project and the LOB. The vertical axis examines a singular case comparing across micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. It reminds researchers "social relations are complex and extend beyond the confines of any predefined grouping or level" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 73). Rather than examining global or industry influences on creativity, in my proposed study, the vertical axis would have considered the various layers of the large, geographically dispersed corporation, to examine the complex interplay and influence that one level or grouping had on other levels. By interviewing multiple participants in each LOB and following the vertical from project level supervisors to the group leader, I had hoped to uncover the social networks of employees that exist at and between levels. Finally, the transversal axis situates the phenomenon and looks at how it has shifted over time offering context to help analyze the two other axes. I intended to consider the transversal axis in my study through the insights shared by the corporate leadership development and learning leader and organizational documentation reviewed. This context would have illuminated the evolution of organizational policy and practice. This is represented by the diagonal wave on Figure 4, which depicts the representation of the CCS axes for this research study.

Figure 4

Comparative Case Study Axes
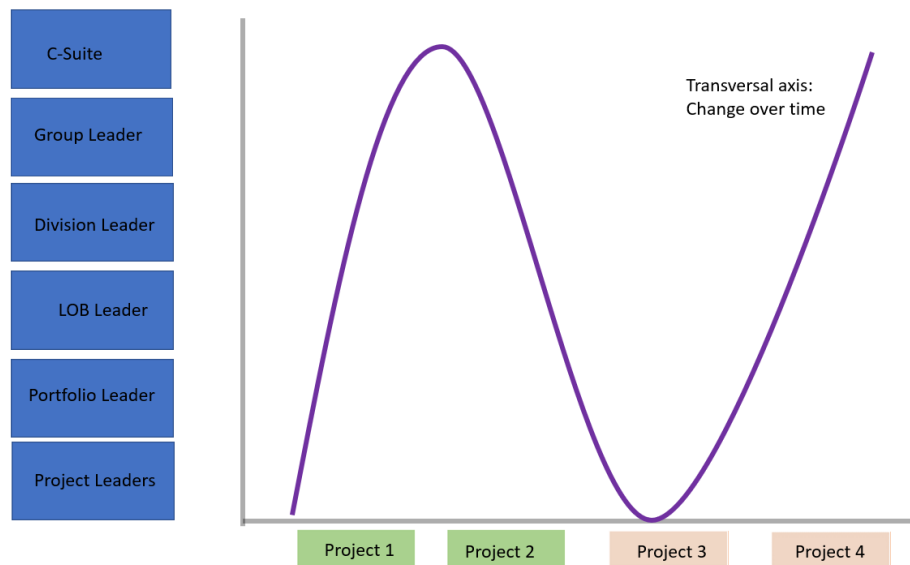
The qualitative research study design would have met the need to understand the thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions of leaders. The CCS horizontal axis allows one to follow the phenomenon. It is a "rich description of each horizontal element . . . [which] is critical to discerning the similarities and differences across the sites" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 54). Through analysis of the horizontal axis, an understanding of how the social context influences policy implementation and practices across situations could have been gained (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). In my research, I proposed analyzing two lines of business as the horizontal axis. Each line of business has its own context and operation style; therefore, creativity may manifest and be fostered differently.

The vertical axis allows "us to follow the phenomenon itself, be it a practice or policy, as it enlists and engages actors whom one might otherwise assume operate in bounded cases" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 74). In a CCS, the study considers interactions and flow of information across the organizational hierarchy rather than focusing on pre-planned job titles

(Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). "The use of the term vertical in the CCS approach opens up analytical opportunities but also risks conceptual constriction if one sees it as a study of levels rather than networks" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 73). Understanding the context of the social networks across the organization allows for a more holistic examination of the interplay between people and situations. This provides additional opportunities to analyze and better understand multiple variables individually. Hierarchy "does not allow for the study of interactions among" actors with different social positions in the entity (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 73). In my initially proposed study, the vertical axis would have followed lineage up and down the division in the LOB.

The transversal axis acts as the connector of the horizontal elements across sites and levels of the vertical axis to show change over time (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) argued that understanding the origin and progression of the phenomenon can unlock important aspects for the researcher to consider in making meaning. There are four central assumptions of the transversal axis. First, the transversal axis illuminates the historical roots and power dynamics of the social phenomena. Next, the historical perspective "contrast[s] how things have changed over time and consider what has remained the same" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 93). The third assumption examines the connection between space and time and the impact these circumstances have on the phenomenon. Lastly, the final assumption is that researchers will look at the phenomenon "analytically through a historical lens," which could provide "alternative explanations" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 94). As Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) pointed out, everything is affected by the context of its situation. For my study, I had hoped to employ the transversal axis for data revealed during the interview with the leadership development and learning leader and potentially through secondary data analysis.

Final Case Study Design

Complications encountered during the recruitment and implementation phase of this study required me to abandon the CCS research design. The available data and volunteers, along with the study timeframe, necessitated the shift to a case study approach. The abandonment of the proposed study was reviewed with and supported by the dissertation committee prior to shift and subsequent data analysis. The resulting study design leaned heavily on the predetermined structure outlined in the previous subsection, remaining grounded in a constructivist epistemology with a process orientation (Maxwell, 2013). The study maintained the lack of a pre-established case and followed a method of continuous discovery with its emergent design, foundational to the CCS approach (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2023).

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?

RQ2: What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on creativity in the workplace?

RQ3: What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to cultivate workplace creativity?

RQ4: What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?

Positionality

I am a career educator. I began my career as an elementary school teacher around the time curriculum guides were intended to be read word for word rather than used as a stimulant for designing engaging activities. I distinctly remember saying to a colleague that word-for-word reading is not why I spent thousands of dollars to become an educator. I quickly learned my

passion was working with younger children and later with adults who cared for and educated our youngest learners. As an early childhood educator, I worked in many capacities, including as a teacher, child care center administrator, quality improvement consultant, trainer, coach, and mentor. I also found myself in different education settings such as public schools, for-profit child care centers, a college lab school, multiple local and national nonprofits, and ultimately, in corporate America. In all these roles and organizations, I maintained my commitment to being an educator—to the children and the adults in these programs—looking for ways to improve their experiences. Each of these roles helped me grow and share my experiences with others.

I began this doctoral journey seeking to develop my leadership knowledge and continue to grow and learn in the field to help expand my sphere of impact. I wanted my dissertation to focus on leadership. I envisioned a leader-follower study that would connect my passion for helping teachers improve their practice and my appreciation for their work in designing and implementing inspiring, creative places for children to explore and learn.

Around this time, I experienced a perceptual shift when I added two large government contracts to my smaller commercial client workload. I began to notice various qualities in the work that others were doing. Although I had aspects of my work that were rote, times when it felt that I was going through the same motions every day in a very prescribed manner, I had other aspects of my work that allowed me to be creative, such as when developing professional development sessions, creating resources, and collaborating with teachers. I saw others who were not so lucky.

I understand creativity is a competitive advantage (Amabile, 1988; Kremer et al., 2019). I had heard and participated in conversations about the draw of companies in the creative sector with environments that promote workplace creativity and often viewed as "the place to work."

We cannot all work for those companies, so I wondered how we could bring that "creative" magic into other organizations. I began to pay attention to interactions and the relationships of those in my organization. My thinking shifted, and I decided to focus my dissertation on trying to better understand how leaders foster creativity in the workplace.

As an employee of a large corporation for the past decade, I brought an understanding of corporate culture and jargon. As an employee of the company within which this research project was situated, I had the background and work experience to connect and interact with my participant leaders. I possessed the knowledge to have informed conversations about their practices and perceptions of creativity in the workplace. I have studied and gained knowledge about leadership phenomena and leadership styles that will enable me to analyze their responses and draw conclusions. This positionality to my participants allowed me to gain participant trust more easily. I did not have an existing relationship with any of my participants prior to the initiation and socializing of this dissertation project.

My job was to listen—*really* listen—intently. I had to remain neutral and hear what the participants were sharing and remember not to judge or try to make their work fit my perceived notions. I viewed this experience, talking with and learning from other professionals, as a gift. My efforts to gather information and broaden my reach will help me in the future as I strive to better support those in the workforce. I remain hopeful that this work has provided information that can be shared widely to enhance the experiences of the workforce, no matter the sector.

Guiding Ethical Principles

Addressing ethical considerations was imperative to the validity of this qualitative research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2010). It was important to acknowledge and address the two aspects of ethics: "procedural ethics and ethics in practice"

(Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 261). Procedural ethics involve the steps necessary to gain approval to conduct the study based on preserving "justice, beneficence, and respect for human beings" (Rossman & Rallis, 2010, p. 382). Practice ethics can be described as the everyday issues that surface during all phases of the study and that may not have been previously considered (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Rossman & Rallis, 2010).

Concordia University-St. Paul requires all doctoral learners to take measures to ensure their research is ethically sound. Completion of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) ethics training modules was required, as was obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. This project received IRB approval through the Institutional Review Board Joint Review Authorization Agreement between Concordia University-St. Paul and the participating company's IRB, with the organization IRB serving as the lead agency. The IRB process ensures that research projects demonstrate respect, concern for the welfare, and justice for the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This section has presented the broad ethical principles that guided this study. The following outlines how I carried out these principles to increase the trustworthiness of my study. As the researcher, I sought to build trusting relationships with my participants, took measures to protect my participants' privacy and confidentiality, and strove to objectively present participant data and interpret their meanings.

Build Trusting Relationships

Although I was the researcher and "instrument" for this study, I also identify as an employee in corporate America (Luttrell, 2019). Beginning with the recruitment letter, I acknowledged my positionality, stating my experience as a first step in transparency and building mutually respectful relationships. I sought to design an interview atmosphere conducive to a

relaxed, informal, honest discussion, including the selection of the physical environment. My

hope was this would help ameliorate the power differential in the researcher-participant

relationship (Maxwell, 2013). These trust building practices carried through the participant

interviews and subsequent member checking interviews.

Protect Participants

The corporate organization played a key role in ensuring the participants of my study,

their employees, were protected. IRB permissions for this study were overseen via an

Institutional Review Board Joint Review Authorization Agreement, with the corporate

organization serving as the lead agency.

As a component of the IRB application to the corporate organization, I provided a copy

of the informed consent document to be shared with participants via Google Form. The informed

consent document, located in Appendix A, detailed measures I developed to protect my

participants. I made every effort to protect their true identities and the organization where they

work. During the consent process, each participant was notified they could either choose a

pseudonym or one would be assigned to them. Their pseudonym was the only identifier used in

all documentation for this study. A pseudonym was also created for the organization, Dragonfly

Consulting. Any unintended identity disclosures were removed from all notes during the

transcription process.

The topic of my study was relatively low in controversy and sensitivity, conditions often

associated with participant willingness to fully complete their involvement in the research.

However, it was possible that a participant or participants would decide they were not

comfortable completing the study. Thus, as a part of informed consent, participants were notified

they could withdraw from the study at any time prior to data aggregation by notifying the

researcher. After completing the consent process, one volunteer did passively withdraw from the study by not responding to any additional communication from the researcher.

Authentically Present Data

In conducting this study, I sought to demonstrate reflexivity and reduce researcher bias by employing member checking as a means of obtaining feedback from participants. According to Maxwell (2013), member checking can be described as:

> the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your biases and misunderstandings of what you observed. (pp. 126–127)

Following data collection interviews, member checking interviews were scheduled with each participant. Prior to the member checking interview, participants were emailed a summary document outlining my initial interpretations of their contributions, which they were asked to review. Then, during the member checking interview, I requested they check for accuracy and allowed them to correct any misrepresentations or inaccuracies (Carlson, 2010; Maxwell, 2013). Two participants provided additional clarification to alleviate misunderstandings. Following the defense of this dissertation, each participant will receive a link to a video presentation of synthesized study findings.

Part II: Data Collection Steps

This study was conducted in a large, for-profit knowledge industry consulting firm headquartered in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The organizational structure of the firm consists of an executive team and over 20 lines of business (LOBs) across multiple

divisions. In this section, I explain the sampling and recruitment of participants and detail each of the methods of data collection.

Sampling

The proposed sampling plan for this study was a two-stage, unique, purposeful sampling process designed to select 10-14 leader participants. Purposeful sampling is used when the researcher targets a population "to discover, understand, and gain insight" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 77) and therefore must select a sample from which the "most can be learned" (p. 77). According to Merriam and Tisdell, a unique sample captures unique occurrences. In this study, a unique, purposeful sample was chosen to capture leadership and situational dynamics of the vertical hierarchy in two separate LOBs. The sampling plan ultimately used in this research study was purposeful in that key organizational leaders were targeted for recruitment at the corporate and division leader levels. However, due to the pool of volunteers' positions within the organization for the study, the second-level vertical hierarchy sample was not possible and thus was dropped from the sampling procedures.

Two key organizational leaders were recruited based on their roles in the organization. First, an organizational leader responsible for developing learning opportunities for other leaders was identified and recruited. Next, a divisional leader interested in the topic was identified and invited to participate. Once recruited, I met with this division leader to gather basic information about the LOBs and was given the LOB level organizational chart to aid in later selection of two LOB leaders to participate.

A video conference meeting was held to introduce the LOB leaders to the study. Following the meeting, I emailed the recruitment letter with the Google Form link to LOB leaders seeking volunteers. The original recruitment plan indicated I would select two LOB

leaders from the pool of volunteers to participate. Decisions would be based on the information gathered from the division leader including LOB characteristics and organizational hierarchy seeking to capture supervision verticals.

Next, I had planned that the selected LOB leaders and I would host video conferencing introductory meetings with all LOB employees who met the participation requirements. However, the participating LOB leader held two meetings with her direct report, which produced participants. After introducing the study, I emailed the recruitment email. The individuals who volunteered then shared the recruitment letter with their direct reports. From the pool of potential participants, seven additional leaders were to be selected from the two LOBS.

A total of 10 semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted. The proposal stated in each LOB, a leadership vertical would be followed from the division lead, through the LOB leaders, to the portfolio lead, project managers, and supervisors. Semi-structured interviews closely align with the process-oriented approach allowing for in-depth conversations, wherein the researcher maintains control but can be flexible in the ordering and phrasing of established questions, with the goal of back-and-forth exchanges to capture participants' lived experiences (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017).

Recruitment

Following IRB approval, the division leader was the first person recruited to participate in the study. I shared the need for the study, research purpose, research questions, methods of the study, and protections that would be employed to protect confidentiality for the organization and participants.

Once the division leader elected to participate in the study, that person was instrumental in helping socialize the study and recruit participants. The division leader invited me to a

standing leadership video call with the LOB leaders and allowed me to introduce myself and the study. During the meeting, I gave an overview, invited them to participate in the study, and fielded questions. I also offered to join any LOB meetings to introduce the study to their people managers and take questions. Immediately following the meeting, I sent each LOB leader the recruitment materials soliciting volunteers. The participant recruitment email is found in Appendix B. The recruitment plan was for two LOB leaders to be chosen to participate; these two leaders were to receive an email advising them they were chosen and explaining the plan to invite leaders from their teams to participate in the study.

I originally proposed that I would send an initial email, the Participant Recruitment Email (see Appendix B), to all employees in the two identified LOB leaders in the organization, briefly introducing myself and the study. The email would contain a Google Forms link and the invitation to participate in the study. Once the potential participant clicked on the link, they would see the brief overview of the study, including its purpose, research questions, methods, and measures I had taken and would take to protect their anonymity. The informed consent process would immediately follow.

Below the informed consent narrative were checkboxes with *Yes* and *No* to capture consent to participate in the study and for video and audio recording of the interview (see Appendix A). If the participant checked yes, the survey gathered general demographic data including their tenure, whether they were a matrixed employee, their preferred email address, willingness for the conversation to be recorded, and their willingness to participate in the study. A screen followed, thanking them for completing the form and stating that if they were chosen to participate in the interview, they would be contacted by the researcher.

One LOB leader volunteered to participate in the study. Once the LOB leader completed the consent document via the Google Form, she invited me to attend two standing meetings with different groups of her direct reports via video conference to recruit leaders from the LOB. During each meeting, I briefly introduced myself and the study with attendees seeking volunteers. Following each meeting, the recruitment materials were sent to the meeting attendees. In an effort to capture various levels in the LOB and supervision verticals, leaders who volunteered shared the recruitment email with their direct reports.

Consent Process

This study utilized a two-pronged informed consent process. Participants received the written informed consent form electronically during the recruitment process and were asked to select the *Yes* option at the bottom of the consent form, and then also provide their name, email address, and other demographic information to indicate consent. They were notified in writing of their right not to answer any question and/or to notify the researcher if they decided they did not wish to participate in the study any longer.

Prior to the start of each interview, I asked each participant whether they had any questions and to provide verbal consent confirmation. Participants were notified their participation was voluntary, and they could elect to withdraw their data from the study at any time prior to data aggregation. At the end of the interview, I notified each participant that the next stage of their direct involvement would be a 30-minute member checking interview at a later date to discuss my initial analysis of their interview, enabling them to confirm or suggest adjustments to my interpretations of the data.

To protect personal identities, prior to the interview, participants were asked to choose a pseudonym to be used in the research project. I created a list of potential pseudonyms in case

participants did not select one on their own. I then confirmed with participants that they still consented to video and/or audio recordings of the interviews for transcription purposes. Before beginning the recording of the interview, participants were asked to share their pseudonym if they had chosen one.

I remain the only person with access to participants' true identities. All project data, including recordings, research memos, and field notes were collected and stored in my secure, password-protected cloud-based drive. During the study, a master list of pseudonyms was kept in a file on an external drive separate from all other project data. Following the publishing of this dissertation, all study information including project notes, research memos, recordings, and files will be destroyed. Identifiable information was not shared in any reports.

Data Collection Process

Data collection for case study research should rely on multiple data sources (Crewell & Poth, 2018). Data collection for the proposed comparative case study was to occur via semi-structured interviews and review of archival documents. I was to gather and review relevant company documents related to creativity and leadership development, including handbooks and information on learning and development programs from the company intranet site. I had intended to gather any relevant documents, including datasets, from the leadership development officer participating in the study. In the next section, I will outline the initial component of my data collection, the review of the organization's artifacts through secondary data review.

Artifact Review

Artifact review was intended to be a component of the CCS case study to aid in answering the research questions. Prior to the interview process, I reviewed the company intranet to compile a list of relevant documents to review. Documents included the employee handbook

and company policy and procedures related to professional development and learning, leadership philosophy, and people management. The hope was to uncover how creativity is discussed in company policies, whether there is consistency in policies and messaging, and how company policies and practices have changed over time. I also planned to review additional documents that were identified through participant conversations and suggestions.

The company intranet site is expansive. During the review of the intranet, I was unable to locate information I considered relevant to this dissertation. Specifically, I found no documents that showed how policies and practices had evolved. Material available on the intranet contained only current policies and practices. This historical information is imperative to investigate the transversal axis of the CCS, but it is not a requirement for a case study, and since the research design for this investigation had changed, I considered it acceptable to omit the information on the history of the company's policy and practices.

For this study, I developed a review framework of workplace elements that foster creativity based on Amabile and Pratt's (2016) Dynamic Conceptual Model of Innovation. I had intended to use Smartsheet to track the document review processes and information gathered from each document (Stake, 1995). The review framework was to document where creativity was discussed by cataloging the name, date, and type of document reviewed. The hope was to record how creativity was discussed in organizational documents by tracking mentions of workplace elements that promote creativity, including encouragement of and the value of creativity, autonomy in meeting responsibilities, collaboration and coordination, shared decision making, sufficient time and resources to accomplish tasks, and reward and recognition for creativity (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Interviews

As a qualitative researcher, I was responsible for employing effective interview techniques to evoke the needed data to answer the research questions. Interviewers have two roles: to question, and to listen to their participants (Stake, 1995; Taylor et al., 2015). Good interviewers relinquish their preconceived notions regarding what they think they know about the situation and what the interviewee means by their answer (Stake, 1995; Taylor et al., 2015). As an interviewer, I asked clarifying and prolonging questions to get the interviewees to explain meaning and elaborate on their responses to provide rich descriptions of their experiences. I also asked participants to share specific examples. Taylor et al. (2015) characterized effective listening strategies as being an active listener. In active listening, the interviewer is mindfully patient and is comfortable with the pause and silence, giving the interviewee time to think about their answer. As the interviewer, I also gave myself time to think about what the next question should be based on the previous response and understanding of the remaining questions (Stake, 1995). I listened for themes that emerged and was attuned to participant feelings and reactions.

Once the consent form was returned via Google Forms, the Calendly link was emailed to the participants. Participants were able to automatically schedule their interview by choosing a day and time that worked best for them based on the researcher's posted availability. Once the meeting was scheduled, Calendly automatically sent participants a meeting invite.

Data were collected through virtual one-on-one interviews conducted via Zoom (Version 5.16.6) with audio and video recording to aid with transcription and analysis. All participants consented to video and audio recording. Due to technical difficulties, two interviews were conducted using audio recording only. Researcher memoing was completed immediately

following each initial interview. Once the Zoom transcription was complete, the transcripts were reviewed by the researcher for quality control.

The semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with volunteer participants using the approved interview protocol. I asked open-ended questions and followed up with additional probes to elicit further participant responses to gain additional detail. Following each interview, I completed a research memo on my experiences and perspectives of the interview. I documented my thoughts and reflections on verbal and nonverbal responses during the interview.

Each interview began by welcoming the participant and thanking them for volunteering to participate in my research project. Each participant was asked to select a pseudonym prior to beginning the recording of the session. For participants who did not choose a pseudonym, a pseudonym from a list of potential pseudonyms I generated was assigned. Although it was captured on the consent Google Form, each participant was asked to verbally acknowledge their continued agreement to participate in the study and that they were doing so of their own free will. Their previously made decision regarding interview recording was also confirmed before beginning the interview protocol.

Interview Protocols

For this study, I implemented a semi-structured interview protocol, in which I asked open-ended questions and followed up with additional probing prompts to elicit further responses and clarification. This interview approach most closely aligned with the proposed CCS research by "attending to the processual nature of conversation and the social dimensions of knowledge production" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 55). Two interview protocols were used; one protocol was developed for use in the leader interviews, and a separate protocol was used in interviewing the leadership development officer. Prior to implementing the interview protocol, I piloted the

interview questions with colleagues to ensure clarity of the questions and establish estimated length of the interview (Stake, 1995). Interview protocols used in this study are located in Appendix C.

<div align="center">**Part III: Data Analysis Steps**</div>

Data Analysis Processes and Procedures

Data analysis was an ongoing, nonlinear, interactive process that was employed throughout the research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Its purpose was "turning raw data into meaningful findings" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 188). The data analysis process was a multi-layer, cyclic process of preparing and organizing data, coding, and presenting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2011). Interviews are social interactions in which meaning is constructed through face-to-face conversations (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015).

The interview data for this study were collected between August and October 2023. Saldaña (2011) claimed the purpose of analysis is to disclose what is learned from our social interactions about phenomena. Through the use of coding, I sorted and classified data based on patterns and categories from initial and member checking interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2011). An iterative data analysis process was implemented (Maxwell, 2013) using both deductive and inductive coding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method of data analysis aligned with both the planned CCS process-oriented approach to discovery (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017) and the actual constructivist-grounded process orientation case study used in this study. Prior to data collection, I used deductive coding to develop a list of codes that arose from my literature review. Inductive coding was then used to capture codes that presented themselves in the data. Lastly, I compiled my codebook by combining both sets of codes.

Following the interviews, recordings were transcribed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016) using Zoom's (Version 5.16.6) built-in transcription program. A quality control check of each transcription was conducted. This quality check, which consisted of listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts served three purposes. First, it allowed me to immerse myself in the data and become more familiar with the content participants had shared (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Secondly, it helped ensure accuracy in transcription. I used verbatim transcription, capturing the exact words of my participants. However, these verbatim transcripts were for researcher analysis only and not submitted to participants. Carlson (2010) noted verbatim transcripts can be a point of distress and embarrassment for participants. This quality check allowed me to add any words that were left out and indicate any "nonverbal communication, pauses, laughter, or interruptions" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 190). Lastly, the quality check allowed me to remove any unintentional disclosures of participant identities or other employee staff.

Immediately following each interview, I completed a research memo (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 1995). Research memoing was intended to capture key takeaways and my thoughts, reactions, and reflections on the interview. I used memoing throughout the analysis phase to capture emerging ideas and insights. Data from these research memos were analyzed to establish categories that emerged using coding to identify major categories and subcategories.

Member Checking

As part of informed consent and the end of the initial interview, I notified participants that member checking was a component of participation in the study (Carlson, 2010). I informed participants of the purpose of including member checking, what the process entailed, and how

and when member checking would occur for the project. Member checking interviews closely align with the constructivist epistemological stance of this study and allowed for a second, shorter interview to discuss with the participants the researcher's key takeaways document based on the initial review of the interview transcript. It also served as an opportunity for researcher and participant to co-construct new meaning from the interview (Birt et al., 2016; Koelsch, 2013).

Following the initial interview, participants were emailed the Calendly link to schedule their 30-minute, semi-structured member checking interview. I reviewed each verbatim transcript and completed a first-level analysis. Following that analysis and the scheduling of the member checking interview, each participant was sent the initial interview analysis write up. Participants were asked to read the write up prior to our meeting and note any concerns or inaccuracies. The member checking interview protocol is located in Appendix D.

The member checking process was used as a strategy to build trust and allow participants to review data collected during their interview. The review is intended to ensure trustworthiness; that is, that what was reported accurately captured participants' ideas and matched their intent (Birt et al., 2016; Carlson, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued member checking is the most important technique researchers can use to establish credibility. In the next section, I will discuss additional steps I took to ensure the quality of the research.

Part IV: Quality Research Criteria

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness and credibility were central elements to my study. In the previous section, I presented several strategies I employed to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. The strategies discussed included use of reflective research memos throughout each phase of the

interview, member checking interviews with each participant, and triangulation across sources

and comparison between participants. In this section, I detail additional steps to establish

trustworthiness in my research with the hope of being able to transfer this research to other

contexts.

In interviews, participants share their experiences, which researchers interpret to create

meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The strategies I implemented to establish trustworthiness were

embedded in the data collection and analysis procedures described earlier. To further build

trustworthiness in my research, I did "everything possible to ensure the data was appropriately

and ethically collected, analyzed and reported" (Carlson, 2010, p. 1103). Because of the lack of

standardized instruments and the interpretive analysis, Carlson (2010) noted, "More

responsibility is placed on qualitative researchers to demonstrate that their entire research

process is worthy" (p. 1103).

I used data source triangulation to build trustworthiness in my data (Carlson, 2010; Yin,

2013). Yin (2013) claimed data source triangulation was "likely to strengthen the validity of a

case study evaluation" (p. 324). By using multiple methods of data collection, I enhanced my

understanding of creativity in the workplace, which facilitated "more valid interpretations" (Birt

et al., 2016, p. 5). Data sources included semi-structured interviews, research memoing

throughout the data collection process, and member-checking interviews. Additionally, my

interviews collected data from people at different levels and places within the organization

offering different perspectives.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. Limitations are elements of a study that are beyond

the researcher's control (Patton, 1999). The qualitative approach chosen for this study is not

meant to be statistically generalizable but rather to provide rich, in-depth information and offer

potential analytic generalizability and case-to-case transfer (Polit & Beck, 2010). This qualitative

case study consisted of employees from one LOB within a division in one corporation. It cannot

be assumed that their perceptions and experiences are similar to those of employees in other

LOBs within the division, the company, or other corporations.

Another limitation of this study is that potential participants may have had reservations

about participating in my study. Reservations may have stemmed from their beliefs or concerns

regarding how others might judge their creativity-fostering abilities and practices, and/or what

would happen with their data. To counter these reservations, in my recruitment efforts, I

repeatedly stated that their true identities would not be shared with anyone inside or outside their

organization. I also shared that there are no right or wrong answers, as this study focuses on

gathering information about their perceptions and lived experiences of creativity in the

workplace.

Lastly, all participants who volunteered to engage in this study were of a singular race.

Through the purposive sampling of individuals in key positions and the open solicitation of

participants in the one LOB, I was unable to recruit a racially or ethnically diverse group of

participants. Although the gender representation of participants was 60% female and 40% male, I

acknowledge the need for a broader spectrum of perspectives from individuals from diverse

heritages and backgrounds.

However, the information from this study provided data and themes that may be used to

guide future research on creativity in the workforce through analytic generalization (Polit &

Beck, 2010). Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) argued case studies "generate rich theoretical insights

that transfer" to other situations (p. 34). Some of the limitations outlined may be mitigated or eliminated in future studies.

Delimitations

I delimited my study by establishing parameters (Yin, 2015). I conceptualized and built this study around my own curiosity of creativity in the corporate workplace. I deliberately chose the parameters of my study, including the small sample size derived from one division and one organization, to gather rich, in-depth information from my participants and to make the study more manageable for an individual researcher within the designated dissertation timeline. These conscious delimiting decisions also included the proposed comparative case study design, the research questions I developed, and the organization and population chosen for the investigation.

Part V: Research Dissemination and Conclusion

Participation Appreciation

This dissertation would not be possible without my participants. To acknowledge their contributions in helping me further explore creativity in the workforce, I felt compelled to share what I learned from the study. The information from this study was shared with division leadership to assist their ongoing efforts to grow creativity in the workplace. At the conclusion of the dissertation process, a video presentation was developed and distributed to all study participants, highlighting study findings and recommendations.

Publishing

Following the conclusion of this study, I hope to disseminate study findings and recommendations broadly within the corporate and scholarly communities. In addition to publishing this dissertation through Concordia's DigitalCommons institutional repository to provide open access to the information, I anticipate exploring article submissions to creativity-

and leadership-focused scholarly journals. Findings will only be shared in aggregate to protect

the confidentiality of the organization and the participants who graciously gave of their time to

participate in my study.

Conclusion

This chapter described and justified my dissertation research methodology. Proposed and

actual methodological elements were detailed, beginning with an overview of the research

design, my positionality, and guiding ethical considerations. Next, the data collection procedures,

analysis methods, evaluative criteria, limitations, and research dissemination plan were

presented. In the upcoming chapter, I will present data gathered from participant interviews

along with my analysis and findings related to the research questions.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This qualitative case study aimed to discover authentic corporate leader insights, opinions, and perceptions of their experiences surrounding workplace creativity. Previously, Chapter One provided an introduction to the study, outlined its significance, and introduced the research questions and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided the study. Chapter Two then gave a comprehensive review of literature related to workplace creativity. Lastly, Chapter Three detailed the methodology used to collect data; this study consisted of 10 participant leaders from a single, American-based knowledge industry corporation.

This chapter contains the presentation and interpretation of the findings from semi-structured participant interviews, an initial one-hour interview, and a 30-minute member checking interview conducted via Zoom (Version 5.16.6). Findings were based on themes that emerged through the execution of the data collection and analysis procedures outlined in Chapter Three, using a systematic coding process performed with the coding software Atlas.ti (Version 23.3). Findings were multi-level, occurring at the systemic organizational level, the LOB, team, and individual levels. This mirrors previous scholarship on organizational culture of creativity (Allahar, 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Anderson et al., 2014).

This chapter is organized by theme; each theme is defined and supported by excerpts of data. Six themes were identified: (a) creativity is a business imperative, (b) the business model can hinder creativity, (c) flattened hierarchy incubates workplace creativity, (d) leader behaviors facilitate a culture of psychological safety, (e) leader behaviors encourage ideation, and (f) individual characteristics contribute to workplace creativity.

Theme 1: Creativity is a Business Imperative

Creating a culture of creativity in knowledge industry organizations is considered a business imperative. A business imperative is considered a goal or objective that is critical to a company's success (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). During the course of the conversations, leaders shared their definitions of creativity, and, at times, I shared the definition of creativity used in this dissertation. The participants shared their perspectives on how important creativity is to the success of this for-profit business. Leaders contributed reasons for creativity being a business imperative, such as remaining on the cutting edge to attract and retain clients and sustaining profitability. The participants generally reflected on the reality and messaging received about the importance of creativity in their work. Building a culture for creativity is necessary for knowledge industry organizations to be successful.

Data

The theme of creativity as a business imperative emerged from two codes pertaining to knowledge industry work: "business imperative" and "client expectations." The codes are shown in Table 2, along with the number of participants who supported the codes and the number of times the codes occurred in the interview transcripts. A total of seven participants contributed to this theme.

Table 2

Creativity is a Business Imperative

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Business Imperative	4	10
Client Expectations	5	5

Leaders shared their beliefs about the importance of creativity to the organization. They spoke broadly about creativity being instrumental to organizational viability and setting the

organization apart from rival firms. Leaders perceived that creativity is at the crux of the knowledge industry organization's success. Two leaders mentioned it being part of the company's DNA. Another leader, Mufasa, said it is an expectation of employees in the organization and a requirement for knowledge industry organizations. Christopher expressed that creativity is "core to the DNA of the company" and went on to say that as consultants, creativity is expected. Jeffrey added, "In the corporate world, creativity is the invaluable intangible." Rory explained the need for creativity expanded beyond solving clients' issues but also in "figuring out internal pain points." According to Lane, creativity is a critical factor and competency for professional services consultants to apply analytical and problem-solving skills. She stated client problems are "complex and sophisticated and evade" typical processes. One leader said creativity is critical for ensuring objectives are met and that employees are not stuck performing their work in the same repetitive manner. Two leaders, Lane and Mufasa, shared that creativity is an expectation of their clients. Logan pointed out, "Breakthrough solutions only come through creativity."

 Creativity is the organization's differential. Two leaders shared that not only does creativity set organizations apart from their competitors, but it also sets them apart from the trend of artificial intelligence. Jeffrey stated, "It's the one thing that helps to separate us from AI currently. It's a whole other realm of things we have to think about and how to integrate new technologies and also not lose that humanistic creativity that makes us 'special.'" Sophie noted that higher quality solutions and products evolve because of creativity. She further explained, "[We] think outside the box with what we're providing to our clients . . . we are not just providing the same old thing they are expecting."

Conversely, participants shared concerns about the urgency of encouraging creativity. Leaders shared creativity is encouraged but could be more deliberate by asking supervisors to recognize, encourage, and make time for it. Lane characterized the use of creativity: "We probably use it as an adjective, but we don't necessarily really embrace it as a competency that we develop in people."

Analysis

The theme of creativity as a business imperative amplifies the urgency and importance of creativity in knowledge industry corporations, reiterating Amabile's (1988) stance on creativity being the competitive edge for organizations. Creativity is a requirement to remain competitive and successful in business operations (Amabile, 1988; Kremer et al., 2019); without it, organizations would be out of business.

This theme is systemic and presents at the organizational level. Due to this theme existing at the organizational level and its ability to impact the viability of the organization, it has the potential to affect every aspect of the organization. It is also cross cutting, influencing each of the research questions and demonstrates the importance of creativity to organizational operations. Since workplace creativity is a business imperative, it is important to understand how the corporate knowledge industry business model can impact employee creativity. The next theme emerging from participants' responses was the impact of the business model in slowing workplace creativity.

Theme 2: The Business Model Can Hinder Creativity

The second theme emerged as an answer to the fourth research question asking leaders about their beliefs on the barriers to cultivating workplace creativity. This theme emerged from codes about the guard rails of the corporate consulting business operations. Moreover, leaders'

responses connected to this theme when they discussed elements of the business model that could impede workplace creativity.

Data

The theme of the business model hindering creativity emerged from six codes: "contract constraints," "time constraints," "budget," "utilization," "financial," and "matrix." There were 90 occurrences in the data, with all 10 participants contributing to this code. It is noteworthy that the "financial" code occurred 33 times in the interview transcripts, making it the highest occurring code in this study; nearly all participants mentioned it in their discussions. The codes and occurrences are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3

The Business Model Can Hinder Creativity

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Contract Constraints	8	13
Time Constraints	8	16
Budget	6	10
Utilization	8	12
Financial	9	33
Matrix	4	6

Leaders agreed creativity can have a financial impact on the organization. Elements of this construct are finances, contacts, and time constraints. One leader expressed, "With the growth of our organization have come more constraints, more processes, more policies to follow so . . . more administrative work."

Leaders described the presence of competing priorities. Most leaders said corporate messaging is supportive and encourages creativity; one pointed out the emphasis is on quality work. One leader explained overt messaging is supportive of creativity, and, on the surface, it is encouraged and expected. However, the functional reality is that systems are in place that contradict and prohibit creativity, such as time and money. She also went on to say that creativity is "not a number one goal . . . very tertiary, if even that goal." Similarly, April shared, "It's always a matter of balancing creativity and innovation with realism." Jeffrey mentioned the conflict between the efficient, "tried and true method" of the business model versus time to experiment and be creative.

Leaders recognized that clients hire them to meet specific needs and to produce specific deliverables or outcomes. In the knowledge industry, we sell clients our skills and expertise via time and/or deliverables. As the old adage goes, in the knowledge industry, "time is money." Building on that logic, two leaders commented on the financial burden of creativity due to the time commitment it requires. One leader acknowledged, "Creativity is costly." He noted commitment and buy-in take time. He explained the organization's financial models for creativity: "When years are good, we get a lot more space, when years are bad, we don't, which is ironic, because probably when they're bad is when we need to be the most creative." He went on to say that the financial burden is "probably the biggest limiting factor" for creativity. Rory got more specific and added that "collaboration is expensive."

Another aspect of the financial implications is the conflict between creativity and profitability. Two leaders spoke specifically about the messaging about profitability. One described the repeated messages to maintain high profits for projects: "We don't have as much time to be innovative and creative outside our projects as we might like because of messaging to

ensure profits are high." Another, Jeffrey, stated that when pursuing creativity, they were "fighting against our own profit margin."

Three leaders explained the biggest barrier to creativity is utilization targets. April stated she felt like the organization operated with a "harsh financial and utilization structure." When talking about utilization, another leader similarly shared, "I think this is a rock and a hard place, because to be a successful, profitable organization, we need billable hours." She went on to say she understood utilization takes priority.

Participants generally believed budget constraints impacted employee creativity. Project budgets are predetermined, sometimes even prior to winning the work. April stated, "With a tight budget, you don't have the same capability to be more creative." Lorelai mentioned with a defined budget, there is often no time or labor hours built in experiment and failure.

Most leaders expressed time being a significant challenge to workplace creativity. Lane expressed, "We can always find more money. We can do other things, but you can't find time, you know, time is a finite resource." Similarly, Christopher pointed out, "Time is our #1 challenge." Yet another leader, Lorelai, stated, "I think time's a big one. If you have more time to do something and more time to think about it, you're definitely gonna be able to come up with a more creative solution than when you are time crunched." Sophie noted sometimes it was most efficient to do what had been done before.

Most organizational staff were matrixed. Leaders noted they were busy working on multiple projects with competing priorities and deadlines. April shared, "We're all matrixed. So, we work on three to six projects." Paris expressed that being matrixed positively and negatively impacts creativity. She noted being matrixed positively impacts creativity because of interactions with different clients, topics, approaches, project managers, and more. Conversely, she added

that being matrixed negatively impacts creativity because of the time and energy it takes to switch mindsets from one topic to another, and it can be hard to set aside time. Paris also noted being matrixed can limit employees from getting into the details.

All participants working within the LOB attributed clients with influencing workplace creativity. Leaders generally reflected that clients may come with their own opinions, and, at times, preconceived notions of the best way to carry out the work, which may hinder the flexibility to offer a creative solution. Paris noted they were bound by needing to be a successful business, which was determined by the clients. She shared, "We are at the mercy of our clients." Logan added sometimes the clients "have very strong opinions on what should be done and what is acceptable." He further clarified, "If you do something that they do not feel is good, even though, like, it seems perfectly fine to you and other people on the team, like, they will let you know; they will tear you apart."

At times, contracts may be structured with predetermined steps to an outcome or deliverable. Mufasa reported when contracts are tightly defined, employees are limited in their ability to be creative. Leaders acknowledged their mandate to operate under their constraints and opinions of the organization and the project point of contact. Lorelai added, "We have to do what they hire us for. We bring thought, expertise, and guide and partner with our clients."

Participants expressed that creativity is situational. Four leaders shared within the division there are a variety of clients, contract types, and tasks across many markets and services, all of which could hamper transferability. Paris noted, "We have so many different projects, so many different contracts, that have so many different needs. And so, it's hard to take a blanketed approach to things." April added,

Every client and situation is different. Using a cookie-cutter approach isn't realistic. If

this were 100 years ago, and we're working an assembly line, sure, everything needs to

be exactly the same. But jobs are not assembly lines anymore.

The organization has tried to operationalize creativity by making it a disciplined approach. Two

leaders pointed out a corporate level team was created to help employees translate creative

efforts into practice.

Analysis

The theme of the business model hindering creativity illuminates the nuanced workplace

context in knowledge industry corporations (Woodman et al., 1993). Moreover, the theme

reflects the inherent dynamics of the organizational operating system. The theme is systemic in

nature and can influence all of the research questions that live at the leadership and individual

levels.

In reflecting on the theoretical framework guiding this study, Bolman and Deal (2017)

recognized all organizations are complex. They asserted, "Every group evolves a structure that

may help or hinder effectiveness" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 111). The authors offered six

assumptions as foundational to the structural frame. Two assumptions speak to the importance of

an effective organizational structure. For example, assumption three stated, "Suitable forms of

coordination and control ensure that diverse efforts of individuals and units mesh," while

assumption five stated, "Effective structure fits an organization's current circumstances

(including its strategy, technology, workforce, and environment)" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 48).

While understanding that this structure is helpful for organizations, the authors recognized, at

times, the structure may be suboptimal and unavoidable, at which point organizations will need

to take actions to address the situation. This is outlined in assumption six, which stated, "When

performance suffers from structural flaws, the remedy is problem solving and restructuring" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 48).

Due to the organization's business model having the ability to slow workplace creativity, leaders of the LOB have identified and built an alternate, flattened hierarchical structure that aids in fostering workplace creativity. The next theme will discuss how the flattened hierarchy influences workplace creativity.

Theme 3: Flattened Hierarchy Incubates Workplace Creativity

The third theme emerged as an answer to the third research question asking leaders about their beliefs of current practices that promote creativity in the workplace. This theme was developed with codes pertaining to the LOB infrastructure. The codes were identified from participants' statements about how the infrastructure helps to facilitate creativity through collaboration and autonomy.

Data

The third theme of the flattened hierarchy incubating workplace creativity emerged from three codes: "flattened hierarchy," "collaboration," and "autonomy." All 10 leader participants contributed to the code, with a total of 48 occurrences in the data. The "collaboration" code was the most prominent code in this theme, occurring two and a half times more frequently than the next highest code. The codes and occurrences are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4

Flattened Hierarchy Incubates Workplace Creativity

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Flattened hierarchy	6	11
Collaboration	7	28
Autonomy	6	9

Organizational infrastructure can contribute to workplace creativity. Leaders within the LOB generally believed the LOB's hierarchy positively impacts creativity. Five leaders described the effects of the flatter hierarchy. Lorelai asserted that the flatter hierarchy removes "artificial divisions and silos." Two leaders explained a benefit of lacking hierarchical walls is leaders being accessible to all staff in the division and LOB. Jeffrey reported leaders' "willingness and availability to talk to anyone" promotes creativity. Sophie said because of the lower hierarchy, people are treated as equals. Lorelai added with less bureaucracy, there is a lowered power differential, which contributes to people feeling connected and valued. She explained creativity can be a side effect of connectedness. Similarly, Mufasa said hierarchy "can squash the ability for us to creatively address some of these emerging cross-cutting challenges when [we] think too much about where people sit and not enough about how the work needs to get done."

Leaders pointed out collaboration can promote creativity because it brings people together. Jeffrey affirmed, "Trying to be creative in a vacuum is incredibly hard." April shared her experience that a person's level is not the determining factor for collaboration. She noted that if someone in the LOB believes one has a good idea or is creative, they will actively seek this individual's input. Lorelai pointed out with a flatter organization, there is less bureaucracy,

which lowers the power differential and aids in collaboration. One participant noted using

meetings for collaboration, strategizing, and addressing challenges and other technology for

routine project updates enhances collaboration and creativity. April shared when working in

groups, there is a feeling they are all working on it together and the attitude is "let's see how

creative we can get."

Lastly, leaders generally noted the autonomy they have in managing their projects

promotes creativity. Three leaders shared they have the latitude to manage their projects and

receive guidance and direction when needed. April called out her decision-making authority.

Lorelai noted that autonomy is indirectly promoted by the flattened organizational norm in which

anyone can interact with the LOB leader, there is a lack of pressure to stay within one's role, and

one is encouraged to go above and beyond to add value to projects for the client. Mufasa

explained,

> It's not about telling my people what to do. It's about giving them a safe, trusted sounding
>
> board to run their ideas by and help to sharpen and make them refine them, and then
>
> clearing the field of play so that they can go faster and bring the best of who they are to
>
> the table.

Analysis

This augmentation of typical organizational hierarchy facilitates practices that allow

leaders to promote creativity. Findings align with Woodman et al.'s (1993) research that

creativity manifests within the individual but is a consequence of the environmental context. In

addition, Bolman and Deal (2017) posited an organization's structure is the framework to

achieve its desired outcomes, and the "structure both enhances and constrains what an

organization can do" (p. 52). They further explained,

One critical structural challenge is how to hold an organization together without holding

it back. If structure is too loose, people go astray, with little sense of what others are

doing. But rigid structures stifle flexibility and encourage people to waste time trying to

beat the system. (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 74)

This information mirrors other researchers' findings that a more horizontal hierarchy with

decentralized power promotes empowerment, autonomy, and collaboration, therefore positively

impacting employee creativity (Bérubé & Demers, 2019; Collin et al., 2018; Morlà-Folch et al.,

2019; Ogbeibu et al., 2018). Within the flattened infrastructure, leaders are able to impact the

situational dynamics through their behaviors. The next theme will further discuss leader

behaviors that facilitate a culture of creativity.

Theme 4: Leader Behaviors Facilitate a Culture of Psychological Safety

This theme was developed with codes pertaining to the elements of psychological safety.

The codes were identified from participants' statements about workplace norms and how a

culture of creativity is established. Leader behaviors establish behavioral norms.

Data

The fourth theme developed through the identification of seven codes. These seven codes

occurred 98 times in the data from nine participants. The "freedom to fail" code occurred

significantly more frequently than the other codes in this theme, with a total of 25 appearances.

The codes and occurrences are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

Leader Behaviors Facilitate a Culture of Psychological Safety

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Psychological Safety	7	16
Trust	7	14
Relationships	6	13
Freedom to Fail	7	25
Freedom for Open Communication	2	3
Taking Risks	6	12
Vulnerability	3	5
Curiosity	6	10
Voice	4	4

Leaders generally believed they worked in psychologically safe environments. Leaders emphasized relationships, trust, freedom to fail, and curiosity as components of psychological safety, and generally, those concepts were intertwined in the discussion. Jeffrey noted, "Intellectual and psychological safety is the best thing" for promoting creativity.

Many leaders cited relationships as being foundational to a culture of psychological safety. Jeffrey stated, "Building a relationship with people first is the foundation for everything." Lorelai added that relationship building is important for engagement and making work more enjoyable. Leaders noted efforts to get to know employees. Two leaders noted relationships promote creativity by allowing leaders to get to know employees as individuals. When discussing relationships, Rory expressed, "It's not just being curious about another person's

point of view, but also like really seeing them and understanding, kind of creating that sense of belonging."

All study participants within the division noted they had good relationships with their supervisors. Leaders noted that relationships foster trust and are a benefit of personal relationships. Jeffrey associated trust with a "bubble of comfort." Lorelai noted trust is fostered through professional and respectful relationships, with friendly and comfortable, respectful, professional environments. April noted, "Building trust is important" and "everyone trusts each other."

Participants mentioned vulnerability and a supportive culture for failure. One leader spoke extensively on the freedom to fail culture. He contended this culture "is at the core of the company. . . . [It] is a life blood of the company. Without it, we're in deep trouble." He went on to say the division is proactive and works to create opportunities for employees to take risks and experiment and recognized that it is important to celebrate the successes and failures of employees' creative efforts. He added employees are "able to fail without negative repercussions or severely negative repercussions" and noted that "in a professional workforce, [they] will only experiment as much as they believe they won't be punished."

Another leader summed up vulnerability and the culture of failure: "Failing is an integral piece of learning. If you're not failing at some stuff, you're not going outside the box." He asserted, "We're all fallible." In reference to vulnerability, he spoke about being vulnerable as an individual and "opening yourself up to the possibility of doing something different" in addition to the role of leaders "getting people to open up and take chances and be vulnerable with you."

Analysis

Findings from this study support the literature cited in Chapter Two's "Workplace Norms that Support Creativity" section. Norms of respect, trust, and vulnerability promote relationships and contribute to psychological safety, which enhances employees' curiosity and likelihood of experimentation (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018; A.S.-Y. Chen & Hou, 2016; Chow, 2018; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Lyndon et al., 2020; Sanda & Arthur, 2017). The findings contribute to answering research questions one, two, and three of this study. They also suggest that leaders have been able to create situational dynamics within their LOB and teams that promote creativity.

In applying Bolman and Deal's (2017) four frames, two align with this theme: the human resource and symbolic frames. The human resource frame focuses on how organizations can achieve their desired outcomes while ensuring workplace norms and relationships promote a sense of security. This security or psychological safety is a foundational strategy for progressive organizations. Bolman and Deal (2017) noted "teams with psychological safety learned better, and teams that learned better performed better" (pp. 172–173). Additionally, the symbolic frame looks at an organization's "beliefs, values, and customs" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 258), which is the organization's culture and its importance. This frame is about how meaning is made. "Leaders serve a deeper and more durable function if they recognize that team building at its heart is a spiritual understanding" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 277).

Through the effective implementation of behavioral norms, leaders have been able to address the situation dynamics and establish a culture of psychological safety. These behaviors encourage a collegial workplace climate, promoting employee engagement and retention. The next theme will discuss how this workplace climate and leaders consistently seeking and valuing employee ideas and perspectives impact workplace creativity.

Theme 5: Leader Behaviors Encourage Ideation

This theme was developed with codes pertaining to soliciting and valuing others' ideas. The codes were identified from participants' statements about leaders' role in fostering creativity, practices that promote creativity, and workplace norms. Ideation is essential for creativity. Leader behaviors have effectively created the norm for idea sharing. Employees are comfortable being curious and sharing ideas because of the culture leaders create.

Data

The theme of leader behaviors encouraging ideation is derived from seven codes. All 10 participants contributed input, with a total of 113 occurrences in the data. The code "soliciting ideas and feedback" was significantly higher in occurrences than the other codes and appeared 25 times in the transcript data. The second highest occurring code was "new ideas." The codes and occurrences are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Leader Behaviors Encourage Ideation

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Soliciting Ideas and Feedback	9	25
Bouncing Ideas Off	5	14
Ideas Values	3	5
Ideation	6	9
Brainstorming	7	13
Not Shut Ideas Down	3	8
New Ideas	7	19
Curiosity	6	10
Inquisitive	4	10

Most participants commented on the culture of leaders soliciting ideas and feedback. Five leaders referenced being a sounding board. Three leaders noted their job was to create an environment where employees felt safe sharing their ideas. Lorelai noted she saw her role as "as an enabler and an acceptor, but . . . it's definitely not a mandatory thing that I do purposefully." Mufasa concluded,

It's not about telling my people what to do. It's about giving them a safe, trusted sounding board to run their ideas by and help to sharpen and make them refine them, and then clearing the field of play so that they can go faster and bring the best of who they are to the table.

Leaders generally believed brainstorming is a valuable part of developing solutions and fostered creativity. Three leaders described brainstorming as gathering as many ideas as possible and considering others' perspectives and points of view. Paris added clarity that diversity of thought, which occurs during brainstorming, positively impacts creativity. Leaders also cautioned that they felt it was important to not shut employees down to promote creativity. Even so, Jeffrey acknowledged all ideas are not equal. He explained, "Some might not be great; some might be really good."

Most leaders spoke to the culture of ideation. They mentioned being open to and valuing ideas. Leaders maintained that the LOB leadership have always been open to ideas, value input from others, and open to evolution. Jeffrey characterized the culture of ideation: "It's not that dead end kind of behavior that kills creativity because it says, I don't want your input. I don't want to hear what thoughts you have on this matter, because I've already made up my mind." Leaders also shared the importance of modeling the wanted behaviors of ideation.

Conversely, a leader from outside the LOB spoke of the need for employees to bring forth ideas that were fleshed out. He stated, "It's a permissive culture where everybody has this ability to bring creativity and their own ideas forward." He goes on to explain with a culture of "leader-doers . . . who are heavily involved in execution of the work and driving the organization forward that they have limited capacity to co-create ideas, but they can respond, help refine, and support."

Analysis

Ideation is foundational to creativity and a component of inquisitiveness and collaboration. Findings from this theme align with information presented in Chapter Two's literature review in the "Workplace Norms that Foster Creativity" and "Employee Innovative Work Behaviors" sections. This theme contributes to answering the first three research questions of this study. As mentioned in the last theme, Bolman and Deal's (2017) human resource and symbolic frames align to this theme as well. The human resource frame considers the relationship between employees and the organization, while the symbolic frame analyzes the values and customs that have permeated the culture of the organization. These situational dynamics create an effect on the culture of ideation and promote organizational success. The culture of ideation and sharing perspectives is a workplace norm leaders build to enhance creativity. Secure relationships positively influence ideation (Carnevale et al., 2017). Findings from this theme echo Gupta and Chandra's (2017) assertion that upper and middle managers lack a substantial difference in the impact of their relationships on employee creativity. The next theme will discuss individual characteristics employees possess that can aid in their individual and group creativity in the workplace.

Theme 6: Individual Characteristics Contribute to Workplace Creativity

This theme was developed with codes pertaining to characteristics leaders perceived to influence workplace creativity. The codes were identified from participants' statements about individual traits and dispositions employees possess that can contribute to their inclination and participation in creative events.

Data

This theme surfaced from 12 codes pertaining to individual characteristics that contribute to workplace creativity. Contributions from all participants helped create the theme, with a total of 70 occurrences in the interview data. Most codes had single-digit occurrences in the transcripts; only one, curiosity, appeared 10 times. The codes and occurrences are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7

Individual Characteristics Contribute to Workplace Creativity

Codes	No. of supporting participants	No. of occurrences in the data
Open Minded	5	7
Open to Feedback	3	3
Open to Fail	5	7
Open to Experience	3	3
Open to Learn	6	9
Confidence	3	3
Curiosity	6	10
Empathy	1	3
Flexibility	5	9
Mindset	3	5
Motivation	4	5
Initiative	5	6

Individual characteristics that people bring to the organization impact their creative

abilities. The employee characteristics attributed to fostering creativity mentioned in this theme

are intertwined. Five codes speak to various aspects of employees' openness. Leaders shared an

open-mindset facilitated creativity. Sophie pointed to employees' openness to learning new

things and being inquisitive influenced employee creativity. She went on to explain employees'

openness including understanding their idea may not be the best one, may not be feasible, or

accepting that it may not work as well as they had hoped.

Another heavily mentioned characteristic is employee curiosity and inquisitiveness.

Leaders generally spoke about the need to be curious in order to be creative, and some noted

curiosity's alignment with the organization's core values. April stated, "If people aren't feeling

curious, we're never to get more creative. We need people to constantly be thinking about how

does this work. How does this happen? Why do we do it this way?"

Paris spoke to employees' initiative and flexibility and how they apply to creativity in the

workplace. She noted, "We have the templates and the frameworks and the ability to do things.

But it's that fine balance between utilizing some of those materials and information that we

already have and bringing your own additional flair to it." Another leader, Sophie, expressed the

need to "think outside the box with what we're providing to our clients that we are not just

providing the same old thing they are expecting."

Analysis

The findings of this theme reflect much of the research presented in the literature review

in the "Employee Characteristics" section. The behaviors and dispositions individuals bring with

them to the workplace can impact their creativity and their participation in creative group events.

These findings tangentially support the research questions and provide context for the other themes and forthcoming recommendations.

When applying Bolman and Deal's (2017) four frames model, the human resource frame consists of four core assumptions. The second assumption states, "People and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 118). Organizations need people with the skills and abilities to be successful. This theme speaks to the characteristics and abilities employees need to embrace creativity in the workplace.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a broad look at the data gathered from participant interviews to better understand their perspectives and experiences related to workplace creativity. Findings generated with the help of Atlas.ti software (Version 23.3) during the systematic coding process were presented and analyzed. The findings were organized and presented by theme; six themes were discussed and supporting evidence from participant interviews was detailed.

Themes from this study resonate at all levels of the organization. Two themes manifest at the organizational level, three reside at the leader level, and the final theme manifests at the employee level. There is a juxtaposition between the first two themes: the business imperative of creativity and the business model hindering creativity. The next three themes assert that leaders can be successful in mitigating the limitations associated with the business model. The final theme speaks to employees' individual characteristics that innately guide their creative endeavors. The next chapter, Chapter Five, will take a broader view of this study and provide recommendations for practice and future scholarship.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

This study investigated leader perceptions and experiences of workplace creativity by interviewing 10 leaders in one American-based knowledge industry corporation. The study was conducted in the context of one division with a geographically dispersed workforce. Using a qualitative research design, I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?

2. What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on creativity in the workplace?

3. What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to cultivate workplace creativity?

4. What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?

Although a large body of scholarship has examined components of workplace creativity, a limited amount of research has focused on creativity in knowledge industry corporations. Through this study, the participants' experiences provide qualitative data that will add to the scholarly conversation of how leaders can promote creativity in the knowledge industry workplace. The hope is that their experiences may inform corporate leaders and researchers in exploring the situational dynamics required to promote creativity in the workplace.

This chapter contains a summary of study findings, implications for corporate policy and practice, and recommendations for future scholarship. These recommendations were shaped by the research questions and based on the scholarship in Chapter Two and the study findings detailed in Chapter Four. Recommendations focus on policy, practice, and scholarship.

As I conclude this work, I begin by commending the participating organization for their commitment to creativity and innovation. I must express my sincere appreciation for their interest in and allowing me to conduct this internal sampling to study creativity in our workplace. This speaks to their commitment of continuous improvement and their interest in not only creativity in the workplace, but also the perceptions and realities of their employees. I appreciated the excitement, time, and generosity of the leaders who participated in this study for sharing their insights and perceptions. I hope to share these findings with corporate leaders.

Summary of the Current Study Findings

Researchers posit workplace creativity is essential across all levels of any organization (Allahar, 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Anderson et al., 2014). This qualitative case study identified 10 leaders at various levels of one division in a knowledge industry corporation. Participant leaders shared their beliefs, insights, and experiences surrounding creativity in the workplace through semi-structured interviews. Through analysis of the interview transcripts, themes began to emerge from the data. In all, six themes were identified: (a) creativity is a business imperative, (b) the business model can hinder creativity, (c) flattened hierarchy incubates workplace creativity, (d) leader behaviors facilitate a culture of psychological safety, (e) leader behaviors encourage ideation, and (f) individual characteristics contribute to workplace creativity.

Themes became apparent at the organizational, leader, and individual employee levels. The first theme to emerge was creativity is a business imperative for the knowledge industry. This theme was overarching and foundational in answering all four research questions and encompasses all other themes. Participants understood that to remain competitive in the rapidly

changing corporate sector, organizations needed a creative workforce. Participants noted organizations had to build and foster a culture of creativity to remain successful.

The second theme is the organizational business model can hinder creativity. This theme speaks specifically to the operational constraints faced by knowledge industry corporations that can impede workplace creativity. Understanding the model is not likely to change, leaders focused their comments on the responsibility leadership has to navigate these obstacles.

Building off those constraints, the next three themes looked at ways leaders have been successful in mitigating those constraints to successfully foster creativity in the organization. First, a flattened hierarchy incubates workplace creativity. This augmented hierarchical structure promotes autonomy and collaboration; collaboration was a prominent code appearing in leader transcripts. The next theme found that leader behaviors facilitate a culture of psychological safety. Leaders mentioned many elements of psychological safety in their interviews and believed they worked in psychologically safe environments. They spoke about behaviors of those in leadership positions setting organizational behavioral norms and those norms establishing the culture of creativity. The last theme that emerged about leader behaviors was that they could encourage ideation. Ideation is essential for creativity, and leaders generally believed their leaders were interested in and valued their ideas; therefore, they were comfortable freely sharing their ideas.

Finally, the last theme was at the individual level. It states individual characteristics contribute to workplace creativity. Leaders shared individual traits and dispositions they believe manifest an employee's propensity for creativity at the individual and group levels. These six themes provide a framework to consider how findings from this study can translate into tangible

results for knowledge industry corporations. In the next section, recommendations will be

offered to support these corporations in developing policies that promote workplace creativity.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy

This section outlines recommendations for organizational leadership consideration when

investigating company-wide, strategic policies to increase workplace creativity. These

recommendations were guided by the research questions and based on insights gained from the

completion of this study through a review of current scholarship and themes that emerged from

participant data. Knowledge industry corporations would do well to consider how to actively

mitigate the culture of their business imperative, business model, and traditional hierarchy can

impose in organizations.

Dedicate Time for Creativity

Data from this study have established creativity as a business imperative; therefore, I

recommend companies be creative in ensuring employees have the time to allow for curiosity

and creativity in their work. This recommendation connects to answering research question four,

which explores what participants believe are the barriers to cultivating workplace creativity.

Companies should consider implementing a new budgeting policy to intentionally build in 5-

10% creative time into their project proposals. This recommendation would be acted upon by

executive leadership at the organizational level. When building the budget template, the pricer

would load the predetermined percentage to labor hours for every bid staff position. This

recommendation for creating time for creative thinking in proposal development would allocate

the necessary resources to ensure all employees experienced some relief from the stringent

budget constraints mentioned in leader interviews. This recommendation would help ensure all

employees had time in their work schedules for problem solving, ideation, experimentation, and

collaboration. Companies would do well to include this new approach in their project proposals as a differentiator highlighting the organizational commitment to innovation and creativity, providing their clients with the best ideas as opposed to the cookie-cutter, standard approaches.

Examine Hierarchical Structure

The data from this study signal that further consideration of organizational hierarchy could positively impact workplace creativity. I recommend corporations evaluate their current hierarchical structure and explore if an alternate hierarchical structure would be advantageous. This recommendation connects to research question three, which asks what participants believe are the current organizational practices that cultivate workplace creativity. This recommendation could require action by the leadership at the organizational, division, and LOB levels. This recommendation advocates for fewer organizational levels when it makes sense for the work. This recommendation has the potential to reduce the power differential and makes leaders more accessible. It also promotes more personal relationships between leadership and employees and between peers, which will positively impact organizational culture, psychological safety, and collaboration.

Leadership Style Assessment and Development

Leaders shared their ideas of characteristics they believe fostered employees' creativity as a part of this study. Many of the characteristics leaders mentioned align with the perspectives of authentic and inclusive leadership styles, including the need for strong relationships, psychological safety, and empathy. I recommend knowledge industry leaders complete leadership style assessments and information about leadership styles when they are promoted or hired in leadership roles. This recommendation would provide leaders across the organization a better understanding of their individual leadership style. This recommendation connects to

research questions one and two, which seeks participants' beliefs of their role in fostering creativity and their perceptions of the impact their leadership has on workplace creativity. This recommendation would require action at the executive level to implement the policy in partnership with the learning and development team. As a result, leaders would have the tools necessary to practice leadership techniques that improve employee creativity.

Develop a Comprehensive Professional Development Strategy

Leaders in this study believed creativity can be learned. Additionally, data indicated employees across organizations could benefit from ongoing experiences to increase their personal skills and abilities. In this light, I recommend knowledge industry corporations develop and implement an intentional, comprehensive, ongoing professional development suite centered on individual and group creativity. This policy development would allocate the appropriate time and funding needed to support the endeavor as well as the framework for implementation. This recommendation connects to research questions one, two, and four, which address participants' beliefs regarding their own role and the impact of their leadership on fostering workplace creativity, along with the barriers to workplace creativity. This recommendation would require implementation at the executive organizational leadership level, as well as the collaboration of the learning and development leaders to build out and sustain the effort. This recommendation will help ensure creativity is at the forefront of business operations and support a shift in workforce thinning to challenge norms and develop a culture of creativity.

This multipronged, global, ongoing, professional development strategy would require all employees to participate and emphasize the importance of creativity and provide opportunities to develop and practice necessary skills for being creative. Professional development would contain a variety of opportunities, from asynchronous to face-to-face training. These initiatives would

benefit from a mix of employees in each grouping, from various divisions and LOBS, and across all levels of the organization to promote a culture of learners and build relationships across the organization. The leadership component of the training should also include practical information they can use to cultivate a culture of creativity. Opportunities could include mentoring, communities of practice, and books studies on topics such as leadership, innovation, creativity, and ideation.

As a component of their global professional development strategy, corporations should consider establishing an annual, hybrid, corporate-wide "conference day." Sessions would be of various formats with a focus on promising practices and ideation sessions to positively impact current strategies and client offerings. Sessions could include solicited sessions where colleagues share their winning approaches and creative wins to inspire creative thinking on elements for potential replication; think tanks sessions for springboarding new ideas; collaboration meetings; and small group sessions focused on building skills necessary for creativity.

In addition to the policy considerations presented, organizations would do well to consider the daily practices that impact creativity in the workplace. In the next section, recommendations for practice will be presented.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

This section considers the daily operations in organizations that influence employees' abilities to be creative in their work. Findings from the current study demonstrate the necessity for knowledge industry corporations to improve the day-to-day practices to enhance the creativity of their employees. These recommendations were guided by the research questions, literature review, and findings from leader interviews.

Encourage Collaboration

Data from this study suggest collaboration promotes creativity. I recommend leaders continuously seek opportunities for their teams to collaborate. This recommendation ties to research questions one and three, which explore participants' beliefs of their role in fostering creativity and practices that cultivate workplace creativity. This recommendation would facilitate employees having ample opportunities to work with others to practice ideation, brainstorming, and building relationships with their peers and leadership. This recommendation urges implementation across all leadership levels to provide numerous and varied collaborative experiences.

Collaboration can take many forms for in-person and virtual employees. A further recommendation is that team meetings focus on collaborative efforts to foster ideation and a feeling of trust, which will help support culture of community and creativity. To build a collaborative infrastructure, additional strategies leaders could implement include in-person events (when feasible) as well as mentoring or project buddies to support ongoing, one-on-one relationships for problem solving.

Amplify Creative Culture

Study findings indicate knowledge industry corporations are complex. I recommend corporations take a multi-pronged approach to understanding their complexity and develop a strategic approach to thinking about organizational change when decisions are needed on organizational culture. This recommendation ties to all four research questions, which explore participants' beliefs regarding their role and the role of leaders in fostering creativity in the workplace, as well as practices that hinder and cultivate such creativity. This recommendation would require intentional, ongoing participation of all organizational leaders. This

recommendation would ensure leaders are actively revisiting and refining their efforts to build and sustain a creative culture. To foster this effort, potential strategies leaders could take include purposeful formation of workgroups focused on aspects of the organizational culture and the impact of organizational change on the creative culture. This recommendation would allocate the needed time to ensure that leaders are cognizant of their ongoing efforts to deliberately shape organizational culture and understand how the change management process could influence the creative culture.

Understand Employees Feelings of Psychological Safety

Findings of this study show that psychological safety is the crux of setting a climate that promotes creativity. To impact psychological safety, I recommend organizations take multiple steps to ensure that all staff feel safe, trusted, and empowered. This recommendation would be implemented across various levels of the organization. This recommendation aligns with research questions two and three, which seek participants' beliefs regarding the impact of their leadership on workplace creativity and practices that cultivate this creativity. One recommended strategy is an annual mixed-method survey of staff. This strategy would be executed at the executive leadership level in coordination with their human resources team. This recommendation would identify strategies employees across levels of the organization feel promote their creativity that could be shared as promising practices and to gauge areas for continued exploration and growth. This recommendation would help support the organization's creative culture and employee psychological safety. A second recommendation—at the division, LOB, and project levels—is that leaders attend project meetings as a contributor or team member rather than in a position of leadership. The leaders' roles would be that of every other member of the team while modeling vulnerability, helping to spur ideation and out-of-the-box thinking by

challenging assumptions, participating in brainstorming, and giving employees autonomy in decision making. Through this safe space to collect ideas, the team could also identify new approaches, when it is appropriate to streamline processes, and ways to foster additional collaboration.

Implications and Recommendations for Scholarship

This study has focused on workplace creativity through the beliefs and experiences of leaders from a single knowledge industry corporation. While the themes extracted from their interview transcripts provide insights into their current experiences related to creativity in the workplace, additional research is needed to provide a better, more refined understanding of creativity in knowledge industry corporations. In this section, recommendations are offered to further the scholarship surrounding creativity in the knowledge industry workplace. The recommendations for future scholarship tie to all four research questions: exploring participants' beliefs regarding their role and the role of leaders in fostering workplace creativity, as well as practices that hinder and cultivate this creativity.

This study drew on the experiences and perceptions of 10 corporate leaders in one knowledge industry corporation. While the themes gleaned from these conversations provide insight into current practice, further research is needed to improve the understanding of workplace creativity. I recommend replicating this study in the knowledge industry. Additionally, future research would benefit from increasing the sample size and scope of the study. By expanding the scope to include voices from different divisions within an organization and increasing the number of participants representing all levels of the organization, researchers would gain a larger perspective and gain greater validity in the data set.

Furthermore, I recommend additional research to carry out the original project design initially proposed for Bartlett and Vavrus' (2017) comparative case study. To my knowledge, this would be the first research study in the knowledge industry to apply this international education methodology in the corporate setting. Their approach to qualitative research allows the researcher to follow the phenomenon and examine the complexity of the social context and culture while understanding the historical and power progression over time. By employing their multi-axis approach to understanding workplace creativity, evidence would emerge about how creativity is fostered across the micro, macro, and meso levels of the organization.

Conclusion

Creativity is, and will remain, essential to the success of knowledge industry corporations. This study emphasized leader behaviors that cultivate a workplace culture of creativity. Leaders in this study shared their beliefs and experiences related to creativity in the workplace. Commonalities existed in how leaders perceived workplace creativity with six key themes emerging. These findings will contribute to the years of existing scholarship on creativity in the workplace and begin to fill a gap in research on workplace creativity in knowledge industry corporations. I believe corporations should take action on practices research has proven to be effective in promoting creativity in the workplace. Ultimately, this study points at the need for leaders to acknowledge the constraints of the knowledge industry business model and actively seek ways to mitigate those challenges to positively impact organizational culture.

Following the completion of this dissertation, I will share these findings with the participants who graciously gave of their time to make it possible. I am also eager to convene a group of trusted advisors to continue to refine and advance this research in preparation for the next level of dissemination either for publication, presentation, or consultation to broader

corporate entities. Through that work, I hope to build awareness of the impacts of leader behaviors on workplace creativity and support continued growth and development of leaders to foster creative environments.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: A Comparative Case Study of Leader Perceptions of Cultivating Workplace Creativity

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled *A Comparative Case Study of Leader Perceptions of Cultivating Workplace Creativity*. The study is being done by doctoral candidate researcher Karen Davis Platt of Concordia University, Saint Paul and an employee at Dragonfly Consulting. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Bruce Locklear of Concordia University, St. Paul, MN. Below you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in this study. Please read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Why is the researcher doing this study?

The purpose of this research study is to better understand how corporate leaders can successfully support creativity in the workforce in the knowledge industry. This study is being conducted as part of the doctoral studies of the researcher, and the results of the study will be presented in a dissertation. The goals of the study are to understand participant perceptions and experiences of creativity in the workplace.

This study seeks insights from corporate leaders across the organization. It centers on their perspectives and experiences cultivating and fostering creativity in the workforce and asks the following questions:

1. *What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?*
2. *What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on creativity in the workplace?*
3. *What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to cultivate workplace creativity?*
4. *What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?*

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

The participants selected for this study are leaders in one knowledge industry corporation, Dragonfly Consulting. Inclusion criteria for this study requires that participants be identified as leaders in the organization. Two leaders will be identified and recruited for their roles in the organization. Additional leaders will be recruited from within two lines of business in the same division (not to exceed 12 participants).

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

● Participate in a semi-structured interview over the next 2 months. Each interview will last about 45-60 minutes. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom to allow the video and/or recording to be easily transcribed.
● Review the researcher's initial interview analysis document and participate in a 30-minute follow-up interview to discuss the researcher's initial interpretations and ensure accurate representation of your contributions.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me, and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw from this study at any point; however, once data is aggregated into larger themes, withdrawal of your interview data will no longer be possible, as it will have informed the analysis. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with your employer (Dragonfly Consulting), the researcher, or Concordia University, St. Paul.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and not more than what is experienced daily in discussing your work experiences with colleagues and leaders. There are no foreseen legal, physical, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. However, due to the subject matter, there is the potential for some emotional risks (e.g., feelings of sadness or anxiety) when discussing their thoughts and experiences. Because the researcher is also employed in the same organization, there is the possibility of feeling slight social risk with a little hesitation and concern to sharing your personal thoughts and workplace experiences with someone you may have, or possibility could work with in the future.

What are the benefits that may happen if I am in this study?

Participants could potentially benefit from participating in this study. The researcher, who is employed at Dragonfly Consulting, will provide a link to a video debrief presentation of research results to all study participants with information that could influence your practice. Indirect benefits include increasing the understanding of how organizations and leaders can foster creativity in the workplace and influence the future practices and policies of corporate organizations to better support their creativity and innovation initiatives, which could positively impact employee experiences and satisfaction.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

Participants will not receive any compensation for participating in this study. However, you will have an opportunity to receive a presentation of my research results.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

I will protect your information by not sharing participant's identities or any identifying information about you or your individual contributions to anyone, including anyone at Dragonfly Consulting. All information will be shared in aggregate.

Every effort will be made to de-identify all data. When I write up the study, I will only use the pseudonyms chosen by the participants prior to participation. Furthermore, I will not disclose any identifying information about any locations associated with data collection.

A pseudonym will also be used for the organization. I will delete audio and/or video recordings once the interviews are transcribed and will keep all digital data in password protected drives. I will keep one document that links the true identities to the pseudonyms—this document will be stored on a separate drive and destroyed when the study is complete. Hard copies of any study files will be kept secure in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office.

Could my information be used for future research?

No, your data will not be used or distributed for future research purposes.

How can I get more information?

The main researcher conducting this study is Karen Davis Platt, a Doctoral Candidate at Concordia University, St. Paul, MN. Please ask any questions you have now and if you have questions later, you may contact Karen Davis Platt at davispk@csp.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact Dragonfly Consulting's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at irb@Dragonfly Consulting.com. You may also access their website at: Institutional Review Board - Home (sharepoint.com).

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

☐ I consent to participate in the study.

I agree to be:

☐Video recorded

☐ Audio recorded

Demographic Data:

Tenure at organization: _____ years

Are you a matrixed employee: ☐Yes

☐ No

Entering my name, email address, and date below indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered, and I am at least 18 years of age.

_____

Participant Name   **Date**

_____

Email Address

<u>**Karen Denise Davis Platt**</u>

Researcher

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Email

Hello!

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Karen Davis Platt, and I am a doctoral candidate researcher at Concordia University-Saint Paul. I have also been a Dragonfly Consulting employee for the last decade. Because of my background working with teachers to promote creativity, and this decade of experience working in the corporate sector in the knowledge industry, I am interested in better understanding the perceptions and experiences of corporate leaders, like you, fostering creativity in the workplace.

You are receiving this email because I am recruiting leaders in your line of business to participate in my dissertation research study. I understand project work keeps you busy, yet I hope you will consider speaking with me about your thoughts and experiences. I think leader perspectives are particularly valuable in understanding how creativity is cultivated. My hope is that your insights can ultimately help inform future professional development, policy, practice, and scholarship.

Participants who are selected to participate should expect to spend approximately one hour in a virtual semi-structured interview conducted via Zoom. Following the interview, participants will receive my initial analysis of their interview and be asked to participate in an approximately 30-minute Zoom meeting discussion of the document and provide any feedback, clarification, or additional information on the conclusions drawn from the discussion. Interviews will be conducted and analyzed over the next several months with the intent to finalize my research in late 2023 or early 2024. You can choose to be removed from this study until I begin aggregating your interview data into themes.

 If you are interested in participating in this study, which I am currently calling *A Comparative Case Study of Leader Perceptions of Cultivating Workplace Creativity*, please use the Google Forms link below to learn more about the study, read and electronically sign the informed consent, and enter your email address. I will then provide you with additional information about the study and answer any questions you have. If you are still willing to participate, once consent to participate is given, I will provide you with a Calendly link to schedule a convenient interview

time and send you a Zoom interview link. I would like to emphasize that your participation is completely confidential and that your decision to participate will have no impact on your relationship with your employer (Dragonfly Consulting), me, or my university. Participant identities will be protected via the use of a pseudonym in all study documents and forthcoming dissertation. And know that no identifying information will be provided to Dragonfly Consulting about the participants of this study.

[Google Form Link](#)

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. Your time, experiences, and insights are valuable. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at davispk@csp.edu.

Take good care,

Karen Davis Platt

Doctoral Candidate, Concordia University, St Paul

Appendix C: Interview Question Matrices

Leader Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Interview Questions
Opening Questions	● Please describe your role in the organization.
RQ1: What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?	● What do you believe is your role in promoting creativity in your team? 　○ Can you give me examples of how you promote creativity in your team? ● What do you think are benefits of creativity in the work?
RQ2: What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on creativity in the workplace?	● What do you believe impacts the creativity of your team members? ● What do you believe are the characteristics of a creative employee? ● Are there workplace norms that promote creativity?
RQ3: What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to cultivate workplace creativity?	● How would you describe the organization's culture of workplace creativity? ● How do you feel the organization promotes employee creativity? 　○ How do you believe the organization rewards or incentives creativity? ● How does your supervisor encourage you and your team to be creative?
RQ4: What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?	● What are challenges to you being creative in your work? ● What do you see as challenges to your team's creativity?
Closing Question	● I have no further questions, but before we close is there anything else you would like to add, bring up or ask about?

Probing Prompts:

- Tell me more…
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you share a specific example?
- How so?
- What I heard you say is…

Leadership Learning Development Leader Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Interview Questions
Opening Questions	- Please describe your role in the organization? - How long have you been in this position?
RQ1: What do participants believe is their role in fostering creativity in the workplace?	- Over the time you have worked at the company, how have you noticed or experienced changes in how workforce creativity is approached? - In your work with leaders across the leadership development programs, how is employee creativity addressed? - In your work with leaders, how are leadership behaviors discussed? Measured? - Can you describe for me the 360 evaluation participants receive? - What is the purpose? What are the benefits? How is the data used?
RQ2: What are participants' perspectives on the impact their leadership has on creativity in the workplace?	- What do you believe are the characteristics of a creative employee? - Are there workplace norms that promote creativity?

RQ3: What do participants believe are the current practices used in the organization to cultivate workplace creativity?	- When did the current leadership development programs begin? - Do you know why they were started? - Can you tell me how they have evolved? - How would you describe the organization's culture of workplace creativity? - How do you feel the organization promotes employee creativity? - How do you believe the organization rewards or incentives creativity?
RQ4: What do participants believe are barriers to cultivating workplace creativity?	What do you feel are challenges to the workforce being creative in their work?
Closing Question	I have no further questions, but before we close is there anything else you would like to add, bring up, or ask about?

Probing Prompts:
- Tell me more…
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you share an example?
- How so?
- What I heard you say is…

Appendix D: Member Checking Interview Protocol

Participants will be informed that the initial analysis write-up could be altered as a result of the responses from this interview.

During the member checking interview, ask:

- What were your initial reactions to the writeup?

- Do you feel I portrayed you and your experiences correctly?

- Do you have any comments or objections to my interpretations?

- Did you notice any inaccuracies in your review?

- Is there anything you would like to be changed?

- Is there anything you want to add?

- Did reviewing this document spark anything you would like to tell me or think we should discuss and add to your story?