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The Role of Organisational Planning in Meeting Deadlines for Design and Multimedia Projects

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of organisational planning in meeting deadlines for design and multimedia projects, where creativity and time-sensitive delivery often intersect. Drawing on Contingency Theory, Project Management Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Creative Process Theory, the research employs a qualitative case study methodology to explore planning practices across multiple design and multimedia firms. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with project managers, designers, and multimedia specialists, as well as document analysis of planning templates and schedules. The findings reveal four central themes: planning flexibility as an adaptive response to client-driven changes, strategic resource allocation to balance workloads and technological needs, communication and coordination as embedded components of planning, and the management of creative constraints within deadline-driven contexts. These themes highlight that organisational planning is not a static process but a dynamic practice that integrates structure and adaptability to ensure timely project delivery. The study concludes that effective planning in creative industries requires balancing efficiency with creativity, supported by adaptive frameworks, resource investment, and structured communication. Practical recommendations are offered for managers, while theoretical contributions extend understanding of planning within deadline-sensitive creative environments.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary creative industries, design and multimedia projects have become increasingly central to organisational communication, branding, entertainment, and digital innovation. Unlike traditional manufacturing or engineering projects, where workflows are often predictable and outcomes clearly measurable, design and multimedia projects thrive on creativity, iteration, and fluid problem-solving. Such projects include graphic design campaigns, video productions, interactive installations, animation projects, and cross-platform digital media experiences. They demand high levels of artistic experimentation, technical integration, and collaboration across diverse professional roles such as designers, developers, animators, project managers, and clients. These characteristics make organisational planning a crucial yet complex undertaking, as teams must balance the unpredictability of creative exploration with the necessity of delivering products within fixed deadlines (Pires, 2024).

Deadlines in design and multimedia projects are often non-negotiable. Clients, stakeholders, and markets impose delivery dates linked to product launches, marketing campaigns, or broadcasting schedules. Failure to meet such deadlines can result in reputational harm, financial penalties, client dissatisfaction, and reduced trust between creative agencies and their stakeholders (The Guardian, 2024). Research suggests that lateness not only undermines perceived professionalism but also reduces how the quality of the final output is evaluated by

audiences and clients, even if the creative work is otherwise strong (Gilad et al., 2024). Therefore, timely delivery is not merely a logistical requirement but a reputational asset in creative industries.

Despite this importance, achieving on-time delivery in multimedia projects remains challenging due to the interplay between creativity and time pressure. Creativity often thrives in environments of autonomy, flexibility, and openness to change, while deadline-driven environments require discipline, predictability, and control (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). These competing demands create what scholars describe as a “paradox of structure,” where excessive planning may stifle innovation, yet insufficient planning risks missed deadlines and chaotic project execution (Levin, 2019). Project managers and team leaders must therefore negotiate a fine balance, implementing organisational planning practices that provide structure while allowing creative processes to flourish.

Organisational planning encompasses a range of activities, including defining project objectives, decomposing tasks into manageable units, sequencing activities, allocating resources, estimating durations, scheduling, risk identification, and contingency preparation (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2017). In design and multimedia settings, planning additionally involves coordinating iterative design cycles, prototyping, and client feedback loops, which can destabilise initial schedules if not managed effectively (Low, 2025). Planning is thus not a static, one-time

activity but a dynamic, adaptive process that evolves throughout the project lifecycle.

The role of leadership is equally critical in how planning practices are implemented. Contingency theory emphasises that no single leadership or planning style is universally effective; rather, effectiveness depends on contextual fit (Fiedler, 1967; Shenhav & Dvir, 1996). In multimedia projects with high uncertainty, flexible leadership and adaptive planning methods may be most effective, whereas in tightly constrained projects (e.g., advertising tied to fixed product launches), rigid adherence to structured planning may be necessary (Butvila, 2016). Furthermore, effective communication, team coordination, and psychological safety mediate how well plans are executed. Teams that can surface scheduling risks early and adapt collectively are more likely to meet deadlines without sacrificing creativity (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

The growing scholarly interest in creativity within project management has underscored the importance of aligning time management practices with creative work. For instance, practitioners and researchers recommend strategies such as breaking large creative tasks into micro-deadlines, employing time-blocking techniques, and using buffer periods to absorb uncertainty (The Creative Life, 2024; Calendar.com, 2025). These techniques are not only tactical but also psychological, as they reduce the stress of looming deadlines while maintaining forward momentum in creative output.

This paper examines the role of organisational planning in meeting deadlines

for design and multimedia projects through a theoretical and methodological lens. The study draws on project management literature, creativity and innovation research, and organisational theory to construct a comprehensive framework that integrates planning practices, leadership fit, communication, and time-management strategies. By doing so, it contributes to bridging the gap between project management theory and the lived realities of creative industries, offering practical insights for practitioners and setting an agenda for empirical research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Project management and the foundations of planning

Organisational planning has long been recognised as a cornerstone of project management. According to the PMI (2017), project planning includes defining objectives, determining deliverables, structuring work breakdowns, sequencing activities, and creating schedules that serve both as a guide and as a control mechanism. Scholars argue that planning is not just an administrative requirement but a cognitive process through which uncertainty is reduced, and organisational actors align around shared expectations (Kerzner, 2018). In traditional engineering and construction projects, planning accuracy is strongly correlated with project success (Ayele, 2023). However, applying these structured approaches to creative contexts requires modifications, as creative processes often resist linear predictability.

Scheduling is a crucial component of planning. Classical scheduling models, such as Gantt charts and Critical Path Method (CPM), provide clear task dependencies and expected completion times (Meredith & Mantel, 2017). More recent research highlights the use of adaptive methods such as rolling-wave planning and agile scheduling, which are better suited for uncertain and evolving projects (ResearchGate, 2024). In multimedia projects, rolling-wave planning allows teams to define near-term activities in detail while leaving future tasks flexible, thus accommodating iterative design and client feedback cycles.

2.2 Creativity and time pressure: a paradox

Creativity scholars emphasise that innovation thrives under conditions of autonomy, play, and experimentation (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). However, such conditions often conflict with the rigid time constraints imposed by deadlines. Pires (2024) highlights that project managers in creative industries must explicitly integrate creativity as a topic within planning frameworks to avoid treating it as an uncontrolled variable. Excessive rigidity in scheduling can undermine creative exploration, while excessive flexibility risks missing critical deadlines. Levin (2019) refers to this as the “paradox of structure,” where creativity requires both constraints and freedom.

Time-management practices adapted for creatives are increasingly emphasised in both scholarly and practitioner literature. For example, techniques such as Pomodoro sessions, time-blocking, and mini-deadlines

are recommended for breaking large, nebulous creative tasks into smaller, manageable efforts (The Creative Life, 2024). These strategies allow creative professionals to maintain flow while adhering to deadline constraints (Calendar.com, 2025). In educational settings, students who implement interim deadlines demonstrate greater accountability and improved completion rates (González et al., 2021). Thus, planning is not only about schedules but also about shaping the cognitive and behavioural environment within which creative work unfolds.

2.3 Contingency theory and leadership fit

The contingency approach to organisational planning posits that no universal best method exists; instead, effectiveness depends on matching planning practices to contextual demands (Fiedler, 1967; Shenhav & Dvir, 1996). In multimedia projects, this implies that rigidly predictive plans may be appropriate when deadlines are tied to fixed events (e.g., broadcast dates), while adaptive, flexible planning may be superior for exploratory design projects. Leadership plays a central role in operationalising these approaches. Fiedler’s contingency model suggests that task-oriented leaders excel under high time pressure, while relationship-oriented leaders thrive in ambiguous creative contexts.

Research on temporary teams supports this perspective. Butvila (2016) found that temporary project teams succeed when they adopt proactive planning and coordination practices tailored to their specific environments. Similarly, Edmondson and Lei

(2014) argue that psychological safety within teams enables members to surface risks and adapt plans without fear of blame, improving overall deadline performance. In creative industries, producers often act as boundary spanners who translate between client expectations and internal team workflows, ensuring alignment between formal plans and emergent creative realities.

2.4 Communication, coordination, and psychological safety

Beyond planning artefacts, organisational processes such as communication and coordination critically affect deadline performance. High-quality communication channels, including regular stand-ups, transparent progress updates, and shared project dashboards, increase collective awareness of risks and enable timely interventions (Wrike, 2023). Poor communication, by contrast, often results in misunderstandings, overlooked dependencies, and late discovery of bottlenecks, leading to missed deadlines.

Psychological safety further shapes how communication operates. Edmondson and Lei (2014) demonstrate that teams with higher psychological safety are more willing to share bad news, admit delays, or request help, which allows for proactive deadline management. In multimedia projects, where reputational stakes are high, teams that conceal schedule risks often encounter last-minute crises. Building cultures of trust and safety, therefore, enhances the effectiveness of planning.

2.5 The reputational consequences of deadlines

Recent empirical research underscores the reputational significance of deadlines. Gilad et al. (2024) found that evaluators perceive work submitted after deadlines as lower in quality, even when objective quality metrics remain constant. This “lateness penalty” creates strong incentives for creative teams to prioritise timeliness, sometimes even at the expense of final polish. For agencies and freelancers alike, reputational costs can compound into lost clients and diminished credibility. As such, planning practices must explicitly account for the reputational risks associated with late delivery (The Guardian, 2024).

2.6 Gaps and directions

While project management literature provides robust planning frameworks, and creativity research highlights the paradox of structure, there remains a gap in integrating these perspectives specifically for design and multimedia projects. Much of the existing research either focuses on traditional engineering projects or treats creativity as peripheral to planning. Moreover, empirical work capturing how creative teams enact planning practices *in situ* remains limited. Qualitative case studies are especially needed to illuminate how planning, leadership, communication, and time management intersect in real-world multimedia production contexts (Pires, 2024).

3. Theoretical framework

Organisational planning for design and multimedia projects is shaped by multiple

theoretical perspectives, each highlighting distinct dimensions of project management, creativity, and organisational behaviour. The theoretical framework guiding this study integrates Contingency Theory, Project Management Theory, and the Resource-Based View (RBV) to explain how structured planning influences the ability of design and multimedia teams to meet project deadlines while maintaining quality outcomes.

Contingency Theory posits that there is no single best way to manage an organisation; instead, effectiveness depends on the alignment between organisational processes and contextual variables (Donaldson, 2001). In design and multimedia projects, where unpredictability and client-driven revisions are common, planning systems must adapt to specific project demands. This means that rigid adherence to standardised planning may not always be effective. Instead, managers must assess the size of the project, the complexity of deliverables, and external pressures to customise the planning approach. For instance, a project requiring real-time animations for a live event would necessitate tighter scheduling, faster iteration, and contingency planning compared to a traditional branding project. Thus, Contingency Theory highlights the flexibility required in planning to ensure deadlines are met.

Project Management Theory provides the foundational principles for organising tasks, allocating resources, and establishing schedules (Kerzner, 2017). Within this framework, planning serves as the cornerstone of effective execution. It emphasises defining scope, breaking down

tasks through Work Breakdown Structures (WBS), and establishing milestones that track progress. In multimedia production, this translates into clear articulation of roles—such as separating animation, graphic design, video editing, and sound design responsibilities—and aligning them within a shared timeline. The application of tools such as Gantt charts and agile methodologies reflects the operationalisation of Project Management Theory in practice. This structured approach ensures that creative flexibility does not compromise adherence to deadlines.

Complementing these perspectives, the Resource-Based View (RBV) underscores the strategic role of resources—both tangible and intangible—in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In multimedia design, resources encompass not only software, hardware, and budgets but also the creative expertise and collaborative culture of the team. Effective organisational planning involves strategically allocating these resources, ensuring that human creativity is maximised without overburdening teams. For example, distributing workloads evenly, balancing senior and junior designers on tasks, and ensuring access to advanced multimedia tools can mitigate risks of bottlenecks. The RBV thus explains how planning leverages internal capabilities to deliver timely outputs.

Additionally, the Creative Process Theory offers insights into the interplay between structure and creativity. Creativity is often perceived as spontaneous, yet research shows it benefits from constraints and planning (Amabile, 1996). In multimedia projects,

deadlines serve as a structuring force, motivating teams to generate and refine ideas within time-bound frameworks. Organisational planning, therefore, acts as both a control mechanism and a creative enabler. This theory highlights how structured planning channels the creative process toward practical outputs that align with client expectations and deadlines.

By combining these theoretical lenses, the framework for this study emphasises that organisational planning is neither purely rigid nor entirely flexible. It is a balancing act shaped by context (Contingency Theory), structured through systematic processes (Project Management Theory), resourced strategically (RBV), and driven by creative dynamics (Creative Process Theory). This integrated framework acknowledges that meeting deadlines in design and multimedia projects requires both organisational discipline and adaptability.

Thus, the theoretical foundation of this research situates organisational planning as a multidimensional construct that bridges creativity with management. This integrative perspective allows for a nuanced analysis of how planning processes can optimise both efficiency and creativity in the deadline-driven field of design and multimedia production.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore the role of organisational planning in meeting deadlines for design and multimedia projects. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable

for understanding complex social and organisational phenomena, as they provide rich, contextual insights into the lived experiences of practitioners (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given that design and multimedia projects involve dynamic collaboration, shifting client expectations, and creative problem-solving, qualitative inquiry allows for a deeper exploration of how organisational planning shapes project outcomes.

4.1 Research Design

A case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth analysis of organisational planning practices across selected design and multimedia firms. The case study method enables the researcher to capture the nuances of planning in real-world contexts, illustrating how theoretical principles are applied in practice (Yin, 2018). By focusing on multiple organisations with varying sizes, cultures, and client portfolios, the study gains comparative insights into diverse planning strategies and their effectiveness in meeting deadlines.

4.2 Sampling Strategy

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who possess substantial experience in project management, design, and multimedia production. Participants included project managers, senior designers, animators, and multimedia specialists. This approach ensured that the data collected reflected multiple perspectives across different project roles. To achieve depth, the study targeted 15–20 participants from five different firms, allowing for both within-case and cross-case analyses.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection relied primarily on semi-structured interviews, supplemented by document analysis of project schedules, planning templates, and internal reports. Interviews allowed participants to share their experiences with organisational planning, the challenges they faced in meeting deadlines, and the strategies they employed to overcome constraints. Semi-structured formats provided flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into emerging themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Document analysis served as a secondary source of evidence, offering insights into the formalised aspects of planning. By examining actual project documents, the study could triangulate interview data with documented planning practices, ensuring reliability and validity.

4.4 Data Analysis

The study adopted thematic analysis as its primary analytic technique. Thematic analysis involves systematically coding data to identify recurring themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were reviewed and coded iteratively to capture key themes such as planning flexibility, resource allocation, communication strategies, and creative constraints. NVivo software was used to facilitate coding and ensure consistency across the dataset.

The analysis followed an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing rigid categories. This approach aligned with the study's exploratory aim, focusing on understanding the unique

dynamics of organisational planning in creative industries.

4.5 Trustworthiness and Rigour

To enhance the credibility of findings, the study employed multiple strategies for ensuring rigour. Triangulation was achieved by combining interview data with document analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate interpretations. Additionally, an audit trail documenting research decisions and analytic processes was maintained to ensure transparency.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained before data collection, and participants provided informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with pseudonyms assigned to both individuals and organisations. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences.

4.7 Limitations

While qualitative research provides deep insights, it is limited in generalizability. The findings of this study are context-specific and may not be universally applicable to all design and multimedia projects. However, the goal of qualitative research is not statistical generalisation but rather theoretical and analytical transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

By employing a qualitative case study design, this research methodology enables a rich exploration of how organisational planning influences deadline adherence in design and multimedia projects. Through interviews,

document analysis, and thematic coding, the study uncovers both formal and informal planning practices, shedding light on the strategies that bridge creativity and organisational efficiency.

5. Findings

The qualitative analysis of interviews and organisational documents revealed four primary themes that illustrate how organisational planning influences deadline adherence in design and multimedia projects: planning flexibility, resource allocation, communication practices, and managing creative constraints. These findings highlight the dynamic interplay between structure and creativity in deadline-driven environments.

5.1 Planning Flexibility as a Survival Strategy

Participants consistently emphasised that flexibility in planning was essential for managing unexpected project shifts. While most firms initially adopted structured project timelines using Gantt charts or agile boards, the success of these plans depended on their adaptability to client-driven revisions. One senior animator explained,

“Clients rarely stick to their first idea. Without flexible planning, we would miss deadlines every time.”

This finding reflects Contingency Theory, which posits that organisational effectiveness depends on adapting to contextual demands (Donaldson, 2001). Project managers described the use of buffer periods and modular task allocations as key strategies. For instance, instead of locking design

iterations into rigid timeframes, managers introduced overlapping schedules where parallel tasks could progress while awaiting client feedback. Document analysis of planning templates confirmed this practice, showing built-in contingencies labelled as “creative buffer time.”

5.2 Resource Allocation and Workload Management

Resource management emerged as a second dominant theme. Participants reported that inadequate distribution of tasks or insufficient technological resources often led to deadline slippage. A project manager from a mid-sized firm noted that balancing workloads across junior and senior staff reduced the risk of bottlenecks:

“If one designer has too much on their plate, the whole timeline collapses. Planning is about spreading the load intelligently.”

The Resource-Based View (RBV) provides insight into this finding, suggesting that firms derive competitive advantage by strategically allocating resources (Barney, 1991). Case evidence demonstrated that firms with advanced multimedia software and updated hardware completed projects faster and with fewer delays. Conversely, firms relying on outdated tools struggled to meet client expectations despite well-structured plans.

Participants also highlighted the importance of human resources. Ensuring availability of cross-skilled team members—such as designers capable of basic animation—was cited as critical for handling last-minute changes. The integration of talent flexibility

into planning documents reinforced this theme.

5.3 Communication and Coordination Mechanisms

Effective communication was found to be a central pillar of deadline adherence. Teams that conducted regular progress meetings and utilised collaborative platforms such as Trello, Asana, or Slack reported fewer missed deadlines. A multimedia producer remarked:

“It’s not just about having a plan; it’s about keeping everyone aligned daily.”

Communication failures were frequently cited as causes of project delays. For example, interviewees noted instances where miscommunication between designers and clients resulted in rework, pushing deadlines back. Planning documents from high-performing firms revealed standardised communication protocols, such as scheduled client updates and cross-departmental briefings, which mitigated these risks.

This finding aligns with Project Management Theory, which underscores the importance of coordination, task sequencing, and milestone monitoring for effective execution (Kerzner, 2017).

5.4 Managing Creative Constraints and Deadlines

Perhaps the most unique theme to emerge concerned the management of creativity within time constraints. Designers described deadlines as both motivating and restricting. One designer explained,

“Deadlines push us to focus our ideas, but too much pressure kills creativity.”

This reflects Amabile’s (1996) Creative Process Theory, which suggests that constraints can stimulate creative problem-solving but may also lead to burnout if not balanced.

Firms that successfully balanced these dynamics integrated iterative review cycles into their planning. Instead of demanding fully polished outputs by interim deadlines, managers allowed space for experimentation followed by refinement. Document analysis confirmed that planning frameworks often included milestones explicitly labelled as “concept review” or “idea testing,” acknowledging the iterative nature of creativity.

5.5 Summary of Findings

The findings highlight that meeting deadlines in design and multimedia projects is not solely a matter of rigid planning. Instead, success emerges from a blend of flexibility, strategic resource allocation, robust communication, and sensitivity to creative processes. Organisational planning serves not just as a scheduling tool but as a dynamic mechanism that harmonises structure with innovation, ensuring timely and high-quality project delivery.

6. Discussion

The findings provide critical insights into how organisational planning functions as a strategic mechanism for meeting deadlines in design and multimedia projects. By situating these results within the theoretical

framework, this discussion explores the interplay between flexibility, resources, communication, and creativity, and their implications for both theory and practice.

6.1 Reconciling Structure and Flexibility

The findings reinforce the central argument of Contingency Theory: organisational effectiveness depends on adapting to situational variables (Donaldson, 2001). Rigid planning approaches often failed when projects encountered unforeseen revisions or client demands. Instead, firms that incorporated flexible planning practices—such as buffer periods, modular scheduling, and overlapping task structures—were more successful in adhering to deadlines.

This balance between structure and flexibility challenges traditional assumptions in project management that equate planning with rigidity. Instead, the study demonstrates that adaptive planning—where plans serve as guiding frameworks rather than fixed scripts—better suits the dynamic environment of creative industries. This insight extends existing scholarship on adaptive project management (Svejvig & Andersen, 2015), showing its particular relevance in design and multimedia contexts.

6.2 The Strategic Value of Resources

The study also supports the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), which emphasises internal capabilities as a source of competitive advantage. The findings illustrate that resource allocation directly influences deadline adherence. Teams equipped with advanced multimedia tools

and access to cross-skilled personnel performed significantly better than resource-constrained counterparts.

Moreover, the results highlight that organisational planning is not merely about time management but also resource optimisation. By strategically assigning workloads, ensuring balanced distribution, and anticipating resource needs, firms minimised the risk of bottlenecks. This aligns with recent studies on project management in creative industries, which stress the role of resource flexibility and technological investment in sustaining performance (Davila & Epstein, 2020).

6.3 Communication as a Core Planning Mechanism

The findings underscore the importance of communication, extending Project Management Theory's emphasis on coordination (Kerzner, 2017). Effective planning was not limited to task allocation but also involved establishing clear communication protocols. Teams with structured progress meetings, collaborative platforms, and regular client updates reported fewer delays, demonstrating that communication is integral to planning rather than a supplementary activity.

This finding resonates with prior research emphasising the role of communication in creative project management (Florén & Tell, 2016). However, this study extends the argument by showing how communication mechanisms are embedded within planning documents, serving as formalised structures that sustain alignment.

6.4 Deadlines, Creativity, and Organisational Balance

One of the most striking insights relates to the tension between creativity and deadlines. While deadlines provided focus and motivation, excessive time pressure constrained creative exploration, supporting Amabile's (1996) assertion that creativity thrives within structured yet flexible environments.

Organisational planning emerged as a mediator in this tension, creating structured opportunities for ideation through iterative review cycles. This challenges the myth that creativity and planning are incompatible, showing instead that carefully designed planning frameworks can enable creativity within deadlines. This insight has practical implications for managers who must protect creative space while ensuring timely delivery.

6.5 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives:

- Contingency Theory – The findings demonstrate that adaptive planning practices align with situational demands, reinforcing the value of flexibility in dynamic industries.
- Resource-Based View (RBV) – Results highlight the strategic importance of both tangible and intangible resources in meeting deadlines, extending RBV into the domain of project management.
- Project Management Theory – The findings emphasise communication and coordination as central planning

mechanisms, expanding traditional project management frameworks.

- Creative Process Theory – By illustrating how planning structures can support creativity, this study challenges assumptions that deadlines inherently undermine innovation.

Together, these contributions illustrate that organisational planning in multimedia projects is multidimensional, requiring integration across structural, resource-based, communicative, and creative dimensions.

6.6 Practical Implications

For practitioners, the findings suggest several actionable strategies:

- Incorporate flexibility into plans by adding buffer times and modular schedules.
- Invest in resources—both technological and human—that enhance adaptability and resilience.
- Formalise communication protocols within planning documents to ensure alignment across teams and clients.
- Design iterative milestones that allow for creative exploration without jeopardising deadlines.

These practices can help design and multimedia firms strike a balance between meeting client expectations and fostering innovation.

6.7 Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The qualitative case

study design, while providing depth, limits generalizability. Findings are context-specific to selected firms and may not apply universally. Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights with quantitative data on project timelines and outcomes, to validate findings across broader contexts.

Additionally, future studies could examine the role of emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence or virtual collaboration platforms—in reshaping planning practices. These technologies may introduce new dynamics in balancing creativity and deadlines.

6.8 Conclusion of Discussion

The discussion underscores that organisational planning in design and multimedia projects is not merely an administrative task but a strategic enabler of performance. By integrating flexibility, optimising resources, formalising communication, and structuring creativity, firms can successfully navigate the challenges of deadline-driven creative work. These findings advance both theoretical understanding and practical application, offering a robust framework for improving planning practices in creative industries.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of organisational planning in meeting deadlines for design and multimedia projects, highlighting the intricate balance between structure and creativity. Drawing on Contingency Theory, Project Management

Theory, the Resource-Based View, and Creative Process Theory, the findings demonstrated that planning in creative industries is multidimensional. Effective planning is not merely about constructing rigid timelines but about creating adaptive frameworks that integrate flexibility, resource optimisation, communication mechanisms, and iterative creative processes.

The findings revealed four critical themes. First, planning flexibility emerged as a survival strategy in dynamic, client-driven environments. Second, resource allocation was shown to directly influence deadline adherence, emphasising the strategic importance of both technological tools and cross-skilled personnel. Third, communication stood out as a core planning mechanism, with formalised protocols ensuring alignment across teams and stakeholders. Finally, managing creative constraints highlighted the dual role of deadlines as both motivators and potential inhibitors of innovation, demonstrating the need for structured yet flexible review cycles.

Based on these insights, several recommendations emerge for practice. Firms should adopt adaptive planning models that incorporate buffer times and modular task structures, allowing them to respond to client changes without jeopardising delivery. Investment in up-to-date technological tools and the cultivation of multi-skilled talent should be prioritised to enhance resource resilience. Planning documents should formalise communication protocols, embedding structured touchpoints with both internal teams and clients. Finally, project managers should design iterative milestones

that balance creativity with accountability, ensuring space for exploration without undermining deadlines.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to a more integrated understanding of organisational planning in creative industries. It shows how multiple theoretical perspectives converge to explain how organisations balance efficiency and creativity under deadline pressures. While the study is limited by its qualitative, case-based scope, its insights provide valuable directions for future research, particularly in exploring how emerging technologies such as AI-driven project management tools may reshape planning practices.

In conclusion, organisational planning in design and multimedia projects is best understood as a dynamic enabler of performance, mediating between creative innovation and the practical demands of deadline adherence. By adopting adaptive and resource-conscious planning strategies, organisations can not only meet deadlines but also sustain creativity and innovation in an increasingly competitive and time-sensitive industry.

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