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The Impact of Leadership Communication on Creative Outcomes in Fashion Labs

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Abstract: Creativity is a critical driver of innovation in fashion labs, where interdisciplinary collaboration and iterative design processes define organisational success. This study examines the impact of leadership communication on creative outcomes within fashion labs by integrating insights from leadership theory, organisational communication, and creativity research. Adopting a qualitative methodology based on secondary data, the study synthesises existing literature to explore how leadership communication practices, such as openness, feedback orientation, and participative dialogue, shape creative performance. The findings reveal that leadership communication significantly influences creativity through key mediating mechanisms, including knowledge sharing, feedback-seeking behaviour, and psychological safety. Leaders who foster transparent and supportive communication climates enable greater idea generation, collaborative problem-solving, and innovation. The study further highlights the role of digital communication in transforming creative collaboration, emphasising the need for adaptive communication strategies in contemporary fashion labs. By proposing an integrated conceptual framework, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how communication-driven leadership enhances creativity in complex, interdisciplinary environments. The findings offer practical implications for leaders seeking to optimise creative outcomes in fashion and other creative industries.

Keywords: leadership communication, creativity, fashion labs, knowledge sharing, psychological safety, innovation, creative industries.

1. Introduction

Creativity has become a defining capability in contemporary organisations, particularly within industries characterised by rapid innovation cycles, aesthetic value creation, and intense global competition. Among these, the fashion industry stands out as a uniquely dynamic sector where creativity is not only a competitive advantage but also a core organisational function. Within this context, fashion labs, experimental and collaborative environments that integrate design, technology, and research, have emerged as critical spaces for innovation. These labs facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, enabling designers, engineers, and business strategists to co-create novel fashion products and processes. As such, understanding the factors that influence creativity within fashion labs is of paramount importance.

One of the most significant yet underexplored determinants of creativity in such environments is leadership communication. Leadership has traditionally been studied in terms of authority, decision-making, and behavioural styles. However, contemporary organisational research increasingly emphasises communication as a central mechanism through which leadership is enacted (Men & Bowen, 2017). Leadership communication encompasses the ways in which leaders articulate vision, provide feedback, foster dialogue, and create communicative climates that enable or constrain employee engagement and creativity.

In creative environments like fashion labs, communication is not merely a tool for coordination but a fundamental process through which ideas are generated, refined, and transformed into tangible outcomes. Designers and creative professionals rely heavily on continuous interaction to exchange ideas, critique concepts, and collaboratively solve problems. Therefore, the quality, openness, and structure of communication significantly influence creative performance. Research suggests that leadership communication plays a crucial role in shaping these dynamics by fostering environments that encourage experimentation, knowledge sharing, and risk-taking (Zhou & Shalley, 2003).

The importance of leadership communication becomes even more pronounced in the context of fashion labs due to the inherent characteristics of these environments. Fashion labs operate under conditions of high uncertainty, where creative outcomes are often ambiguous and subjective. Unlike traditional manufacturing settings, where outputs can be standardised and measured objectively, creative outputs in fashion are evaluated based on originality, aesthetic appeal, and market relevance. This ambiguity necessitates a leadership approach that emphasises dialogue, interpretation, and collaborative sense-making.

Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of fashion labs introduces additional complexity. Team members often come from diverse professional backgrounds, including design, engineering, marketing, and data science. Effective communication is essential for integrating these diverse perspectives into

cohesive creative outputs. Leaders must not only facilitate information exchange but also mediate differences in language, values, and cognitive frameworks. In this regard, leadership communication serves as a bridge that connects diverse knowledge domains and enables collective creativity.

Another critical dimension is the increasing role of digital communication in fashion labs. With the proliferation of digital tools and platforms, creative collaboration is no longer confined to physical spaces. Virtual communication has become an integral part of the creative process, enabling real-time collaboration across geographical boundaries. While digital communication offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges related to misinterpretation, reduced social cues, and communication overload. Leaders must navigate these challenges by adopting communication strategies that maintain engagement, clarity, and trust in virtual environments (Wang & Wang, 2022).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of leadership communication, existing research has largely focused on general organisational contexts, with limited attention to creative industries and fashion labs in particular. Studies have examined the relationship between leadership styles and creativity, highlighting the positive impact of transformational and participative leadership on innovative outcomes (Amabile, 1988; Du et al., 2021). However, the specific communicative practices through which leaders influence creativity remain underexplored.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of leadership communication on creative outcomes in fashion labs. By adopting a qualitative research approach based on secondary data, the study synthesises existing literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of how communication practices shape creativity in these environments. The research seeks to answer the following key questions:

- How does leadership communication influence creative outcomes in fashion labs?
- What are the key communication practices that foster creativity?
- What mediating mechanisms link leadership communication to creative performance?

The study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it extends existing research on leadership and creativity by focusing on communication as a central mechanism. Second, it provides a contextualised understanding of these dynamics within fashion labs, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities of creative environments. Third, it proposes a conceptual framework that integrates insights from multiple theoretical perspectives, including the componential theory of creativity, social exchange theory, and communication climate theory.

In practical terms, the findings offer valuable insights for fashion lab managers, creative directors, and organisational leaders. By understanding the role of communication in fostering creativity, leaders can design strategies that enhance collaboration,

encourage innovation, and improve creative outcomes. As the fashion industry continues to evolve in response to technological advancements and changing consumer preferences, the ability to effectively manage creativity through communication will become increasingly critical.

2. Literature Review

Creativity is a multifaceted construct that involves the generation of ideas that are both novel and useful (Amabile, 1988). In the fashion industry, creativity extends beyond individual design talent to encompass collective processes involving teams, organisations, and networks. Fashion creativity is inherently social, relying on interactions among designers, trend analysts, technologists, and consumers (Kamašauskė & Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė, 2021).

Fashion labs represent a specialised context within the industry where creativity is systematically cultivated. These labs function as innovation hubs that integrate design thinking, technological experimentation, and collaborative problem-solving. Unlike traditional fashion studios, fashion labs emphasise iterative processes, rapid prototyping, and interdisciplinary collaboration. This environment requires continuous communication among team members to exchange ideas, evaluate concepts, and refine designs.

Research indicates that communication plays a central role in facilitating creativity in such settings. Open communication enables the sharing of diverse perspectives, which is essential for generating innovative ideas. At

the same time, structured communication processes help teams converge on viable solutions. Thus, the balance between openness and structure is critical for achieving creative outcomes.

2.1 Leadership and Employee Creativity

The relationship between leadership and creativity has been extensively studied in organisational research. Leadership influences creativity by shaping the work environment, motivating employees, and providing resources and support. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been found to positively impact creativity by inspiring employees, encouraging intellectual stimulation, and fostering a sense of purpose (Du et al., 2021).

Similarly, participative leadership enhances creativity by involving employees in decision-making processes. This approach increases engagement and allows employees to contribute their ideas, leading to more innovative outcomes. Creative leadership, which focuses on enabling creativity through supportive behaviours and flexible structures, is particularly relevant in creative industries.

However, leadership is not only about behaviours and styles but also about communication. The effectiveness of leadership depends largely on how leaders communicate with their teams. Communication serves as the primary means through which leaders convey expectations, provide feedback, and build relationships. Therefore, understanding the communicative aspects of leadership is essential for examining its impact on creativity.

2.2 Leadership Communication as a Strategic Function

Leadership communication refers to the deliberate use of communication strategies by leaders to achieve organisational goals. It includes both formal communication, such as meetings and presentations, and informal interactions, such as conversations and feedback exchanges (Men & Bowen, 2017).

Effective leadership communication is characterised by clarity, openness, and responsiveness. Leaders who communicate effectively create environments where employees feel informed, valued, and motivated. In contrast, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, reduced trust, and decreased performance.

In the context of creativity, leadership communication plays a strategic role in shaping the conditions under which creative processes occur. For example, open communication encourages the sharing of ideas, while constructive feedback helps refine those ideas. Moreover, two-way communication fosters dialogue and collaboration, which are essential for creativity.

Symmetrical communication, which emphasises mutual understanding and dialogue, has been shown to enhance employee engagement and creativity. This approach contrasts with asymmetrical communication, where information flows primarily from the leader to subordinates. In creative environments, symmetrical communication is particularly important because it allows for the exchange of diverse perspectives.

2.3 Communication and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a critical mechanism through which communication influences creativity. Creative ideas often emerge from the combination and recombination of existing knowledge. Therefore, the exchange of knowledge among team members is essential for innovation.

Research suggests that leadership communication significantly affects knowledge-sharing behaviours. Leaders who encourage open communication create environments where employees feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and ideas (Khassawneh et al., 2022). Conversely, hierarchical and restrictive communication can hinder knowledge sharing and limit creativity.

In fashion labs, knowledge sharing is particularly important due to the interdisciplinary nature of work. Designers must collaborate with technologists, marketers, and other professionals to develop innovative products. Effective communication facilitates this collaboration by enabling the integration of diverse knowledge domains.

2.4 Feedback-Seeking Behaviour and Creativity

Feedback-seeking behaviour refers to the process by which individuals actively seek information about their performance. This behaviour is crucial for creativity because it helps individuals refine their ideas and improve their work.

Leadership communication plays a key role in encouraging feedback-seeking behaviour. Leaders who provide constructive feedback and create supportive environments motivate employees to seek feedback and engage in continuous learning (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). In contrast, environments characterised by criticism and fear can discourage feedback-seeking and inhibit creativity.

In fashion labs, feedback is an integral part of the creative process. Designers continuously seek feedback from peers, leaders, and stakeholders to refine their concepts. Therefore, leadership communication that promotes constructive feedback is essential for enhancing creative outcomes.

2.5 Psychological Safety and Communication Climate

Psychological safety is defined as the belief that one can take risks without fear of negative consequences. It is a critical factor for creativity because it enables individuals to express ideas, experiment, and take risks.

Leadership communication plays a central role in creating psychological safety. Leaders who communicate openly, listen actively, and respect diverse perspectives foster environments where employees feel safe to share their ideas. This, in turn, enhances creativity.

Communication climate theory provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. A positive communication climate is characterised by trust, openness, and support, while a negative climate is associated with fear, defensiveness, and control. Research indicates that positive

communication climates are conducive to creativity and innovation.

2.6 Digital Communication and Creativity

The rise of digital technologies has transformed communication in organisations, including fashion labs. Digital communication tools, such as collaborative platforms and virtual meeting systems, enable real-time interaction and collaboration across geographical boundaries.

While digital communication offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges. For example, the lack of non-verbal cues can lead to misunderstandings, and communication overload can reduce effectiveness. Leaders must adapt their communication strategies to address these challenges and maintain engagement and creativity (Wang & Wang, 2022).

In fashion labs, digital communication is particularly important for coordinating complex projects and facilitating collaboration among diverse teams. Effective use of digital tools can enhance creativity by enabling the sharing of ideas and resources.

2.7 Research Gap

Despite the extensive literature on leadership, communication, and creativity, there is a lack of integrated research examining these concepts within the context of fashion labs. Most studies focus on general organisational settings, overlooking the unique characteristics of creative industries.

Furthermore, while leadership styles have been widely studied, the specific communication practices through which

leaders influence creativity remain underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on leadership communication as a central mechanism and examining its impact on creative outcomes in fashion labs.

3. Theoretical Framework

Understanding the relationship between leadership communication and creative outcomes in fashion labs requires a multidimensional theoretical foundation. This study integrates several complementary theories, namely the Componential Theory of Creativity, Social Exchange Theory, Knowledge Sharing Theory, Communication Climate Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory, to construct a comprehensive framework. Together, these perspectives explain how leadership communication shapes individual and collective creativity through psychological, relational, and organisational mechanisms.

3.1 Componential Theory of Creativity

The Componential Theory of Creativity, proposed by Amabile (1988), provides a foundational framework for understanding creativity in organisational contexts. According to this theory, creativity is influenced by three key components: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation.

Leadership communication directly influences each of these components. First, through communication, leaders facilitate the development of domain-relevant skills by sharing knowledge, providing guidance, and

encouraging learning. In fashion labs, where interdisciplinary knowledge is essential, leaders play a crucial role in integrating diverse expertise through effective communication.

Second, creativity-relevant processes, such as problem-solving, divergent thinking, and risk-taking, are shaped by the communicative environment. Leaders who promote open dialogue and encourage questioning foster cognitive flexibility, which enhances creative thinking. Conversely, restrictive communication can limit exploration and reduce creativity.

Third, intrinsic motivation, which is critical for creativity, is significantly influenced by leadership communication. Supportive communication, recognition, and constructive feedback enhance employees' sense of autonomy and competence, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1988; Zhou & Shalley, 2003).

3.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) posits that social relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges of resources, including information, support, and trust. In organisational settings, leadership communication plays a central role in shaping these exchanges.

When leaders communicate openly and transparently, they build trust and establish high-quality relationships with employees. This trust encourages employees to reciprocate by engaging in positive behaviours, such as sharing ideas and contributing to creative processes. In

contrast, poor communication can lead to mistrust and reduced engagement.

In fashion labs, where collaboration is essential, social exchange processes are particularly important. Creative work often involves sharing incomplete ideas and taking risks. Employees are more likely to engage in such behaviours when they trust their leaders and feel supported. Therefore, leadership communication that fosters trust and reciprocity is a key driver of creativity.

3.3 Knowledge Sharing Theory

Knowledge Sharing Theory emphasises the importance of exchanging information and expertise for organisational performance and innovation. Creativity often emerges from the combination of diverse knowledge elements, making knowledge sharing a critical mediator between leadership and creative outcomes.

Leadership communication influences knowledge sharing by shaping the norms and practices of information exchange. Leaders who encourage open communication create environments where employees feel comfortable sharing their knowledge (Khassawneh et al., 2022). This is particularly important in fashion labs, where interdisciplinary collaboration requires the integration of diverse knowledge domains.

Moreover, leadership communication can reduce barriers to knowledge sharing, such as fear of criticism or competition. By promoting a culture of openness and collaboration, leaders enable the free flow of information, which enhances creativity.

3.4 Communication Climate Theory

Communication Climate Theory focuses on the overall environment created by communication practices within an organisation. A positive communication climate is characterised by openness, trust, supportiveness, and participative dialogue, while a negative climate is associated with defensiveness, control, and lack of transparency.

Leadership communication is the primary determinant of communication climate. Leaders set the tone for how communication occurs within the organisation. In fashion labs, where creativity depends on the free exchange of ideas, a positive communication climate is essential.

Psychological safety, a key aspect of communication climate, is particularly important for creativity. It refers to the belief that individuals can express ideas and take risks without fear of negative consequences. Leadership communication that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive fosters psychological safety, enabling employees to engage in creative behaviours.

3.5 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory emphasises the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating employees to achieve higher levels of performance. Transformational leaders use communication to articulate a compelling vision, provide intellectual stimulation, and offer individualised consideration (Bass, 1985).

Communication is central to transformational leadership. Leaders use communication to inspire creativity by encouraging employees to think beyond conventional boundaries and explore new possibilities. Intellectual stimulation, a key component of transformational leadership, involves challenging assumptions and promoting innovative thinking.

In fashion labs, transformational leadership communication is particularly relevant due to the need for continuous innovation. Leaders must inspire teams to experiment, take risks, and pursue novel ideas. Through effective communication, transformational leaders create environments that support creativity and innovation.

3.6 Integrated Conceptual Framework

Based on the integration of these theories, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which leadership communication serves as the primary independent variable influencing creative outcomes. The relationship is mediated by several key factors:

- **Knowledge sharing** (Knowledge Sharing Theory)
- **Feedback-seeking behaviour** (Componential Theory & self-regulation perspective)
- **Psychological safety** (Communication Climate Theory)
- **Trust and reciprocity** (Social Exchange Theory)

These mediators collectively influence creative outcomes, including idea generation,

innovation, and collaborative problem-solving in fashion labs.

The framework highlights that leadership communication is not a direct determinant of creativity but operates through complex psychological and social processes. This multidimensional approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how communication shapes creativity in organisational contexts.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena, such as leadership communication and creativity, where contextual understanding and interpretive analysis are essential (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Secondary data analysis involves the systematic review and synthesis of existing literature to generate new insights. This approach is appropriate for the present study because it allows for the integration of diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

4.1 Research Approach

The study follows an interpretivist research paradigm, which emphasises understanding social phenomena from the perspectives of individuals and within their specific contexts. In the context of this research, the interpretivist approach enables the exploration of how leadership communication influences creativity in

fashion labs through subjective experiences and social interactions.

The research also adopts an inductive approach, where themes and patterns are derived from the data rather than being imposed a priori. This approach is consistent with qualitative research and allows for the development of new theoretical insights.

4.2 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The study relies on secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference papers, and industry reports. The data sources were selected based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** The sources must address leadership, communication, creativity, or fashion industry contexts.
- **Credibility:** Preference was given to peer-reviewed journals and reputable academic publishers.
- **Recency:** Recent publications were prioritised to ensure up-to-date insights.
- **Theoretical and empirical contribution:** Sources that provide significant theoretical frameworks or empirical findings were included.

Databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science were used to identify relevant literature. Keywords included “leadership communication,” “creativity,” “fashion industry,” “knowledge sharing,” and “psychological safety.”

4.3 Data Analysis Method

The study employs thematic analysis as the primary method for analysing the data. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis was conducted in several stages:

- **Familiarisation:** Reviewing the selected literature to gain an overall understanding of the content.
- **Coding:** Identifying key concepts and assigning codes to relevant segments of data.
- **Theme development:** Grouping codes into broader themes related to leadership communication and creativity.
- **Interpretation:** Analysing the relationships among themes to develop a conceptual framework.

This systematic approach ensures that the analysis is rigorous and transparent.

4.6 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are addressed through criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- **Credibility:** Ensured through the use of high-quality, peer-reviewed sources and triangulation of multiple studies.
- **Transferability:** Achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, allowing readers to

assess the applicability of findings to other settings.

- **Dependability:** Maintained through a systematic and transparent research process.
- **Confirmability:** Ensured by grounding interpretations in the data and minimising researcher bias.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

As the study relies on secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human participants. However, ethical considerations are still important. All sources are properly cited to acknowledge the original authors and avoid plagiarism. The study adheres to academic integrity standards and ethical research practices (Mannan & Farhana, 2026).

4.6 Limitations of the Methodology

While secondary data analysis offers several advantages, it also has limitations. First, the study is limited by the availability and quality of existing research. Second, the findings are based on interpretations of secondary data, which may introduce bias. Third, the lack of primary data limits the ability to test the proposed conceptual framework empirically.

Despite these limitations, the methodology provides valuable insights and serves as a foundation for future empirical research.

4.7 Justification of Methodological Choice

The choice of a qualitative secondary data approach is justified by the exploratory nature of the research. The study aims to develop a conceptual understanding rather than test specific hypotheses. By synthesising

existing literature, the research provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between leadership communication and creativity.

Furthermore, this approach is particularly suitable for studying fashion labs, where empirical data may be difficult to access due to the proprietary nature of creative processes. Secondary data analysis allows for the examination of a wide range of contexts and perspectives, enhancing the robustness of the findings.

5. Findings and Analysis

The analysis of secondary data reveals that leadership communication exerts a profound and multifaceted influence on creative outcomes in fashion labs. This influence operates through several interrelated mechanisms, including knowledge sharing, feedback-seeking behaviour, psychological safety, and communication structure. The findings also highlight the contextual specificity of fashion labs, where creativity is shaped by interdisciplinary collaboration, iterative design processes, and digital communication environments.

5.1 Leadership Communication as a Catalyst for Creative Processes

The findings indicate that leadership communication functions as a foundational catalyst for creativity in fashion labs. Leaders who engage in open, transparent, and dialogic communication create an environment conducive to idea generation and experimentation. This aligns with the Componential Theory of Creativity, which emphasises the role of supportive

environments in enhancing intrinsic motivation and creative performance (Amabile, 1988).

In fashion labs, creative processes are inherently iterative and collaborative. Designers often work on multiple prototypes simultaneously, requiring continuous communication to refine ideas. Leadership communication facilitates this process by providing clarity, direction, and encouragement. For instance, leaders who articulate a clear vision while allowing flexibility enable teams to explore innovative solutions without losing strategic alignment.

Moreover, the tone and style of communication significantly influence creative engagement. Supportive and non-judgmental communication encourages risk-taking, which is essential for creativity. In contrast, authoritarian or overly critical communication can inhibit idea generation by creating fear of failure. This finding is consistent with prior research showing that leadership communication shapes employees' willingness to engage in creative behaviours (Zhou & Shalley, 2003).

5.2 Knowledge Sharing as a Mediating Mechanism

One of the most prominent findings is the central role of knowledge sharing as a mediator between leadership communication and creative outcomes. Fashion labs are characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration, where creativity emerges from the integration of diverse knowledge domains. Effective leadership communication fosters knowledge sharing by

promoting openness and reducing barriers to information exchange.

Leaders who encourage dialogue and collaboration create environments where team members feel comfortable sharing their expertise. This is particularly important in fashion labs, where designers must collaborate with technologists, material scientists, and marketers. The exchange of knowledge across these domains leads to the development of innovative products and processes.

The findings also suggest that leadership communication influences the quality of knowledge sharing. Constructive feedback and active listening enhance the depth and relevance of shared knowledge. Conversely, poor communication can lead to knowledge silos, limiting creativity. This supports the argument that knowledge sharing is a critical pathway through which leadership communication impacts creativity (Khassawneh et al., 2022).

5.3 Feedback-Seeking Behaviour and Iterative Creativity

Feedback-seeking behaviour emerges as another key mechanism linking leadership communication to creative outcomes. In fashion labs, creativity is not a linear process but an iterative cycle of idea generation, evaluation, and refinement. Feedback plays a crucial role in this cycle by providing insights that help improve creative outputs.

Leadership communication significantly influences employees' willingness to seek feedback. Leaders who provide constructive and timely feedback create a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This

encourages employees to actively seek feedback, enhancing their creative performance (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011).

The findings also highlight the importance of feedback quality. Specific, actionable feedback is more effective in enhancing creativity than vague or general comments. Leaders who engage in meaningful dialogue with team members contribute to deeper understanding and more innovative solutions.

5.4 Psychological Safety and Risk-Taking

Psychological safety is identified as a critical factor in fostering creativity in fashion labs. It refers to the perception that individuals can express ideas and take risks without fear of negative consequences. Leadership communication plays a central role in creating this sense of safety.

The analysis shows that leaders who communicate openly, listen actively, and respect diverse perspectives foster psychological safety. This encourages employees to share unconventional ideas and experiment with new approaches. In contrast, environments characterised by criticism and judgment discourage risk-taking and limit creativity.

In fashion labs, where innovation often involves uncertainty and failure, psychological safety is particularly important. Designers must be willing to experiment and take risks to develop novel ideas. Leadership communication that supports this process enhances creative outcomes.

5.5 Communication Structure and Network Dynamics

The structure of communication networks within fashion labs also influences creativity. The findings suggest that balanced communication networks, where information flows freely but is not overly centralised, are most conducive to creativity.

Highly centralised communication, where leaders control information flow, can limit creativity by restricting access to diverse perspectives. On the other hand, overly decentralised communication can lead to information overload and a lack of coordination. Effective leadership communication strikes a balance by facilitating structured yet flexible interactions.

Leaders play a key role in shaping communication networks by determining how information is shared and how interactions occur. For example, regular meetings, collaborative platforms, and informal discussions can enhance communication and creativity.

5.6 Digital Communication and Creative Collaboration

The increasing use of digital communication tools in fashion labs has transformed creative processes. The findings indicate that digital communication can enhance creativity by enabling real-time collaboration and access to diverse resources. However, it also presents challenges related to communication quality and engagement.

Leadership communication is crucial in navigating these challenges. Leaders must

ensure that digital communication remains clear, inclusive, and interactive. For instance, using collaborative platforms effectively can facilitate idea sharing and feedback.

However, the lack of non-verbal cues in digital communication can lead to misunderstandings. Leaders must compensate for this by providing clear and explicit communication. This finding aligns with research highlighting the importance of adapting communication strategies in digital environments (Wang & Wang, 2022).

5.7 Integrated Analysis

Overall, the findings demonstrate that leadership communication influences creative outcomes through multiple interconnected pathways. The relationship is not linear but dynamic, involving continuous interactions among communication practices, psychological factors, and organisational structures.

The analysis supports the proposed conceptual framework, highlighting the mediating roles of knowledge sharing, feedback-seeking behaviour, and psychological safety. These factors collectively enhance creativity by enabling idea generation, collaboration, and innovation.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the role of leadership communication in shaping creative outcomes in fashion labs. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence from secondary data, the discussion offers a deeper

interpretation of the mechanisms through which communication influences creativity.

6.1 The Centrality of Communication in Creative Leadership

One of the key contributions of this study is the emphasis on communication as a central dimension of leadership in creative environments. While traditional leadership research often focuses on styles and behaviours, this study highlights the importance of communication as the primary means through which leadership is enacted.

The findings suggest that leadership communication is not merely a supportive function but a core driver of creativity. This aligns with the Componential Theory of Creativity, which emphasises the role of environmental factors in influencing creative performance (Amabile, 1988). Leadership communication shapes these environmental factors by creating conditions that either enable or constrain creativity.

6.2 Mediating Mechanisms and Theoretical Integration

The study identifies several key mediating mechanisms, knowledge sharing, feedback-seeking behaviour, and psychological safety, that link leadership communication to creative outcomes. These mechanisms provide a nuanced understanding of how communication influences creativity.

From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, leadership communication fosters trust and reciprocity, encouraging employees to engage in knowledge sharing and creative behaviours (Blau, 1964). Similarly,

Knowledge Sharing Theory explains how communication facilitates the exchange of information, leading to innovation (Khassawneh et al., 2022).

Communication Climate Theory further enhances this understanding by highlighting the role of psychological safety. A positive communication climate encourages risk-taking and experimentation, which are essential for creativity.

6.3 Implications for Fashion Labs

The findings have important implications for fashion labs, where creativity is both a process and an outcome. Leaders in these environments must adopt communication practices that support collaboration, experimentation, and continuous learning.

First, leaders should prioritise open and transparent communication to facilitate knowledge sharing. This includes creating platforms for dialogue and encouraging participation from all team members. Second, leaders should provide constructive feedback to enhance learning and creativity. Third, fostering psychological safety should be a key priority, as it enables employees to take risks and explore new ideas.

The interdisciplinary nature of fashion labs also requires leaders to bridge differences in expertise and perspectives. Effective communication can help integrate these diverse perspectives into cohesive creative outputs.

6.4 Digital Transformation and Communication Challenges

The increasing reliance on digital communication in fashion labs presents both

opportunities and challenges. Digital tools enable collaboration across geographical boundaries, enhancing access to diverse ideas and resources. However, they also require leaders to adapt their communication strategies.

The findings suggest that leaders must be proactive in managing digital communication to maintain engagement and clarity. This includes using appropriate tools, setting clear expectations, and fostering interactive communication. Failure to do so can lead to miscommunication and reduced creativity.

6.5 Contribution to Theory and Practice

This study contributes to the literature by integrating multiple theoretical perspectives to explain the relationship between leadership communication and creativity. It extends existing research by focusing on communication as a central mechanism and applying it to the context of fashion labs.

From a practical perspective, the study provides actionable insights for leaders in creative industries. By understanding the role of communication in fostering creativity, leaders can design strategies that enhance innovation and performance.

6.6 Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The use of secondary data limits the ability to test the proposed framework empirically. Future research should conduct empirical studies to validate the findings and explore the impact of different communication styles on creativity.

Additionally, cultural and organisational factors may influence the relationship between leadership communication and creativity. Future studies could examine these factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores the critical role of leadership communication in shaping creative outcomes in fashion labs. By fostering knowledge sharing, encouraging feedback, and creating psychological safety, leaders can enhance creativity and innovation. As fashion labs continue to evolve, the ability to effectively manage communication will remain a key determinant of success.

7. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the impact of leadership communication on creative outcomes in fashion labs, a context characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration, rapid innovation cycles, and high levels of uncertainty. By adopting a qualitative approach based on secondary data, the research provides a comprehensive synthesis of how leadership communication influences creativity through multiple interconnected mechanisms.

The findings demonstrate that leadership communication is a central driver of creativity rather than a peripheral managerial function. Leaders who engage in open, transparent, and dialogic communication create environments that foster idea generation, experimentation, and collaborative innovation. In particular, the study identifies knowledge sharing,

feedback-seeking behaviour, and psychological safety as key mediating factors through which leadership communication enhances creative performance. These factors collectively enable individuals and teams to exchange ideas, refine concepts, and take risks, processes that are essential for creativity in fashion labs.

The study also underscores the importance of communication structure and digital communication in shaping creative outcomes. Effective leadership communication balances openness with coordination, ensuring that information flows freely while maintaining strategic alignment. In the context of digital transformation, leaders must adapt their communication strategies to sustain engagement and clarity in virtual environments.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature by integrating multiple perspectives, including the Componential Theory of Creativity, Social Exchange Theory, Knowledge Sharing Theory, and Communication Climate Theory. By positioning communication as a central mechanism of leadership, the study advances a more nuanced understanding of how creativity is managed in organisational settings. The proposed conceptual framework offers a foundation for future empirical research and theoretical development.

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide actionable insights for leaders in fashion labs and other creative industries. Leaders should prioritise fostering open communication climates, encouraging feedback, and promoting knowledge sharing to enhance creativity. Additionally, investing

in effective digital communication tools and practices can further support collaborative innovation.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its reliance on secondary data. Future research should empirically test the proposed framework and explore the role of cultural, organisational, and technological factors in shaping leadership communication and creativity. Overall, this study highlights that effective leadership communication is a critical enabler of creativity and innovation in contemporary fashion labs.

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