APPLYING PROJECT MANAGEMENT TO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PROJECT SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

The rise of creative economy in recent years has significantly changed the role of creativity in generating social and economic value. Many companies in the creative industries are project-based and their economic development is strictly related to successful implementation of projects. Key topic in the field of successful project management is leadership. However, there is still lack of research focusing on project leadership within the creative industries. Thus, the scope of this research was to explore and examine the relationship between leadership style and project success in creative industries. A web-based questionnaire that included questions on leadership styles and project success assessments to collect data from project stakeholders in the creative industries was administered. It was followed by semi-structured interviews that were conducted and analyzed following the thematic content analysis approach. The analyses of the data indicated that the preferable leadership style for successful projects is the transformational style, followed by the transactional leadership style, as both styles have a significant positive relationship to project success. The right balance between creativity and discipline is the major challenge for project managers in the creative industries. Thus, it is recommended to develop a supportive organizational culture and to continuously develop the project managers' soft skills and competences, focusing on inspirational motivation to enhance successful projects.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Project Success, Creative Industries.

INTRODUCTION

The *creative industries* and the sectors belonging to them have been widely investigated in the last decades with the aim of giving a generally recognized and established definition as well as defined boundaries Flew & Cunningham, (2013; Harper, 2011; O'connor, 2010; Potts, et al. (2008). Probably the most cited definition of creative industries is "*those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property*" (DCMC, 2001).

The relationship between creativity and economic growth has been recently obtained increasing attention, with the developing interest in the globalized economic environment and intensive use of creative products and outputs. Creative economy has emerged in the 21st century, driven by a sophisticated approach to consumption, defined as "*symbolic consumerism constructed of elaborate higher social demand*" (Levickaitė, 2011). In this framework, the creative industries have become a central

factor with regard to innovation, creativity and new methods in the service of creative economy (Granados, et al. 2017; Howkins, 2007; Lampel & Germain, 2018). Creative industries nowadays become more and more important for the development of society which depends on knowledge and is characterized by the predominance of creativity and innovation. Thus, it received substantial attention by research, especially with reference to strategic management and decisions, as well as governance. However, one important aspect was almost neglected so far, and it is related to the fact that the creative work is fundamentally project-based, a fact which "involves giving up hierarchical relationships, and clearly conveys a desire to break with the tendency to control, so as to liberate worker initiative" (Briand & Hodgson, 2011).

The current paper aims to shed light on this aspect by examining projects that are carried out by teams and managers in creative industries. Effective project leadership is essential in motivating teams to achieve the project goals and objectives. In the creative industries, project leadership might be a demanding task that bridges the gap between creative activities and managerial activities, or it might be a stimulating task that creates a synergy between different types of activities. Given the challenges of managing creative and aesthetic work in such sectors, this paper is focused on which leadership style in managing projects succeed to control the so-called "uncontrollable" aspects of such work, thus leading to successful teams and projects. The current study explores different types of leadership in creative industries projects and the relationship to project success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Projects in the Creative Industries

The creative industries have been received worldwide recognition in the last two decades and have benefitted from an array of studies that intended to better define what these industries are and what is the value they offer (Flew, 2012). Creative industries are perceived as a key factor for economic growth, demonstrated by more employment possibilities and related incomings (Abisuga Oyekunle & Sirayi (2018); Garnham, 2005; Piergiovanni & Santarelli, 2012; Siwek, 2000). Some previous studies have been carried out in the field of creative industries and in the related practices of management DeFillippi, et al. (2007); Jones, et al. (2004). Among them, for example, Marotto at al. (2007) illustrate the type of leadership and management styles promoting "*peak performance*" in an orchestra, Cohendet & Simon's (2007) analysis of video games illustrates how tight/loose controls are used to balance the demands of creativity and mass production,; Hotho & Champion (2011) study SME in the computer games industry to examine management practices in extremely innovative company, Mangematin et al. (2014) discuss the effect of digital technologies in creative industries on institutional logics, business models and creative processes.

Management in the creative industries is challenging due to the complex relationship between administrative work, art and technology which have to be coordinated in the right balance to achieve businesses objectives on one hand, and retaining creative integrity on the other hand (Bérubé & Demers, 2019; McKinlay, 2009; Townley, Beech, & McKinlay, 2009; Tschang, 2007). The creative industries, thus, face the challenge to keep the right balance between creativity and management. The first is associated with freedom and free spirit, while the other is associated with procedures and efficiency.

Despite many well-established creative industries, such as architecture and film, have always been organized through projects, in recent years, there is an increasing significance of "*projectivization*" at a global level (Lundin & Steinthórsson, 2003; Petrović & Sofronijević, 2017). These industries are now shifting towards projects-based organizational models in order to adapt themselves to unpredictable risks while remaining innovative. This shift can be specifically seen in many sectors of the creative industries, such as advertising, music and design, fashion, new media and videogames (Bettiol & Sedita, 2011; Cohendet & Simon, 2007; Cohendet, Llerena, & Simon, 2014; DeFillippi, 2009; Marcella & Rowley, 2015; Tschang, 2007). However, most of the studies on creative industries do not adopt the body of knowledge that has been evolved in the project management field of study.

Project Leadership Styles

In recent years, the interest in the role of leaders and the relationship between leadership and creativity has been grown (Bilton, 2006; Isaksen & Akkermans, 2011; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2008). Even though, in the context of project management, leadership has been well-studied in previous research and it is established as one of the most demanding competences at all levels of managing a project (Bennett, 2009; Emery & Barker, 2007; Müller & Turner, 2010; Turner & Muller, 2005), there is still a missing link between leadership in projects in the creative industries.

This study follows the well-established leadership theory that was initially presented by Bass (1985) who identified two main types of leadership: transformational and transactional. Transformational leadership is related to charisma, development of a vision, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, gets subordinates to meet job requirements by handing out rewards or punishments. The transformational leader is primarily people-focused while the transactional leader is primarily task-focused.. .

The four dimensions of transformational leadership are: charisma or idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration. Charisma, or idealized influence, refers to the personality and behavior of the leader which cause the followers to admire the leader. Inspirational motivation refers to the vision that the leader articulates and how much it stimulates the followers. Intellectual stimulation refers to the extent to which leaders can encourage their followers to challenge assumptions, take risks, and ultimately enhance creativity. Individualized consideration refers to the personal attitude of the leader towards each one of the followers and it might be translated to caring, mentorship or coaching (Judge & Piccolo 2004).

The three dimensions of transactional leadership are: contingent reward; management-by-exception (active); and management-by-exception (passive). Contingent reward refers to situations where the leader clearly defines the expectations and the positive or negative rewards that are associated with meeting or missing those expectations. The concept of management-by-exception refers to the degree to which the leader, based on leader-follower transactions, takes corrective actions Judge & Piccolo (2004). Active leaders are characterized by monitoring follower behavior, anticipating problems, and taking corrective actions before the behavior creates serious difficulties. On the contrary, passive leaders take actions only after the behavior has created problems Howell & Avolio (1993).

The additional form of leadership, actually non-leadership, is laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leadership is the avoidance or absence of leadership. Laissez-

faire leaders avoid making decisions, hesitate in taking actions, and are absent when needed (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). This paper follows the division of leadership styles that was presented by Avolio, et al. (1995), in which transactional leadership is assessed by contingent reward and management by exception - active, while passive avoidant leadership is assessed by management by exception -passive and laissez-faire.

As it has been underlined before, recent studies have paid attention to leadership as one of the most critical factors that influence employees' creativity, and how the leader enhance employees' creative behavior (Shin & Zhou, 2003; Sung & Choi, 2009). Studies on leadership styles and creativity address emotional intelligence Castro et al. (2012) and empowering leadership styles (Slåtten, Svensson, & Sværi, 2011; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). In the current study, the focus is on the well-established theories of transformational and transactional leadership which laid the foundation for more recent theories, though previous research results appear to be mixed (Moss & Ritossa, 2007; Tierney, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The purpose, therefore, is to investigate those leadership styles in the context of creative industries and the relationship with successful projects.

Project Success Criteria

The project management literature extensively examined project success from various perspectives (Atkinson, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Jugdev & Müller, 2005; Turner, 1999).

Pinto & Slevin (1988) studied project success factors and found that the need for communication channels was of extremely importance, as well as the ability of problem-solving. Although no explicit connection with project management or leadership style was done, they did mention that the absence of some of the characteristics of a project manager, such as human, administrative and influencing skills contribute to project failure. One of the most comprehensive contributions in literature on the project manager's competence and leadership style impact on project success is the study conducted by Turner & Müller (2005). They found that although the literature on project success "*has largely ignored the impact of the project manager, and his/her leadership style and competence, on project success*" (p.59) or as a success factor, literature on general management clearly suggests that the leadership style and competences of a manager is key to successful performance in businesses. Among some of the following works that have discussed this topic, there are those which examined the relationships between project managers' personality, management style and the types of projects (Dvir et al. 2006), others that investigated the relationships between leadership dimensions and project performance and success Geoghegan & Dulewicz, (2008); Rodney et al. (2009), and yet others which demonstrated that different leadership styles are appropriate for different types of projects (Müller & Turner, 2007). The underline assumption is that leaders are responsible, and thus critical, for achieving all the metrics of project success.

Jugdev & Müller (2005) give us a retrospective look at the understanding of project success in the literature over the last 40 years, by identification of four main periods in the project management literature. It started in the mid-1900's with measurement that is based on implementation and efficiency, which was translated into simple metrics such as time, cost and quality. Later, the important indicator of project success, demonstrated by stakeholder satisfaction, was added. The next stage was the development of integrated frameworks that take into consideration different

perspectives. The current approach for project success considers project management as a strategic asset of organizations, thus includes an array of relevant measures. In this context, the study conducted by Shenhar et al. (2001) is of particular importance. Their approach is based on the acceptance of project managers as not only operational but also strategic leaders. The definition and assessment of project success is therefore based also on a strategic management concept. A multidimensional and multi-observational framework for assessing project success, that takes into consideration different dimensions, was presented. It includes four basic universal success dimensions: project efficiency, impact on the customer, business success, and preparing for the future. In this study, we use the well-established and widely used Project Success Assessment Questionnaire (PSAQ) (Shenhar et al., 2001; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007) as the measure for project success.

Method

The objective of the study was to identify leadership styles of project managers in creative industries and to determine whether there is a relationship between leadership style and project success in this context. Both quantitative approach in a form of a survey that contains closed-ended questions to collect the numerical data, and quantitative approach in the form of semi-structured and open-ended interviews to collect the narrative, were applied in this study in order to gain a better understanding of the relationships between leadership styles and project success in the creative industries Ivankova, et al. (2006); Williams, (2007). The survey was used to measure the research variables based on well-established and reliable tools: assessment of leadership styles by the MLQ-5X, developed by Bass & Avolio (1995), and assessment of project success by the PSAQ by Shenhar & Dvir (2007). It was followed by semi-structured interviews with relevant professionals in the field of creative industries in order to deeper investigate specific issues.

Survey Sample and Procedure

The survey was administered through a web-based questionnaire based on a random sampling. A total of 250 companies were contacted via the Internet with a request to participate in the online survey. However, since the researchers are based in Europe, the majority of contacted companies and responding participants were Europeans, and more specifically Italians, as described below. In order to set the eligibility criteria for the study participants, the definition of creative sectors presented in the November 30th 2016 European Parliament Report was used (European Parliament, 2016). Thus, the following sectors were selected for the research: architecture, archives and libraries, artistic crafts, audio-visual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, performing and visual arts, publishing and radio.

The web-based questionnaire included an introduction letter and was composed of three parts. The first part captured data about the demographic profile of participants. In the second part, the MLQ-5X Short version Bass & Avolio (1995) was utilized, with Rights from Mind Garden, Inc. to administer the survey and collect data on. This part included 45 statements that can be presented either for self-assessment to be answered by leaders evaluating their own operations and behaviors (Leader Form) or as a 360° assessment for project team members to evaluate their immediate supervisors (Rater Form). Both versions asked participants to use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = "*Not at all*" to 4 = "*Frequently, if not always*" representing the

frequency of each behavior. Totally, the MLQ-5X consists of 12 factors of scoring key. Nine factors measure components of leadership style, while the other three factors measure leadership outcomes (extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction) deriving from the leadership style. The MLQ-5X validity has been widely addressed and demonstrated in previous studies (Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Mahar, 2004; Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008; Seyal & Rahman, 2014). All its 12 scoring key Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between .74 and .94 (Avolio et al., 1995) and it was used internationally by hundreds of researchers in their studies (Avolio, et al. 2004).

In the third part of the questionnaire, 10 items of the PSAQ (Shenhar & Dvir, 2007) have been used to measure the perceived project success, based on statements assessed by a 4-point Likert scale coded as 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 4 = "Strongly agree". Those statements were used to evaluate four main success dimensions: project efficiency, impact on the customer/user, business and direct organizational success, and preparing for the future.

The PSAQ is one of the most comprehensive tool and reliable scale found in the literature for measurement of multi-dimensional project success. It was first developed and validated by its authors (Shenhar & Dvir, 2007), showed sufficient reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .78 to .92 (Nwagbogwu, 2011) and used by other scholars in previous research (Ahmed & Azmi bin Mohamad (2016); de Oliveira Moraes & Barbin Laurindo (2013); Serrador & Turner (2015).

The survey was available online for three months, between May and July 2019. During this period, 50 responses were collected 50 from different participants, who had completed the questionnaire with responses to all the items.

As the following Table 1 shows, among the 50 survey participants, 19 (38%) were males, and 31 (62%) were females, with a distribution of age into four main categories: between 21 and 30 years old, between 31 and 40 years old, between 41 and 50 years old, and more than 50 years old; no responses were given by people younger than 21.

Table 1			
DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS BY AGE AND GENDER			
Age	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**	**%**
Female	31	0.62	62%
21 - 30	12	0.08	24%
31 - 40	8	0.24	16%
41 – 50	7	0.16	14%
> 50	4	0.14	8%
Male	19	0.38	38%
21 - 30	2	0.08	4%
31 - 40	9	0.04	18%
41 - 50	4	0.18	8%
> 50	4	0.08	8%
Total	50	1.00	100%

It is interesting to notice that the majority of respondents (62%) were in the age range of 21 to 40 years old, which implies to considerably young sample population. However, their years of experience is solid, with 29 respondents (58%) who have had their current employment for more than 10 years; 11 participants (22%) have had their current employment for a period between 5 and 10 years; 8 participants' experience ranged between 2 and 5 years of experience (16%); and only 2 participants (4%) had less than 2 years of experience in their working position. Survey results showed that 32 (64%) of the study participants had a role of project

manager/team leader while 16 (32%) took part in their project as team member. Two additional respondents served as the customer representatives.

Concerning nationality, as mentioned above, the majority of respondents were Europeans, and more specifically, Italians. A total of 38 participants were from Europe (76%), and the majority of them were Italians; 9 respondents were from the UK (18%), and the last 3 answers came from people in India (2%) and North America (4%), respectively.

The participants reported on working in a variety of sectors in the creative industries: performing and visual arts (28%); cultural heritage (24%); audio-visual, including film, television, digital, video games, and multimedia (22%); publishing and radio (6%); design, including fashion design (6%); and others (festivals, music advertising, architecture, archives and libraries, and auctions) (14%). With regard to the organizations the respondents represent, t 82% considered their company a project-based organization and 76% reported that their company has an organizational unit for managing projects and programs.

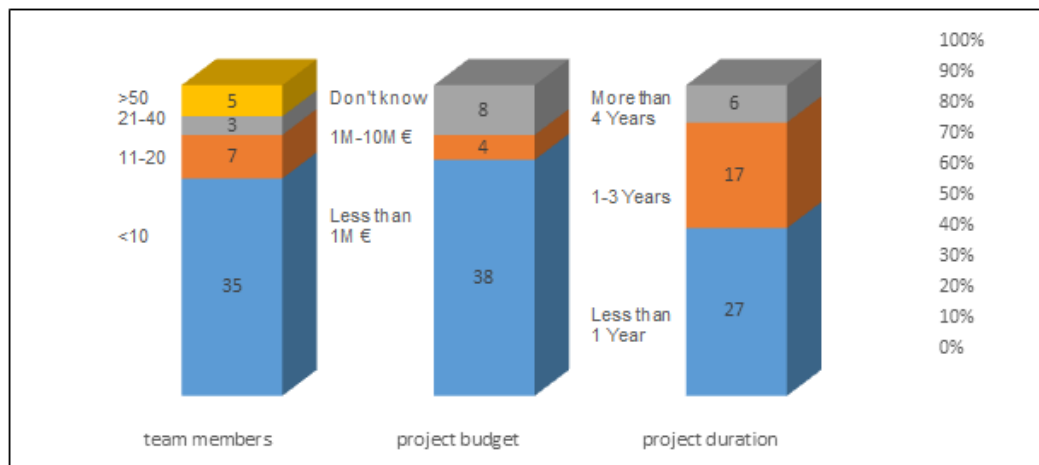The following Figure 1 chart presents the main project characteristics as reported by the survey respondents.

FIGURE 1
SURVEY PROJECTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Interviews Sample and Procedure

The semi-structured interviews was used as secondary data collection tool, in order to get a better understanding of the survey results, interpretations, observations and insights, and to explore attitudes, values and motives based on personal perspectives Bell, et al. (2018); Creswell & Poth, (2017); Miles & Gilbert, (2005); Smith, (1975). The selection of interviewees was based on participation in the online survey. Participants were asked by email if they could participate in the interviews after taking part in the online survey. No pre-defined criteria were used to select individuals for interview other than their participation in the online survey, in order to get a randomly representation of different working positions and different sectors in the creative industries.

Interviews were conducted either through phone calls or e-conversations on Skype with each one of the participants, and lasted around 20 minutes. Four interviewees participated in this part of the study. They represent different sub-sectors of the creative industries and serve in different positions in their organizations. The

first one is from the educational department of a private collection in charge of a networking project; the second is a project manager who is leading an international event. The third is a radio broadcaster who is carrying out a project with the aim of creating a real columnist radio program, and the fourth interviewee is a former manager of multinational companies who is working as a creative technology expert.

The interviews covered the respondents' subjective conceptualizations of project leadership style, different attributes of effective leadership and the influence on team members, as well as personal views on the effects of leadership on project success. Detailed notes were taken during the interviews and the transcript were analyzed by the researchers using thematic content analysis approach based on grounded theory where categories and themes emerge during the analysis (Easterby-Smith, et al. 2012; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Survey Descriptive Statistics

Respondent ratings were analyzed from the MLQ-5X Short for transformational, transactional, passive-avoidant leadership styles, and outcomes of leadership; and from the PSAQ for project success and its subscales project efficiency, impact on the customer/user, business and direct organizational success, and preparation for the future. A summary of the descriptive statistics is presented in the following Table 2.

Table 2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SURVEY DATA					
Variable	**N**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**Mean**	**SD**
Transformational leadership	50	0.85	3.90	3.10	0.58
IIA	50	0.75	4.00	2.96	0.55
IIB	50	0.50	4.00	3.11	0.74
IM	50	0.00	4.00	3.31	0.78
IS	50	0.75	4.00	3.12	0.71
IC	50	0.25	4.00	3.00	0.79
Transactional leadership	50	1.25	3.63	2.63	0.61
CR	50	1.00	4.00	3.08	0.72
MBEA	50	0.50	3.50	2.18	0.76
Passive avoidant leadership	50	0.00	2.75	1.02	0.74
MBEP	50	0.00	3.75	1.21	0.89
LF	50	0.00	3.00	0.83	0.78
Outcomes of leadership	50	0.44	4.00	2.99	0.77
EE	50	0.00	4.00	2.89	0.92
EFF	50	1.00	4.00	3.12	0.69
SAT	50	0.00	4.00	2.88	0.89
Project success	50	1.80	4.00	3.39	0.50
S_1 Project efficiency	50	1.00	4.00	3.29	0.71
S_2 Impact on the customer/user	50	2.33	4.00	3.64	0.48
S_3 Business and direct org. success	50	1.33	4.00	3.10	0.75
S_4 Preparation for the future	50	1.50	4.00	3.54	0.68
Valid N (listwise)	50				

Note: Transformational leadership and subscales: IIA=Idealized influence (attributes), IIB=Idealized influence (behaviors), IM=Inspirational motivation, IS=Intellectual stimulation, IC=Individual consideration; Transactional leadership and subscales:

CR=Contingent reward, MBEA=Management by exception (active); Passive avoidant leadership and subscales: MBEP=Management by exception (passive), LF=Laissez-faire; Outcomes of leadership and subscales: EE=Extra effort, EFF= Effectiveness, SAT=Satisfaction. The MLQ-5X Short was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 maximum points. The PSAQ was based on a 4-point rating scale from 1 to 4 points.

Overall, transformational leadership recorded the highest mean score (M=3.10). The lowest leadership style mean was scored by passive avoidant leadership with (M=1.02) while transactional leadership recorded a mean of (M=2.63). Focusing on transformational leadership subscales, participants evaluated their manager or themselves lowest in idealized influence (attributes) (M=2.96), and highest on inspirational motivation (M=3.31). Additionally, outcomes of leadership demonstrate a general satisfaction from respondent ratings (M=2.99), with the highest evaluation deriving from leader effectiveness (M= 3.12).

Relationships between Leadership Styles and Project Success

A correlation analysis was conducted to ascertain whether a relationship (positive or negative) exists between each one of the main leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant) and the four measures of project success (project efficiency, impact on the customer/user, business and direct organizational success, and preparation for the future). The following Table 3 summarizes the results.

Table 3 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PROJECT SUCCESS									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Transformational leadership	1								
2. Transactional leaderhsip	0.78**	1							
3. Passive avoidant leadership	-0.433**	-0.350*	1						
4. Outcomes of Leadership	0.840**	0.677**	-0.485**	1					
5. Project Efficiency	0.086	0.05	0.028	0.222	1				
6.Impact on the customer/user	0.186	0.176	-0.232	0.323*	0.628**	1			
7.Business and direct organizational success	0.335*	0.372**	-0.383**	0.438**	0.416**	0.460**	1		
8. Preparation for the future	0.604**	0.563**	-0.446**	0.653**	0.123	0.414**	0.612**	1	
9. Project success	0.393**	0.385**	-0.352**	0.530**	0.684**	0.785**	0.867**	0.702**	1

[*]Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
[**]Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Overall, a significant positive correlation was found between both transformational and transactional leadership styles and project success, and a significant negative correlation was found between passive avoidant leadership style and project success.

In order to distinguish between participant scores representing their perception of success or failure in the project, a mean score of 3.39 or higher indicated the project was overall considered to be successful while if the mean scored lower than 3.39, projects were considered, on average, less successful. Overall, respondents indicated their projects as particularly successful in their impact on the customer/user that recorded the highest mean of (M=3.64), and it also recorder the lowest standard deviation for project success (SD=0.48). Preparation for the future subscale also

scored a considerably high mean score of (M=3.54). The lowest subscale scored by project success was business and direct organizational success (M=3.10).

Specifically, there was a significant moderate positive correlation between transformational leadership and business and direct organizational success with r =.335 (p<.05); and between transformational leadership and preparation for the future with r =.604 (p<.01). Similar results were found between transactional leadership and business and direct organizational success with r =.372 (p<.05); and between transactional leadership and preparation for the future with r =.563 (p<.01). The passive avoidant leadership style was found to be significantly negatively related to business and direct organizational success, and to preparation for the future with r =-.383 (p<.05) and r =-.446 (p<.05), respectively. Although it was well expected to find the transformational leadership style positively related to project success, and to find the passive avoidant leadership style negatively related to project success, it was interesting to see that also the transactional leadership style is positively related to project success. Moreover, the relationship to project success, which was evaluated on four criteria, was clearly derived from the two business and strategic criteria rather than the two efficiency and operational criteria.

Semi-Structured Interviews Findings

Follow-up interviews were administered as an additional research method with the aim to allow detailed discussions and elaboration on specific topics such as the role of organizational culture in creative projects, specific factors that appears to motivate creative people in the working team, and peculiar characteristics that interviewees perceived as important for leaders in such a specific working field dominated by creativity. All the interviews were conducted in Italian, since the interviewees were all Italians. The main representative insights presented in the following sections were translated to English by the researchers. However, the qualitative research method was based on the interviews' full transcripts, which had been carefully read, coded, and analyzed following a thematic content analysis approach to identify repeated themes and concepts DeCuir-Gunby, et al. (2011).

The interviewees represent different sectors in the creative industries: cultural heritage, events and communications, publishing and radio, and creative technologies for art. These sectors were not previously chosen but, eventually, they appeared to provide a diverse spread of design process outputs. Since the main purpose of this second stage of analysis was to explore additional and extensive themes to stage one, the focus was on asking participants about their experiences in guiding creative projects and professionals (or in being guided as creative professional), and skills, characteristics and peculiarities related to that role as perceived by them. Once analyzed, three main themes appeared to be significantly relevant: the organizational culture, leadership skills and motivation approach in leading creative people, and the seeking of a right balance between creative freedom and discipline.

Concerning organizational culture, all interviewees mentioned that developing an organizational culture that stimulates creative freedom and affecting their willingness to propose new ideas is an imperative. Although, the perceived presence of attentive supervisors was perceived as important in order to better feel an atmosphere of psychological safety. The following quotes illustrate how some of the interviewees perceived organizational culture inside their company:

"Our organizational approach is very horizontal. In the team, every person is responsible for its operational scope, always with the supervision by me and my partner." (Interviewee 1, events and communication).

"It is very important to give everyone the freedom to work independently and the opportunity to express new ideas and suggestions." (Interviewee 2, private Collection).

With regards to organizational culture in creative industry organizations (in this case, events and communication, and private collection), it is important to foster autonomy without oppressing it with highly structuralized operations and imposed authority.

Overall, the perceived importance of leadership on the success or failure of a project was very high. All the interviewees stated that a good approach by the leader towards her or his team would enhance the probability of success. Regarding leadership skills and characteristics mostly required in creative projects, answers varied. As two interviewees described:

"Leadership is essential to project success, but also in the organizational part of it, always complex. [...] Credibility, enthusiasm, competence, the ability to assume risks and responsibilities, and ethics are particularly important as creative leaders. [The factors that motivate the team are] the sharing of a vision, a culture, an atmosphere. [...] We work for something that we feel being our and in which we recognize ourselves. The stressful part of the work in the project is on us leading them, while for the team we try to give them the pleasure of working well." (Interviewee 1, events and communication).

"Particularly, in the creative industries it is very important to have a very innovative vision capacity since creativity is closely linked to innovation." (Interview 4, creative technologies for art).

Creating a shared vision was widely perceived as a contributing factor to successful leadership, but in some cases the importance of *"great flexibility and a spirit of sacrifice." (Interviewee 2, private Collection)* was also considered vital. Thus, overall, the interviewees expressed their vision of leaders as being responsible for creating a shared vision, communicating it, and motivating people without setting too many boundaries. These cases demonstrate that the attention was drawn on characteristics that may be similar to those expressed both in the transformational and transactional approach to leadership.

One Additional ability which all the interviewees agreed on appeared to be the capacity of understanding how to approach the working team on the basis of their characteristics. As one interviewee stated: *"It always starts from people and their quality." (Interviewee 1, events and communication).* Many are the variables to be taken into account in skills shifting (culture, personality, experience or goal orientation of the followers, etc.), and today a good leader may need to use different leadership styles depending of what forces are involved between the followers, the leader, and the context.

Lastly, participants were asked to express the major challenges arising from managing creative people and projects. As one interviewee explained:

"The sectors characterizing the creative industries are many and in continuous expansion, the competition is very strong and the characteristics of creative teams or of whom is managing creative projects are largely different from [other sectors]. They must always be planned and organized but it is necessary to take into account the personality both of the team members, less rigid but also probably less well-organized [...], often with greater possibilities of failure and with more uncertain rules. We need to be creative, visionary and have a propensity to foresee the future." (Interviewee 4, creative technologies for art).

This quote perfectly explained one of the most discussed challenges in managing creative professionals. The search for a balance between creativity and boundaries appeared vital because *"Creatives don't really like rules and structures; they are undisciplined by definition." (Interviewee 3, radio and publishing)*; Thus, the

major challenge recognized was to give discipline without preventing people to fully express their creativity.

DISCUSSION

Successful projects require completing the scope and providing quality deliverables, on time, within budget, and to satisfy the customer/users requirements and expectations. Project professionals, particularly project managers and team leaders, in various organizations face the challenge of leading their teams throughout the project in order to meet all these requirements. Thus, leadership is one of the most important and essential factors that synergistically integrates profession, skills, competences, behavior and attitudes to achieve the project goals and accomplish the objectives successfully. This study extends the existing body of knowledge with analysis of leadership styles and project success in the context of the creative industries. Although previous empirical studies have given special attention to the positive effect of leadership style on project success and creativity (e.g., Cohendet & Simon, 2007; Cohendet et al., 2014; Hotho & Champion, 2011; Mangematin et al., 2014; Marotto et al., 2007; Müller & Turner, 2010; Turner & Muller, 2005), to the best of our knowledge no previous study investigated the specific relationship between leadership style and project success within this particular context.

This study investigated the relationships between the three main styles of leadership identified by one of the most widely recognized leadership theories, the Full Range of Leadership Theory (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles) as well as the outcomes of leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1995) and the different measures that constitute the project success (Shenhar et al., 2001; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007).

The study results show a significant relationship between transformational and transactional leadership style and two components of project success: business and direct organizational success, and preparation for the future. Those results may imply that the most important measure of projects success nowadays is not necessarily efficiency, i.e., meeting the scope, schedule and budget, but rather a wider perspective that takes into consideration the current and future strategic business objectives achievements. This is in line with previous research that reviewed project success assessments (Jugdev & Müller, 2005).

Furthermore, the findings reveal that outcomes of leadership have the highest positive correlation with project success variable and three of its four measures, thus reinforcing the assumptions on the vital importance of leadership in project success within the creative industries.

The combination of results from quantitative and qualitative methods, i.e., the web-based survey and the semi-structured interviews, confirm that project managers leadership style plays an important role in the success of a project. Those results are consistent with previous studies which empirically examined the relevance and impact of transformational leadership in project-oriented organizations, with significant effect on outcomes including project success Aga, et al. (2016); Anantatmula (2010); Gundersen, et al. (2012); Yang, et al. (2011) both in creative and non-creative industries. Karen Mallia (2019), in her book on leadership in the creative industries stated that "*most often, successful leaders in the creative industries are transformational leaders [and] the transformational style of leadership is often called creative leadership in management literature*" (p. 34). She also referred to the role of transactional leadership in the creative industries, giving the example of Jeff Bezos,

CEO of Amazon, as one of the "leaders dictate what needs to be done, and what subordinates need to do to achieve what they want in terms of external or extrinsic rewards […]" (p. 35). The positive relationship between transactional leadership style and project success, which was also supported by the current study, can be explained as follows. A company working across many creative sub-sectors would need to be highly organized and structuralized in order to make each department working efficiently and the overall company working synergistically together. Transactional leadership style is more appropriate in large teams and organizations that work on short-term projects. In such circumstances, there is a need for strict guiding directions by the leader in order to achieve the specific short-term objectives. The current study findings also highlight the importance of contingent reward attitude showing that leaders giving higher contingent rewards to followers tend to achieve higher level of preparation for the future on the business level. Additionally, transactional leadership can be a precondition for effective transformational leadership (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). Indeed, the results show a strong positive correlation between these two leadership styles (r=0.787, p<0.01) (see Table 3), which is in line with previous studies Aga et al., (2016); Tyssen, et al. (2014), and it is now also confirmed for projects in the creative industries.

In the context of creative industries, which is a developing field in the 21st century (Garnham, 2005; Piergiovanni et al., 2012; Siwek, 2000), and will probably offer more and more projects to be planned and managed in the following years, the transformational leadership, which is also known as *Creative Leadership*, appears to be the most successful. Leaders in the creative industries face many unique challenges in order to find the right balance between encouraging followers to optimize their productivity while also fostering their talent and creative freedom. Thus, a special focus should be given to communication skills, flexibility, and the agility to adapt to high uncertain and complex environment.

CONCLUSION

This study, like many others, is not free from limitations. First, the sample of this study was small (N=50) and focused on Italian organizatios. In addition, for follow-up interviews, a convenient small sample of professionals was selected based on voluntarism and availability of the interviewees. In order to obtain more statistical power to reinforce the findings, a world-wide inclusive survey is needed. Another confounding aspect in the study was the high level of heterogeneity both among the companies analyzed, and in the projects recorded. This, together with the small sample size, particularly affected the opportunity to draw practical conclusions on the differences among the investigated creative sectors and to express generalization on the findings. This study would have undoubtedly benefited from having a larger sample including more representatives for each sector analyzed, which is highly recommended for future studies. An additional limitation was the correlational nature of the research, which prevent any cause-effect relationship to be drawn from the results. Alternatively, future studies may adopt more experimental designs in order to be able to identify causal relationships among the observed variables. Specifically, a casual comparative study through regression analysis could be beneficial in examining whether a project manager leadership style has an influence on creative project success and whether its impact is direct or indirect according to variables, such as demographic factors, projects characteristics and sector attributes. Additionally, a more comprehensive qualitative study would help to deeper understand opinions,

perceptions, and feelings from creative professionals on the relationship between leadership, creativity, and project success. Since this was the first study investigating this relationship in the field of creative industries, further examinations will extend and deepen the understanding of these important topics.

Creativity has somehow always been at the core of business, but maybe because it was considered unmanageable, it has not been at the top of the management agenda. The shift to a more creative-driven economy has been abrupt and, today, many questions need to be answered. The rise of creative economy has significantly changed the role of creativity in generating social and economic value, and the predictions for future prospective on this phenomenon are very high. Since the majority of creative industries are project-based, the predicted economic development of the creative sectors is strictly related to the successful implementation of new projects. In recent years, the current way of designing and approaching the realization of projects within the creative industries are changing and, therefore, new project management approaches need to be investigated. One key topic in the field of project management that has been widely recognized is the topic of leadership, which was addressed in the current study.

If creative industries could better understand how to improve their project success rate through improvements of their leaders' approaches to creative teams, then the overall creative economy also may improve. As leadership, including soft and essential skills, can be learned and developed, it is recommended that project managers in the creative industries will continuously develop those skills and competences.

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