



# **LINKING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVITY IN TEAMS: A CASE STUDY OF CREATIVE COMPANIES**

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**Abstract:** In recent years there has been a marked increase in the study of the creativity in the companies and the effects of personal traits to promote it but the numerous investigations presents a problem: a general lack of focus on links between leadership and creativity. Additionally, little work has been done examining the effects of leadership on highly creative people. Furthermore numerous authors have shown that a transformational leadership style can foster the employee creativity. The purpose of this study is to prove that fundamental aspects in the transformational leadership style truly foster creativity in highly creative workers.

**Key words:** creativity, leadership, transformational leadership, advertising agencies, social network, graphic design, high creative workers.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays it is essential for a company to incorporate creativity in the process as it is necessary to survive in an increasingly dynamic market that is in constant change where consumers are increasingly demanding. A company that does not innovate is destined to disappear from the market. So companies have had to adapt to a substantial change in recent decades, therefore try to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage. Creativity is an aspect that can be applied at all levels of the organization of a company creating new products, logistics, customer relations, human resources, etc. But there are some types of company where creativity is an essential aspect for its operation, such as advertising agencies, new development of social and graphic design.

Creativity is essential for commercial success in the twenty-first century as it plays a significant role in the successful resolution of challenging organizational and social problems (Rosa et al., 2008). Nowadays creativity is becoming one of the most important business treat due the strong relationship it have with innovation and competitiveness. As Van den Broeck said (2008) the recent change in the economy moving from knowledge based activities to creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and imagination.

Creativity refers to the generation of new and useful ideas about products, services, processes and procedures in organizations (Amabile et al., 1996). Furthermore, creativity can also mean employees using a diversified range of their skills, abilities, knowledge, insights and experience to generate new ideas to decision making, problem solving and performing tasks efficiently (Oldham and Cummings, 1996).

The term of creativity has been very studied during the last years to different levels due to the great importance that has in some companies where it is the key of the success. For example in the area of the investigation, the science, design and specially in the advertising agencies, social network and graphic design. Many authors who have studied the creativity in advertising agencies have focused in exploring the personal characteristics of the creative workers as the creative capacity and the skills of motivation, and in organizational factors to promote it.

On the other hand there is another kind of investigators who coincide with that the leaders of the creative or teams managers have not received the necessary attention and are these who are designated like creative and who manage the tasks that

produce creativity and therefore they have a more wide perspective. These leaders can contribute a wider vision of the management of the creativity because they are insiders that have developed his professional career inside a creative environment.

Shin and Zhou (2003) explained that employee creativity can be fostered by a transformational leadership style. Study on transformational leadership has provided great insight into the effect of leaders on organizations, by appealing through visionary behavior, for example, motivating learning, encouraging growth and visualizing the future (Grant, 2012; Vera and Crossan, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to prove that fundamental aspects in the transformational leadership style truly foster creativity in highly creative workers. As mentioned above, we believe that there is one kind of business where creativity is a critical factor of their business and without which wouldn't be capable to operate: advertising agencies, social network and graphic design.

The study was performed using questionnaires based on Transformational Leadership Scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990), which examines five transformational factors of leadership: articulates vision, provides appropriate role model, fosters the acceptance of goals and collaboration, provides individualized support, and offers intellectual stimulation. These questionnaires were delivered and completed by art director and art director of the Publips agency based in Madrid, executive creative director and creative director of the agency Peanut & Monkeys, the creative director of the agency Double You, the creative director the J. Walter Thompson agency based in Barcelona and creative Director, the Project Manager of the social network Muaaka and the coordinator of graphic design in the newspaper La Directa.

The case study is organized as follows: The first section is described a theoretical review of creativity. First the study begins with a conceptual research of concepts of creativity and creativity in organizations. A brief explanation of creativity as main product and the creative worker profile. Then the concept of leadership and style of creative leadership related to the generation of creativity is explained. The definitions of these terms will be supported by the definitions that several researchers have obtained about these before.

Then the methodology used as a qualitative research through a questionnaire to the leaders of creative teams. Next results of data analysis are presented. Finally conclusions, future lines of study and limitations are then described.

## **2. THEORETICAL APPROACH**

In this part of the study, the concept of creativity defined by several authors through a review of the literature was analyzed. This study will focus on the concept of creativity in as a principal product and then in creative workers focused on creative profiles. Subsequently, a review of the concept of leadership which will also focus on the concept of transformational leadership is discussed.

### **2.1. What is creativity in organizations?**

Creativity is the production of novel and useful ideas (Amabile, 1988). Creativity is the foundation on which innovation relies (Argabright, McGuire and King, 2012). These ideas are either related to the organization's business, such as new products, or to the organization itself, such as new procedures (Gilson and Shalley, 2004). Creativity is a continuum (Amabile, 1996) with minor adaptations of existing ideas at the low and radical new ideas at the high end (Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2003).

The definition of creativity has been made by several researchers throughout history, but it was not until the mid-twentieth century when many researchers began studying creativity. It has been discussed at various levels, individually and in a business environment.

Individual creativity is defined by Oldham and Cummings (1996), they said that creativity employees use a range of their diversified skills, abilities, knowledge, views, and experience to generate new ideas, for decisions making, problem solving, and completion of tasks in efficient ways (Oldham and Cummings, 1996). Creativity has a different role depending on the job executed. Creativity can either be a part of employee's job requirement or go beyond them (Unsworth, 2001). Some authors related creativity to behaviors for example Sternberg and Lubart (1999) explain that creativity is exhibited in behavior, as in "the ability to produce work both novel and that is appropriate, (ie useful)". Creative Individuals have the characteristics of awareness and sensitivity to problems, good memory, and a high degree of adaptability (Evans, 1991). Jevnaker (2005) give a description of creative individuals and he considered that intuition, risk taking, spontaneity and innovation are all elements of the creative process. Jevnaker also include in his studies of business and organization that the



characteristics of creative thinkers include rebelliousness, playfulness, intuition, humor, and irony.

Creativity in the company can be defined as a key to increase the competitive advantage of a firm (Amabile, 1988). Amabile (1996) referred creativity as the generation of new and useful ideas, concerning products, services, processes, and procedures in organizations ability. Other authors define that creativity is one tool to solve problems and add value to the organization Ideas to combine in new ways to solve problems and exploit opportunities (Stacey et al., 2000). Creativity can be a mixture of free expression and discipline, that an entire process transforms thoughts into value (Kao, 1997).

However others have focused on the definition of consequences or results of the application of creativity in the company. Creativity enables organizations to develop innovative strategies, new products and new ways of working that are crucial for survival in highly competitive and dynamic business environments (Andrews and Smith 1996). To conclude Amabile (2000), that is a referent in creativity issues, explained in his investigations that creativity can benefit all departments in the organization to help them succeed despite the fact that many companies believe that creativity is just part of the marketing department.

### *2.1.1. Creative profiles*

The creative individual has been defined as someone who “must dare to differ, make changes, stand out, challenge traditions, make waves, bend rules – and make mistakes and fail” (Davis & Rimm, 1998).

Work that requires high levels of creativity has different characteristics to most jobs; this implies that creative workers have characteristics that distinguish them from others. Highly creative people have been identified as highly autonomous, professional, motivated and critical of the average person (Hennessey, 2010). The creative persons realize tasks with high levels of risk in his work, with a lot of efforts creatives that they can lead to the failure. The creative workers are less on the market and therefore the companies have difficulties in the recruitment, the contracting and retain them. A trend exists studied to that this type of workers have an intrinsic motivation.

Traditionally creative personality focused mainly in personality factors and cognitive process. Some studies have analyzed the importance of personality factors as predictors of creative achievements. Taken the most relevant as a whole, the main personality traits include the following aspects. The first one is risk-taking defined as the creative individual's willingness to take a stand and challenge the status quo (Michael, 1979). The second one is related to self-confidence the tendency to have a high regard of her/himself (MacKinnon, 1960). The next is tolerance of ambiguity as the ability to acknowledge complexity and even disorder without becoming overly anxious (MacKinnon, 1960). Next is need for achievement: creative people are generally ambitious individuals with an inner need to accomplish a combination of personal and economic goals (MacKinnon, 1962) and last of personality factors is autonomy and non-conformity – the desire towards autonomy in their work and social environment and a lack of concern for social norms (Buel, 1965).

A handful of studies exhibit a clear relationship between individuals' cognitive processes and creative performance. Another part of research has focused on specific cognitive process assigned to creative individuals. The main cognitive abilities correlated with creative achievement include mental flexibility as the ability to break form routine constraints if s/he is to stay open and unblocked in order to create some space for new problem-solving strategies (Majaro, 1992). Other aspect included is remote associations to refer the ability to recognize similarities and make associations among elements or ideas in new ways (Mednick and Houston, 1963). And the last is suspension of judgement: creative individuals' need to tolerate uncertainty and hold back from accepting the first possible solution that comes to mind so that they give their ideas time to flow (Majaro, 1992).

Recent writings have also identified that highly creative employees exhibit a helping behavior that mobilizes the generation of new ideas and assists in problem solving (Hargadon and Sutton, 2000). Organizations today face complex problems involving the collaboration of individuals with different knowledge and skills. Instead creativity in generating only have such knowledge or skills is not enough. Creative employees are required to exhibit a helping behavior, such as assisting colleagues with heavy workloads or providing constructive suggestions when needed.

The creative director of one of the most influential advertising agencies in France and also worldwide and with more than 40 years of experience in the sector, Jacques Séguéla, he assures that the big creative minds in general are not very intelligent in the

traditional sense but they have another kind of intelligence. They have a great aptitude to absorb a lot of information that they transform into good ideas.

On the other hand investigations exist as that of Goffee and Jones (2007) that establishes that the creative leaders must be creative geniuses of their area and this is coherent if we think that the leaders get their power from previous successes, though since I have mentioned previously it is a question of a work with many risks of failure that they can separate the leader of his ascents.

## **2.2. The role of leadership in creativity**

A leader must be able to leverage more than his/her own capabilities. He must be capable of inspiring other people to do things without actually sitting on top of them with a checklist” (Bennis, 1989). The leader's role is important in an organization. According to several studies leader features not revolve around an authoritarian paper but leaders should influence the actions of the team members to work together to obtain the desired objectives. Leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Tannenbaum et al, 1961). Employee expectations of the manager's role include receiving guidance, support and resources from their managers to accomplish goals (House and Dessler 1974).

The traditional creativity study presents another problem: a general lack of focus on links between leadership and creativity (Hunter et al, 2011). For years the creation of creativity or creative products has been considered to be the result of an exceptional effort at the personal level and normally generated in isolation that stops and limits creativity. Nevertheless some studies exist as the realized one for Stenmark, Shipman and Mumford (2011) that show a consistent pattern of results that indicate that the effective leadership is related to the creativity and the generation of creative ideas. A study of Sung and Choi (2012) demonstrated the effects of team knowledge management on creativity were positive in terms of collective creativity. The results of some investigations demonstrate that there is a positive correlation between creativity, innovation and leadership. This pattern of results and an increase of the interest in many investigators have made promote in the last years several investigations that relate the leadership to the generation of creative ideas.

The position and the responsibilities of a leader give knowledge and comprehension brings over of promoting the creative activity. Leaders primarily work to initiate employees' creative abilities so that they can find creative solutions for problems (Boerner et al., 2007). In addition the leaders have influence great in his creative teams, and therefore in the creativity as output. Amabile and Khaire (2008) defended in a colloquium in Harvard Business School that the principal tasks of a leader is support of generation of ideas of all the teams members, to promote the diversity of ideas and selection of the best ideas.

On the other hand we have evidence according to Reisman (2011) of which the highly creative persons are only and operate in forms fundamentally different from the average person on having taken part in a creative task. Leadership is different if we talk about creative persons or not, we can affirm that the leader has the only paper and of great importance in the work teams. An important reason of this opportunity they are the daily interactions with the workers. The leaders have a global perspective of the project that allows them to see the way of integrating the efforts of the workers of the creative team.

As is mentioned above the kind of work where the creativity is an essential part of the business has notable differences with the work that most of workers realize. Creatives need to execute complex tasks with originality and it's because of this reason that the leadership should be managed differently. Due to personal characteristics of creative individuals based on autonomy, professionalism and motivation is possible that team members don't be interested in traditional techniques like authority influence and conformity. Creative workers have a major responsibility and assume risks in their work because of the possibility of take decisions that lead them to failure. Considering these particularities of creative work and workers, it is expected that the leaders of these teams use unique processes influence to lead them.

In the past twenty years there has been an impact on the study of factors affecting the workers and therefore their returns. For several years already it is taken a trend in which increasing the creativity of companies and motivate employees and develop their creative skills by creating a creative environment. As well as several researchers developed adequate theories and techniques change. Shin and Zhou (2003) explained that employee creativity can be fostered by a transformational leadership style.

It is for this reason on that we are going to focus on the study of a transformational style of effective leadership for companies on that the generation of the creativity is an

aspect fundamental and necessary for his development integrated by highly creative persons who need a different kind of leadership.

### *2.2.1 Transformational leadership and employee creativity.*

Study on transformational leadership has provided great insight into the effect of leaders on organizations, by appealing through visionary behavior, for example, motivating learning, encouraging growth and visualizing the future (Grant, 2012; Vera and Crossan, 2004). Transformational leadership has commanded a measure of attention from researchers who have examined its consequence on multiple work-associated outcomes such as commitment, performance, and creativity (Lowe et al., 1996; Judge and Piccolo, 2004). The finding of these studies have demonstrate how effective leader manage is in the generation of creativity for the employees.

Transformational leaders tend to encourage their followers to deliver outcomes beyond their expected level, which is possible through invoking employees' higher level beliefs and values (Bushra et al., 2011; Chi and Pan, 2012). According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders are those who can affect their followers by increasing conventional goals and helping them to boost their self-confidence at work. Transformational leadership has four important dimensions (Bass and Avolio, 1994): idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Idealised influence, also referred to as charisma, refers to those leaders who have the power and influence to make their followers accept them as their role model. Transformational leaders have high moral standards and values, and adhere to an ethical code of conduct, providing a vision and mission to their followers, thus followers have respect and admiration for their leader (Northouse, 2004).

Transformational leaders are those who can successfully transform the focus of their followers from instant self-interests to an isolated collective vision and inspire them to perform beyond their duties (Rubin et al., 2005). As propagated by Bass (1985), transformational leaders have an apparent vision for their organization and also have the skills to encourage employees to start thinking in a new way in order to devise a creative solution for a given problem. Although the term has studied a lot of leadership in recent years, transformational leadership has received a great deal of attention in numerous studies. According to Elkins and Keller (2003), a transformational leader has a close relation to other determinants that help build a creative workplace; these

include having a clear vision, encouragement, autonomy and promotion of innovation and challenges. Podsakoff and colleagues suggest (1990) there are five key behaviors associated with transformational leaders. The first one is Identifying and articulating a vision-behavior on the part of the leader. The purpose of foster a common vision is the identification of new opportunities for joint development organization and engaging and inspiring the team with a future vision. Secondly we find provide an appropriate model-behavior by the leader sets a role model behavior by team members that helps to strength the values promoted by the leader in their performances. Thirdly we find that a leader should encourage the acceptance of objectives and collaboration on these by the team members. This behavior is aimed at promoting cooperation between members of a group and work together to achieve a common goal. The next aspect is providing individualized support. This behavior by the leader suggests that him or her respects group members and care about your feelings and needs and provides support for the individual requirements and their problems. The last aspect that defines a transformational leader is the intellectual stimulation of group members. The leader encourages reflection to reexamine some of team members assumptions about their work and they can rethink how it can be performed. Bass and Hater (1988) states that intellectual stimulation helps employees to move “towards a creative synthesis by generating various possible solutions”. By providing intellectual stimulation, the employees see difficulties as problems to be solved (Bass, 1990), and increase their efforts on subsequent tasks (Bass and Hater 1988).

As we mentioned above transformational leadership is crucial for employee creativity (Shin and Zhou, 2003). Transformational leaders create a supportive climate for creativity (Sarros et al. 2008). In the nature of conceptualization less creative ideas are more common than highly creative ideas and the transformational leadership help the employees to try out creative approaches without the fear of failure. Transformational leadership encourages employees to challenge the status quo and to try new approaches that foster employee creativity (Shin and Zhou, 2003).

Transformational leaders motivate their employees by providing a desirable vision, expressing high performance expectations, and providing individualized support (Shamir et al. 1993). Furthermore, motivation has been highlighted as a distinguishing factor between what a creative individual can do and what they actually do (Amabile, 1990). As we mentioned above personality traits, cognitive factors and knowledge directly affects to the generation of creativity but there is one aspect that is crucial and it depends on the leader and is the motivation of the team members. Intrinsic motivation not only affect directly what one can do but determines the extent to which

one fully applies one's skills in the creative output (Amabile, 1997). Studies have highlighted that creative potential is maximized when individuals are allowed to do something that they really love (Runco and Chand, 1995; Amabile, 1997) and thus become immersed enough to be able to change it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Several contemporary authors agree that these are some of the fundamentals for motivating creative teams: evaluation, surveillance, contracted-for reward, task constraint and competition (Collins and Amabile, 1999).

This intrinsic motivation strengthens and promotes engagement team members to try to improve their performance and therefore their final work. Transformational leaders strengthen the creative self-concept of their employees (Wang and Zhu, 2011). Thus, workers feel more confident to try new approaches to work and therefore with new creative ideas.

### *2.2.2 Fundamentals of leadership in an advertising agency by Jacques Ségéla.*

In this study we have centred on the leadership of highly creative persons, concretely on work teams in which the creativity is a fundamental aspect as the advertising agencies. For this reason it is considered of great importance bear the opinion of a professional in mind in the area of the advertising with a great experience and positioning in the sector. The interview was realized to Jacques Séguéla by the University of Glasgow (2010). Jacques Séguéla co-created RSCG, one of France's most visible advertising agencies, and authored numerous best-selling books on the topic. Séguéla was involved in 20 presidential campaigns in France and abroad, with clientele such as French President François Mitterrand in 1981 and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barack in 1999. Today, Jacques Séguéla is CCO (Chief Communication Officer) of Havas, France's second largest and the world's sixth largest advertising and communication group, and leads a task force of 800 creative people around the world.

### ***Emotional intelligence***

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Séguéla puts emphasis in the importance of the emotional intelligence and the emotion of the creativity and therefore, the emotions in the process of leadership to the creative teams. These affirmations are consisting with the declarations of Getz and Lubart (2007) saying that the emotions play a role fundamentally in the development of the creative process. For Séguéla there exist three ways in which the application of the emotions helps to the leadership of creative teams. First the use of emotional intelligence helps the leaders to legitimize the emotion in the environment of work since it is an aspect that traditionally has not been in the managerial area and performs great importance for the creative process.

Secondly the emotional intelligence helps the leaders to empathize with the persons of highly creative teams and to increase their happiness in the work environment. It builds a nearest relation where there is easier resolution of professional or personal problems that could block his creativity. Since it demonstrated Bolten (2003) to support the happy persons in the environment of work the generation of creativity increases.

Nevertheless Séguéla supports that he uses techniques of pressure and even of intimidation for his employees and that this affects positively the generation of creativity. Thirdly Séguéla defends that the emotional intelligence helps the leaders to sell his ideas to clients as to stakeholders and it is a fundamental aspect in any process of sale. This agrees with studies of other investigators who defend the promotion of ideas as critical aspect of a leader of creative teams.

Continuing the theme of emotional intelligence, Séguéla emphasizes the emotional contagion can be defined as the transfer of emotions from a sender to a receiver. Emotional contagion happens unconsciously when receivers acquire and imitate emotions senders, in this case leadership. At the time that emotions are transferred from the executive position of the company to leaders and teams, is also transferred to the customer. This movement could be described as "snowball effect". Séguéla admits that he uses emotional contagion to manipulate creative team; first creates a work environment with positive emotions increase happiness and morale of workers and promote creativity and secondly transmits negative emotions to indicate pressure to increase creative performance.

During his interview Séguéla mentioned emotional intelligence as fundamental to bearing in mind to lead persons and highly creative teams. It is interesting to see that there is a relationship between the factors described by Séguéla and the five dimensions of Podsakoff described above. Emotional intelligence helps create a good working environment where employees feel engaged and this promotes one of the



fundamental aspects of transformational leadership, to give personal support to employees feelings and needs, the fourth dimension of Podsakoff. We found that furthering a work environment based on emotions affect workers in a team feel, and this favors to foster a common vision and encourage the acceptance of objectives by the leader to team members, the second Podsakoff dimension described above. . Consider the emotions or personal problems of each worker can lead to increase engagement with the company and the vision of the company and the achievement of objectives..

As explained previously above the role of the leader is crucial in creating an environment where creativity is encouraged, in particular a transformational leadership style. The leader's role is critical to stimulate their skills and create a supportive climate to try new approaches. The actions of the leaders enable team members to think "outside the box" to create creative solutions. These behavioural characteristics of a leader can generate employee creativity. Ultimately this results in intrinsically motivated followers and hence acts as a prime source for promoting their creativity (Tierney et al., 1999).

Considering the pattern of findings described in this point is proposed our hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Transformational leadership foster creativity in high creative teams.

### **3. METHOD**

The methodology, that is, the set of procedures to achieve the objectives of this research are based on a qualitative work divided in two parts. The first one is analyze the key factors of transformational leadership through the most relevant aspects of Transformational Leadership Scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) which examines five transformational factors of leadership: articulates vision, provides appropriate role model, fosters the acceptance of goals and collaboration, provides individualized support and offers intellectual stimulation. In the second part we performed a qualitative work in which we have delivered these questionnaires to creative and art directors of advertising agencies, the creative director of new social network and a coordinator of a team of graphic designers newspaper. To carry out the surveys was used questionnaires format of Google Forms.

As previously mentioned creativity and innovation is essential to business success in the twenty first century and have become a differentiating factor that makes companies have competitive advantage, but there is a line of business where creativity is essential as the service of this company focuses exclusively on the production of creativity.

It is for this reason that we have focused our study on leaders of companies in which we consider essential for creative activity: creative directors and art directors in advertising agencies and creative director of a new social network based on music.

In the case study were included advertising agencies of important national level: Publips, Peanuts&Monkeys, Double You and J. Walter Thompson. On the other hand we included a startup that designed a social network based on music (Muaaka) and a graphic designer coordinator of the newspaper La Directa.

Publips is the Spanish agency that belongs to the group Amin, a network of independent advertising agencies in over 30 countries with offices in Valencia and Madrid. Publips is working with large national and international brands and their campaigns have a strong presence in social networks. Among the most outstanding works of 2015 are "Salvem la fresca" Ikea, Amstel Gold, for Coca Cola with "the derby song" Eergy System. Publips committed to advertising on social networks and their videos have been among the most viewed on Youtube.

Peanuts & Monkeys is an Irish advertising agency established in Madrid in our country that works internationally. The surveys were made in the Madrid office staff that work nationally. Among their last most outstanding works we found an ad for Movistar with Iker Casillas, promoting the new Star Wars movie, campaigns for Mitsubishi, Lotus and Disney among others.

DoubleYou is an integrated communications agency advertising where digital culture is an essential item. It is a company located in Madrid, Barcelona and Mexico of a multidisciplinary nature integrating these four groups: digital advertising, promotional marketing, integrated advertising and media. Among its main customers brands are Atrapalo, Audi, Dodot, Evax, Nike, Microsoft, Mahou, Pepe Jeans or Tourism Spain.

Walter Thompson, the world's best-known marketing communications brand, has been inventing pioneering ideas since 1864. With offices around the world: Asia, North America, Latin America, Europe and North Africa. In our country they settled in Madrid and Barcelona. We have made contact with the creative director of their offices in Barcelona. JWT in our country has made very significant advertising campaigns.

Among the best known brands are Freixenet, International Amnesty, KitKat, Corona and Nestle among others..

Muaaka is a social network launched in 2014 and has music as drive shaft. The web includes a search engine users, a seeker of artists and a concert search engine. Both registration services are free. The main change compared to other social networks is the search for users based on personal preferences of each in music. It has recently gained popularity following several articles in media such as El Mundo or VICIOUS Magazine.

La Directa defined them as a media for social transformation. It is a media for research, debate and analysis that see communication as a tool for social transformation. The project was started in 2012.

#### 4. RESULTS

The first part of the survey consists of 9 questions based on Leadership Scale developed by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990). The following table describes the results of the closed answer questions: yes, no or no response / do not know (nr / dk).

Table 1: Results of Leadership Scale by Podsakoff.

	<b>Publips Senior Art Director</b>	<b>Publips Art Director</b>	<b>Peanuts &amp;Monkeys Creative Director</b>	<b>Peanuts &amp;Monkeys Executive Creative Director</b>	<b>Double You Creative Director</b>	<b>Muaaka S.L. Creative Director</b>	<b>JWT Creative Director</b>
Do you think you have a clear vision of where the company is headed?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you consider yourself as a person who looks for new opportunities for the organization?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you think that you inspire other members of the group by future plans of the company?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you think you can ensure that the other members of the team are committed to organizational vision?	Yes	Nr/dk	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Do you consider yourself as a role model for other team members by promoting "doing" rather than "tell"?	Nr/dk	Yes	Nr/dk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you think that the proper treatment is achieved to make feel the group members part of a team?	Nr/dk	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Do you take into consideration the respect and attention to personal feelings of the team members?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Do you consider that is appropriate to behave in a thoughtful way to the personal needs of the members?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you think it is encouraging team members to reconsider or rethink their working methods in the case of problems arising?	Nr/dk	Nr/dk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

In the second part of the survey we performed two open questions about personal characteristics or skills of leaders that currently exist in the company and which ones are considered optimal for the generation of creativity. This part is considered interesting due the respondents can extend the answers with the personal opinion and they can specify in some of them. Moreover could be observed the tendencies of every company.

Table 2: Results open questions.

	Explain briefly what are the characteristics or traits that fundamentally define a leader of your organization.	What skills or personality traits you consider that should have a leader to encourage creativity in their teams?
<b>Publips</b> Senior Art Director	Unexpected, with clear ideas, very pro.	Assertive, polite, attentive, patient.
<b>Publips</b> Art Director	Assertiveness, conviction, defending workers.	Respect, honesty and assertiveness
<b>Peanuts &amp; Monkeys</b> Creative Director	A leader must have clear ideas and know how to transmit them. He or she should motivate by example and must create a pleasant and positive atmosphere. And above all, you should listen.	Positivity. Serenity. Open minded and constructive.
<b>Peanuts &amp; Monkeys</b> Executive Creative Director	Respect, Reference, Experience	Motivation, Inspiration, Collaboration
<b>Double You</b> Creative Director	Flexible, patient, exacting.	Demanding, teaching, consistent
<b>Muaaka S.L.</b> Creative Director	Creativity as AND. "Do before expect that someone do it. Motivate and lead by example with the ability to overcome and daily work.	Review before criticizing. Inspire new ideas by exciting the imagination of the team with daily challenges, fresh information on trends and ways to make the environment.
<b>JWT</b> Creative Director	Generous, caring, committed, motivational, inspirational and charismatic.	Generosity, flexibility, empathy, humility.

As we have seen in the responses, the leaders of creative teams share views on important issues in an environment where creativity is generated. We have found that in general the companies follow a transformational leadership style based on the five dimensions of Podsakoff (1990).

We note that the leaders articulate a clear vision of the company that helps identify new opportunities for organizational development. Leaders also considered themselves a role model for team members to strengthen values that promote good development for

their activities. They are considered committed to the personal needs of workers and foster intellectual stimulation to review possible errors in performance.

Although there is a general tendency to agree these dimensions in their area of work we have found that some are less accepted by the leaders of creative teams. We have noticed that leaders and team members have a clear vision of the goals and have an organizational vision that involves them in future plans for the company but not all leaders believe that the members of the group feel as a part of a team. Moreover we note that there is a clear focus to the personal needs of workers but not all leaders believe that personal feelings are important part of their management.

In the second part of the study we have obtained the personal opinion of the leaders of creative teams described above. This open opinion is very important in the study because they are professionals in their fields and have an established career, but not only leading creative teams also as creative workers.

Among the highlights we found that having clear ideas is a fundamental aspect in the leadership of creative teams. But it is not only important to have a vision of where the company is going but the ability to transmit is another fundamental aspect. Having a clear vision of the objectives helps to foster an engaging and inspiring to view the group members. Assertiveness is an important factor that is repeated, this means having a clear vision while respecting the views of other members remain flexible in their performances. Respect, honesty and humility are also important factors in generating an atmosphere of pleasant and positive work.

We have realized that consider the personal needs of team members is an important factor that transformational leadership add to response and thus generating a creative environment. Among the aspects we found that take into account the personal needs of team members. We found that to be generous, caring, listening to the opinions of team members and have empathy with them makes an environment where creativity can emerge.

We also find that the leader has a key role in motivating the team. And the responses indicate that a good way to motivate is setting an example, so that the leader plays a role model to demonstrate capacity of overcoming.

Although general terms are shared we found some differences in the companies. In advertising agencies we found that Peanuts&Monkeys and JWT leaders have a tendency towards the needs and feelings of team members as elements that encourage creativity. Moreover Double You argued that the requirement is an

important aspect of leadership and found combined with elements such as the flexibility or act in a didactic way.

Moreover, we found differences in the leaders of advertising agencies, already consolidated companies, and Muaaka the social network what is a new company with less than two years of existence. Muaaka creative director emphasizes proactive as an indispensable element in the management of creativity. He has added motivation as an example of overcoming capabilities. It also includes daily challenges which are used to stimulate the imagination of team members to the creation of new ideas. He add that to be well connected with the environment is a fundamental aspect.

Finally we found an organization in which is lacking the role of leader. The survey was filled by coordinator graphic design media La Directa but has not been included in the table of answers for lack of leaders in the organization. In the company they are organized in assemblies and the objectives are decided by components among all teams. Their main feature is the responsibility of the media. He adds that in the case of leaders in your organization would have to be close to workers, worrying about their needs and taking responsibility for them.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The objective of this case study is to figure out what are the most important aspects that define leadership in highly creative teams and know how transformational leadership style fosters creativity in companies where creativity is a fundamental aspect of their development.

The analyzed sample was composed of leaders of creative teams represented by the art director and art director of the Publips agency based in Madrid, executive creative director and creative director of the agency Peanut & Monkeys, the creative director of the agency Double You, the creative director the J. Walter Thompson agency based in Barcelona, creative Director and Project Manager of the social network Muaaka and the coordinator of graphic design in the newspaper La Directa.

For data collection it was used a questionnaire facilitated to respondents through Google Forms platform via online. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first is closed answer questions based on Transformational Leadership Scale developed by



Podsakoff et al. (1990) which examines five transformational factors of leadership: articulates vision, provides appropriate role model, fosters the acceptance of goals and collaboration, provides individualized support and offers intellectual stimulation.

The second part consists of two open-ended questions of the opinion leaders on issues that are the leaders in your organization and what are the characteristics that should have to encourage creativity.

As a general conclusion we can affirm that a transformational leadership style encourages and positively affects generation of creativity in teams of highly creative workers.

The first part of the study where key aspects of transformational leadership developed by Podsakoff (1990) are studied we found that, although there are some less popular aspects, the surveyed companies use them in their daily leadership activities.

The first aspect studied was the identification and articulation of a common vision of the company by the leader who must transmit to team members. All leaders surveyed claim that they have a clear vision in their organizations and also are seeking new opportunities for the organization, and not all of them, but most say they can transmit this vision to the team members.

The purpose of the shared vision is to foster an engaging and inspiring vision of the company and its projects. This helps to increase the commitment of employees of the company and helps to identify new opportunities for the organization. Several authors have studied the transformational leadership, cited on theoretical framework of this work, confirm importance of having a common vision in creative teams. Grant, (2012) and Vera and Crossan, (2004) defended that leadership has provided great insight into the effect of leaders on organisations, by appealing through visionary behaviour, for example, motivating learning, encouraging growth and visualising the future (Grant, 2012; Vera and Crossan, 2004). Bass (1985) also supports the importance of a clear vision on the part of the transformational leader to achieve creative solutions by the team and explains that have an apparent vision for their organization and also have the skills to encourage employees to start thinking in a new way in order to devise a creative solution for a given problem.

Elkins and Keller (2003) argue that one of the important roles of the transformational leader is to create an environment that fosters creativity through having a clear vision among others. One of the capabilities of a transformational leader is to successfully transform the focus of their followers from instant self-interests to an isolated collective

vision helping team members to perform acts that go beyond their duties (Rubin et al., 2005).

The second aspect studied is whether leaders offer Appropriate Model-Behavior. Here all leaders claim to be a role model for his followers through doing the tasks and do not just saying what are the tasks to be performed. This behavior helps to strengthen the values promoted by the leaders in their performance. Relevant authors in the study of leadership as Bennis (1989) support the importance of a leader should set an example with their actions and not just assign the tasks and argues that a leader must not only be able to utilize their capabilities but a leader has to be able to inspiring other people to do things without actually sitting on top of them with a checklist.

Moreover Seguela (2010) argued that emotional intelligence is an important aspect of leadership. Especially emotional contagion, which is the transfer of emotion by the leader to a team member, supports the situation in which the leader gives a role model to follow. Transfer of emotions happens unconsciously between the sender and the receiver causing the receiver, or worker, the imitation of actions of the leader unconsciously.

Thirdly we have analyzed the fomentation and acceptance of the objectives and collaboration on the part of the leader. Here there has been a general acceptance among leading respondents in which they considered themselves influential to transmit future objectives of the company and therefore the objectives. This behavior promotes cooperation among group members to work together to achieve common goals. Share goals with the group helps create engagement between workers and the organization. This is an aspect that only the leaders of creative teams can bring to the team, as they are the ones with a more global perspective on projects.

The next term used to provide an individualized support. In general, respondents affirm they pay attention to individual team members. They have claimed that it is entirely appropriate to behave in ways that the personal needs of the members are respected and it is generally considered of great importance to them. Furthermore most, but not all of them consider it appropriate to pay attention to the feelings of the team members. Moreover, the majority of respondents believe that they are making workers feel part of a team although is not a generalized opinion.

Attending to the needs and feelings of the workers by the leader suggests that they are respected by the leaders and is a support for their needs and their individual problems.

Authors like Sarros and colleagues (2008) argue that the main role of the leader is to create a supportive climate for generating creativity.

As explained in previous sections, Seguela (2010) puts special stress upon the use of techniques of emotional intelligence to lead a highly creative team perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). The use of emotional intelligence helps leaders to legitimize the emotion in the workplace and is an important aspect in the creative process. Emotionally empathize with the creative workers makes them happier as well demonstrated Bolten (2003).

The last analyzed factor is the intellectual stimulation of group members. Respondents believe that leaders are promoting intellectual stimulation through rethink or reconsider working methods in case of the emergence of a problem so they themselves can propose a solution.

Some authors note the importance of intellectual stimulation by the transformational leadership for example Chi and Pan (2012) defended that transformational leaders tend to encourage their followers to deliver outcomes beyond their expected level, which is possible through invoking employees' higher level beliefs and values.

Furthermore some authors related it to the generation of creativity as for example Shin and Zhou (2003) explained that transformational leadership encourages employees to challenge the status quo and to try new approaches that foster employee creativity. And Bass (1998) described that intellectual stimulation helps employees to move "towards a creative synthesis by generating various possible solutions".

In the second part of the study we have obtained the personal opinion of the leaders of creative teams described above on key aspects of their daily work.

One of the most important aspects in the leadership of creative teams is to have clear ideas. This means having a clear vision of where the company is heading. This is the first dimension of Podsakoff (1990) described in this section. This helps to foster employee commitment to the goals of the company. Besides, leaders suggest that it is important to know how to transmit the vision to team members with a charismatic behavior. Several authors have studied the transformational leadership explain the relationship between having a common vision and generating a creative environment. Bass (1985) supports the importance of a clear vision on the part of the

transformational leader to achieve creative solutions by the team. Having a common vision helps to increase conventional goals and increase self-confidence at work.

Bass and Avolio (1994) sets on their four transformational leadership dimensions the idealized influence, also referred to as charisma, refers to those leaders who have the power and influence to make their followers accept them as their role model.

Another important factor of leadership that leaders mentioned in their answers is the ability motivation of team members. As described in the theoretical framework, creative workers have unique personal characteristics and motivation is an issue that must adapt to them. For this reason, the creative workers need intrinsic motivation. Motivation has been highlighted as a distinguishing factor between what a creative individual can do and what they actually do (Amabile, 1990). This means that the motivation generates an optimal working environment for workers using their creative force for major achievements. Also Amabile (1997) explained that intrinsic motivation not only affect directly what one can do but determines the extent to which one fully applies one's skills in the creative output.

Among the aspects of team leaders include motivating workers is by example. Therefore the leader must assume a role model, the second dimension of Podsakoff (1990) explained in the previous section which relates to authors and the emotional contagion proposal for Seguela (2010).

We have realized that consider the personal needs of team members is a factor that says transformational leadership and thus generating a creative environment. We found that to be generous, caring, listening to the opinions of team members, to empathize with them, respect, honesty and humility builds centered on emotions environment. Which as has been explained in this section leads to increased worker happiness and increases creativity.

Also mentioned in the free answers the inspiration of new ideas through challenges is an activity that takes place daily in one of the computers scanned. This coincides with the fifth dimension Podsakoff (1990) in which the leader must stimulate intellectually team members. Authors such as Chi and Pan (2012) confirm the importance of this aspect that must follow a transformational leader.

## **6. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Our study has some limitations that suggest avenues for future research.

The study has several limitations. We used only the qualitative method to get the results that we used to have a base on the subject studied, but it would be desirable to complete the study with a quantitative work to corroborate the data having a more objective view of the study.

The project has been conducted on companies with specific characteristics. These are companies where creativity is essential for development but are not the only ones which work with highly creative teams. It is for this reason that it would be appropriate to add other companies to research for more extensive results related to creativity-leadership. These organizations may conduct activities in which creativity is a fundamental aspect, such as design, scientific research, creating innovative companies and architecture among others. Or they could be organizations where creativity is not a critical issue, but help strengthen the competitive advantage of the company. The sample consists of seven creative leaders. It is convenient to add more leaders with the same profile to have a deeper insight into the aspects studied.

This is a case study, which has some limitations. It was a small-scale research with a space and limited resources. So it is a representation of reality for orientation but not a definitive conclusion.

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