

Tactile

Enhancing creativity through shared leadership *Case study: Tactile Games*

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Abstract

The mobile gaming industry became a lucrative business market with the emergence of accessible and high performing devices we possess today. In this paper, we investigate the mobile gaming industry, with Tactile as the main case in our research. We combined the Componential Model of Creativity and Shared Leadership to gain insight into how the innovation and creativity processes work at individual and organizational level, to then identify where shared leadership enhanced the process. The results imply that supportive organizational culture and practice of shared leadership enhanced the individual components which then impacted the organizational ability to innovate.

Keywords: innovation, shared leadership, creativity, creativity theory, gaming, mobile gaming, creative environment, employee motivation

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Introduction

In today's business climate, where each decision is connected to the goals and future activities, staying behind became a much riskier tactic than adopting new technology. Technology and creative thinking have been pushing the innovative scope hand in hand to move away from traditional thought patterns to novel solutions to problems. When talking about entertainment, and technological acceleration in the last decade we cannot ignore digital entertainment. October 1958 marked the creation of Tennis for Two by Physicist William Higinbotham, and since then, the increase in video games specifically came to be thanks to the new generation of mobile devices, which allow us to have visually stimulating video games within our grasp at any moment (Tretkoff, 2008) (Green & Kaufman, 2015). Similarly, as in other markets, online games also need to display a certain level of innovation as the backbone of their projects. Some of the evolutions in this market included the implementation of virtual and augmented reality to increase the immersive experience for players (Dörner et al., 2022). By implementing VR and AR in gaming, players could interact with the virtual environment by using their bodies instead of a classical mouse and keyboard, which paved the way to new possibilities. By 2021, the number of online games was estimated to reach 2.96 billion (Dimitrievski, 2023). The number is foretold to reach 3.32 billion by 2024 and rise exponentially as the years come (Ibid.). Ergo, with new advancements, a plethora of opportunities arises, as will competitors. The world of gaming is a river full of possibilities, but also a competitive field when it comes to the product. So, how do companies break through the noise with their new product when the numbers increase each year? The answer, just as in traditional product development, is innovation. Innovation in the gaming industry became imperative to not only pique the interest of the players but to push the boundaries and advance the industry itself. Players are in a perpetual state of demanding better experiences that utilize new technology, therefore companies ought to think about delivering unique gameplay mechanics, visuals, and stories. Innovation, as the main catalyst, has been stimulating the development of gaming channels, which has dramatically transformed the processes and practices across a wide array of departments (Faqih, 2022). The gaming industry is rapidly expanding, transforming, and growing, which means that companies must adapt to the demands or risk falling short of the vibrant gaming culture. For this paper, it is imperative to define innovation, which concerns the implementation of creative ideas and their translation into finished products (Kristensson et al., 2002). Thus, at the bottom of the dilemma lays creativity as the main motor of delivering innovation.

Amabile (1988), presents creativity as a generation of novel and useful ideas. Whilst creativity is viewed as an individual set of actions, there are necessary processes that lead to the creation of novel and meaningful ideas. Both Amabile (1988) and Bharadwaj & Menon (2000) recognize team and organizational dimensions of creativity which can provide tools and resources to encourage the creative process.

Tactile Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union estimated more than 6 billion mobile phone subscriptions in 2012, which implies mobile games are a notably growing area of game business and culture (Mäyrä, 2015). For this paper, we chose a mobile game developer based in Denmark, due to decreasing boundaries between mobile, console, and PC gaming. An increased number of games offer the possibility to change from one type of device to another and continue the same game from any place. This only emphasizes the relevance of studying mobile gaming and its processes, as it will become an even more lucrative field due to the possibility of accessing a player's favorite game on the go. Due to our location as researchers, and the accessibility of the company that is connected to it, we opted for a local organization. Moreover, Denmark is known to have an informal culture which is known to promote the proactive personality and creativity, which offers a good ground for research (Pan et al., 2018). This paper studies a Danish mobile developer company Tactile founded in 2008, which has more than 280 employees in more than 43 countries with 42% being women (Tactile, n.d.). Their focus is on engaging, narratively-driven games, from which the most popular ones include puzzle games Lily's Garden and Penny & Flo (Ibid.). The company has a lean organization with a flat hierarchy and a creative environment where each individual is encouraged to grow and develop their skills alongside other creatives (Ibid.).

Problem Area

The gaming industry strives to find novel innovative ways to enhance player experience through gameplay mechanics, unique styles of graphics, and storytelling. As a result, creativity plays a significant role in crafting a player's experience. The contemporary outlook on creativity is perceived as a continuous and interdependent process between subjects and their sociocultural context in their everyday practices in the organizational processes (Dourado & Davel, 2022). For its demand, creativity continues to be a core competency of the 21st century, considering it conveys one's ability to express themselves in

different contexts and is fundamental for innovation, creative leadership, and the economic development of an organization (Nakano and Wechsler, 2018). Therefore, employees are at the core of a company's ability to innovate (Hellmann, 2007). Due to the value, these skill sets bring to the company that wants to stay ahead of the competition, companies started to pull away from the usual worker with a conforming attitude to avoid rigid structures which were found in organizations with people management focused on bureaucratic hierarchies and relationships (Bessi et al., 2023 p.2). Employees in the gaming industry can help to achieve innovation by designing game environments, developing unique gameplay, creating compelling stories, or changing the organization's internal processes to increase efficiency by utilizing their creative thinking and sharing their suggestions. By encouraging and nurturing such a work environment, companies can stay ahead and develop games that resonate with players, reduce costs, and increase profitability. Many concepts emphasize the environment as a center for the creative process as a whole (Ibid.). Such can include supportive leadership, challenging tasks, a diverse workforce, adequate resources, a collaborative environment, acceptance of failures, and unbureaucratic structures (Zhou & Shalley, 2003). On the other hand, obstacles to creativity are related to behavioral traits, such as fear of taking risks, making mistakes, sharing ideas, or feelings of inferiority (Ibid.). As creativity develops itself on an individual and social level, putting the focus on creativity as a process as well as on the individual, allows us to comprehend in what way the company environment supports and nurtures this phenomenon. By understanding the contextual side of how new ideas are generated, companies can be aware of the factors that impact this process and support it with correct leadership practices.

Problem Formulation

From personality, motivation, and skillset down to the operational structure, and culture, a company needs to consider not only what needs to be done on a daily basis, but also who they want to be at the core of their innovation speed. In spite of companies' efforts however, it is not enough to only hire creative workers, the workers need to actively engage with the organization to familiarize themselves with its processes and conditions that allow and encourage them to experiment, research, create and ultimately innovate (Bessi et al., 2023 p.2). Therefore, in a work environment, which includes culture and management, one can spot encouraging conditions and obstacles. We incorporate leadership as the guarding force of organizational culture that can support the creativity and growth of the employees.

Therefore, a leader can leverage their skills and organizational knowledge to encourage and support the employees with resources to express their creativity in favor of the organizational goal or task. In this paper, we want to reflect on how Tactile nurtures creativity at work, emphasizing the influence of leadership practices occurring in the creative process. In previous studies, leadership plays a role to a certain degree, however, our angle incorporates employees being encouraged to take on the leadership role and help to define introduced tasks with valuable contributions and find creative solutions. By taking on a leadership role, the employee also becomes significantly more engaged with the task and connected to the team, as well as thinking about a variety of other incentives such as taking on more responsibility to raise up in the ranks, inspire others or seek more knowledge (Ensley et al., 2006, p.77). Since creativity has been associated with people's ability to present new and valuable ideas, leaders who include employees in planning and other parts of leadership activities give employees space to utilize their creative thinking in other parts of their tasks (Bessi et al., 2023 p.2). This not only gives employees an opportunity to become part of the decision-making team but also to think beyond their assigned tasks. Thus, the relevance of our paper lies in the connection between creativity and shared leadership which encourages leadership responsibilities, such as decision-making, goal-setting, or mentorship to be distributed among the team members, based on their individual strengths and expertise, rather than being assigned to a single individual.

Research question:

How does Tactile as a gaming company cultivate a creative environment for their employees to develop innovative ideas through shared leadership?

In order to explain the research question and cover all it conveys, we will utilize these secondary research questions.

Secondary questions:

1. How do employees perceive the creative climate in Tactile?
2. How does Tactile influence employee's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with their management skills?
3. How is the management at Tactile utilizing shared leadership to nurture the organizational innovation process?

Literature Review

The starting point for our research is the examination of already existing literature around a similar research topic. Research literature relates a working topic to a broader context and provides details about the knowledge gaps preventing the construction of already established findings (Bryman, 2016, p. 6). Based on the former findings, we can gain a better understanding of the concept we are analyzing, formulate relevant theoretical strategies and methods, and draw inferences that will ultimately support our research construction choices and conclusions (Ibid.).

In the case of our research, we will be using the traditional type of narrative literature review due to its focus to generate an understanding of the topic rather than accumulating knowledge (Ibid., p. 91). It provides a preliminary impression of the topic and concepts that will be explored further during the course of the study. A narrative review serves as both an introduction to the subject area and an explanation of how the research can fill knowledge gaps in the field (Ibid.).

The concept of creativity

The subject of creativity has been studied under different approaches highlighting personal abilities, products, and processes, or environments in the fields of innovation, organizational development, economics, culture, and many more (Nakano and Wechsler, 2018). In the early stages of creativity research, the focus was on the psychological aspect emphasizing creative persona skills, such as flexibility, intuition, persistence, strong focus on the goals, and attraction to complexity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creativity has been considered the foundation of ever-since humanity and the fundamental element of life in terms of self-expression, enjoyment, and self-discovery (Ibid.). Studies on creativity have recently focused on the management field, specifically to generate insights on how to foster and organize creativity processes in the workplace (Slavich and Svejnova, 2016, p. 238). Amabile (1996) made essential contributions to the field with the introduction of creativity components of expertise, creative thinking, and intrinsic motivation that determine individual and team creative thinking processes.

Generally, due to the variety of topics and possible approaches, creativity does not have one ultimate definition. To some researchers, creativity is seen as the outcome of novel ideas recognizing the usefulness and originality to the organization (Ibid.). To others, it refers to the social interaction process to influence and collaborate among the teams in order to

produce new ideas (Perry-Smith and Shalley, 2008). Another stance considers creativity as individual and team engagement in task generation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The following sections examine various conceptions of creativity commonly scrutinized in academic works and peer-reviewed publications.

Measuring creativity

Creativity can be an ambiguous concept, especially when talking about how to express it in a measurable context. Most of the measurements include creativity tests which can be grouped into three general categories, i.e. personality tests, biographical inventories, and behavioral assessments (Amabile, 2019, p. 23). Personality tests assess trait characteristics of an individual, biographical inventories look at various items such as childhood, interests, hobbies, and notable experiences, whereas behavioral tests include oral, written, or drawn responses that study the divergent thinking (Ibid., p.24). Despite the possibilities of testing creativity, creative tests became rather criticized due to their dependance on situational or contextual factors (Ibid.). Thus, a more objective approach to creativity assessment was constructed. Ghiselin suggested a possibility of analyzing the intrinsic quality of a product to determine whether they are creative or not (Ibid.). Interestingly, subjective assessment of individuals or products have a longer history than the creativity tests, even if they are used less (Ibid., p.30). These assessments used the judgements of a specific group of experts to assess creativity of a particular individual (Ibid.). These later developed into frameworks that included several dimensions the experts had to judge, such as Sobel and Rothenberg sketch drawing, which included originality of sketches, value of sketches, and overall creative potential of the art product (Ibid.). Additionally, Jackson and Messick suggested that these creative judgments are composed of four aesthetic responses, i.e. surprise (response to unusualness in a product judged against norms), satisfaction (appropriateness in a product judged within the context of the work), stimulation (transformation in the product, evidence that the product breaks away from the constraints of the typical situation), and savoring (response to the power of the product to condense a great amount of intellectual or emotional meaning in a concise way) (Ibid., p.32).

Creativity as a Process

Around the 1950s the initial research on creativity has taken the individual as the central element of the creative activity, noting that creativity arises from unconscious

impulses that can develop into the skill of creative thinking or as a personality trait to be creative (Sternberg, 1999). In the following decade, the concept of the 4Ps (person, process, product, and press environment) was introduced analyzing the characteristics of a creative person, processes, and how an appropriate environment can improve novel creations (Choi et al, 2020). The research from the 2000s and onwards defined creativity in the context of social interactions among individuals encompassing more diverse and complex topics, such as knowledge, emotions, and social views, noting how creativity unfolds in such interactions (Ibid.).

Contemporary conceptions take the standpoint that creativity occurs as a process beyond just cognitive exchanges and interactions among individuals but rather combines all elements in one (Slavich and Svejenova, 2016). More particularly, creativity is perceived as a continuous everyday organizational process depending on the subjects and environment they are set in (Ibid.). Generally, unlike the previous studies that centralized individuals and their cognitive skills as the primary driver for creativity, new studies point to the environment as the focal point. Conditions such as managerial support, supervision, provision of resources and challenging tasks, nonhierarchical organizational structures, and acceptance of risks and failures are what thrives creativity further, whereas contrasting aspects like inadequate assignments, impossible deadlines, and lack of emotional and verbal support diminish creative incentives (Amabile, 1998).

Essentially, creativity as a process notes that creativity happens in stages (Hjorth, et al., 2018). The starting point is with the problem identification and its definition, nextly providing context and evaluation, and lastly incorporating creative solutions defined by the actors in the process, i.e. employees, creative individuals, or teams in the organization (Ibid.). Due to the close connection among organizational units of teams, managers, supervisors, and evaluators, creative processes are nonlinear.

Creative environment

Organizational environment became one of the most influential factors that can affect employee's creativity (Amabile, 1988, p.146). As our research question focuses on how mobile gaming companies can create and nurture a creative work environment, we ought to look at what it should consist of, as well as what could obstruct its success. Amabile (1988, p.147) identifies 9 qualities that promote creativity and 9 qualities that inhibit creativity. Firstly, to promote creativity, there is a significant need to control one's own work and ideas

in terms of deciding how to achieve the overall goal (Ibid.). The following factor is good project management with a manager who serves as a role model and exhibits enthusiasm and excellent communication skills, with the ability to match employees with their preferred tasks and interests (Ibid.). The rest of the factors include sufficient resources, encouragement, organizational characteristics where innovation is rewarded and failure is not fatal; recognition; sufficient time to think creatively and explore different perspectives; a sense of challenge; and a sense of urgency to accomplish something (Ibid.). On the other hand, qualities of an environment that obscure creativity consist of various organizational characteristics that can result in inappropriate reward systems or little regard for innovation in general (Ibid.). Additionally, a general lack of freedom in deciding what to do or how to accomplish the task (Ibid.). Moreover, a lack of organizational support or interest in projects that can be perceived as an apathy toward any accomplishments that can be obtained from it (Ibid.). Similarly, poor project management with a Manager who is unable to set clear direction due to poor technical or communicational skills (Ibid., p.148). The following three factors ranked the same, they include evaluation, insufficient resources, and time pressure which both display a lack of appropriate means (Ibid.). Lastly overemphasis on the status quo where the reluctance to make a change in processes or overall unwillingness to take risks from Managers or coworkers, and intergroup competition that can foster a self-defensive attitude can be deemed fatal for creative ideas to sprout (Ibid.).

Engagement process

Drazin et al. (1999) define creativity as the process of engaging an individual in a task in terms of behavior, cognition, and emotion in order to produce positive results. In the engagement process, creativity is linked to individual or group commitment to the task or project at hand, while at the individual level, engagement refers to positive rewards and a work-related mindset driven by self-efficacy and dedication (Slavich and Svejenova, 2016). Nevertheless, individuals can choose the level of commitment they invest in creative processes - either a high level of dedication or the minimum level by suggesting simple, not necessarily novel ideas, depending on the daily circumstances both organizational and motivational (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Creativity is intrinsically related to the motivational state, whereas elements such as strong organizational culture and interpersonal support contribute to engagement and flow, also known as the creative process experience (Ibid.). Being in the flow helps individuals to

deal with unpredictable creative efforts by evoking out-of-the-box thinking, ultimately making it easier to achieve high commitment to the task (Ibid.).

Motivation

Motivation is a process where an individual's efforts are directed, reinforced, and cultivated to accomplish certain goals (Robbins and Coulter, 2014). If an organization seeks to increase the effectiveness of an employee, increasing the employee's motivation can ultimately result in enhancing the overall performance (Steer, 1994). In order to create such an effect, the organization needs to create a motivation system that will not only focus on task motivation but also the overall responsibilities (Nilasari, Nisfiannoor and Devinta, 2021, p.437). There are two types of means to increase motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Cetin and Askun, 2018). Intrinsic motivation can be defined as a spontaneous tendency to perform a task as it results in a profound satisfaction of performing it, rather than anything else that is associated with it (Nilasari, Nisfiannoor and Devinta, 2021, p.437). In retrospect, an individual performs an activity because they enjoy it, not because of the rewards they are promised. A way how an organization can support intrinsic motivation is through the Management which ought to notice the competences of an employee and depending on their autonomy support their initiatives. On the contrary, an unenjoyable task can be supported by extrinsic motivation (Ibid.). The main difference between the two types of motivation lies in the source from which the motivation arises, as the extrinsic comes from the outside and the intrinsic starts within the individual (Sennett, 2021). Management ought to consider both motivations and develop a reward system where they can utilize both depending on the situation and tasks.

Social Interactions in the creativity process

Many researchers consider creativity as a systemic process where social interaction is the pivotal element in its happening (Ibid.). Such an approach considers the interconnected nature between the idea and the context it was developed, noting that creativity reflects upon the human process within the specific sociocultural setting (Choi et al., 2020). The transition in focus on collective logical practices from individual cognitive processes concludes that individuals within the organization are a part of the social group with different viewpoints, social and cultural experiences, and personality factors that have a mutual influence on one another and affect their idea generation and knowledge sharing process (Csikszentmihalyi,

1996). It is indicated that the interactive process among people with divergent and complementary profiles results in richer results when developing creative ideas in the organization (Tang, 2020).

Shared creativity process

Originally, shared creativity has been associated with the assumption that collective creativity arises from the working class or among individuals without access to higher education (Sawyer, 2017). However, nowadays, it is recognized that such a concept is more likely to occur in organizations with diverse teams due to the variety of cultural, cognitive and social differences (Ibid.). The successful creativity-sharing process requires a psychologically safe, eager-to-learn and accept mistakes environment, thus to establish such a setting, organizations are encouraged to have clearly defined goals, exchange initial process design among the groups, support experimental decision-making and monitor the progress and results throughout the whole process (Edmondson, 2012).

In addition to organizational culture, the nature of interactions between individuals and creative teams also influences creativity sharing. The development of creativity begins in each individual separately, which later extends or shapes through communication or creative processes. As a result, Glaveanu (2014) argues that creativity should not be defined as a static outcome (product) of a goal but rather as a dynamic quality arising from collectively developed relationships within a shared organizational environment.

Leaders likewise take an essential role in maintaining a shared creativity dynamic. As well as stimulating creativity, brainstorming, and dynamic interactions can cause group conflicts (Sawyer, 2017). As already known, the general process of shared creativity includes stages of idea generation, further development, closing, and evaluation of outcomes (Nemiro, 2002). Leaders must ensure that conflicts are de-escalated by addressing individual differences and interfering (if necessary) to supervise and direct each individual's strengths toward achieving the goal and ensuring resources, rewards, and collaboration systems. (Ibid.). Additionally, contrary to conflicts, it is essential to minimize the possibility of 'groupthink' when individuals choose group consensus instead of challenging pre-established ideas and methods and thriving creatively (Amabile and Kurtzberg, 2001).

Innovation

Innovation as a study emerged not too long ago, in the 1960, and the first important distinction between innovation and an invention is that the invention is the first occurrence of an idea for a new product or a process, whilst innovation is the first attempt to implement it into practice (Fagerberg, 2018, p.4). Innovation is defined as a continuous process, occurring mostly in companies or large organizations (Ibid., p.5). Consequently, what we perceive as a single innovation is most likely a result of a lengthy continuous process involving a variety of interrelated innovations (Ibid.). Schumpeter (in Ibid.,p. 8), distinguishes between five different types of innovation, these include products, new methods of production, new sources of supply, an exploration of a new market, and a new way to organize a business. Schmookler (1966), on the other hand focused on the new products and new methods of production, where he classified the former as a knowledge about how to produce new products, i.e. product innovation, and the latter as how to produce them, i.e. process innovation. Nonetheless, Schumpeter continued to expand his work with new classification of innovations according to their radicality compared to the current technology (Fagerberg, 2018 ,p.9). There, he categorized innovation into incremental vs radical, where incremental expanded on the existing, whereas radical brought about a technological revolution so to say (Ibid.).

Innovation stages

Schroeder, Van de Ven, Scudder, & Polley (1986) describe a sequence of phases through which innovation in the organization happens. Saren (1984), categorizes these innovation phases into five types. Firstly, as a departmental-stage model (Robertson, 1974). This model connects innovation stages to various departments where innovation can begin, i.e. R&D, design, engineering, production, and marketing (Amabile, 1988, p.158). These sequences begin at conceptualization until reaching market ready status. Following stage model includes activity (Ibid., p.157). Activity models appear to be the most frequent, as they identify particular activities that happen during innovation (Ibid., p.158). Such models can include initiation of the process with problem identification, generation of alternative innovation proposals, evaluation of alternative innovation proposals, selection and initiation of an alternative, and acceptance with routinization (Ibid.). The next model is the decision-stage model (Ibid., p.157). This type of model breaks down the process into

decisions with a sequence of steps at each decision point (Ibid., p.158). An example based on Cooper & More (1979) follows gathering information to reduce uncertainties, evaluation of information, decision making, and identification of remaining key uncertainties (Amabile, 1988, p.158). Last two models are the conversion process, and response model (Ibid., p.157). The conversion process looks at input and outputs, which is rather different from the previous order focused models. Lastly, the response model describes innovation as an organization's response to an external or internal stimulation, such as individual's pressure on organization to create a new idea, conception of an idea for an innovation, proposal by the project lead for development, and adoption of the innovation (Ibid., p.158).

The concept of leadership

The concept of leadership has been studied by a number of researchers worldwide who provided numerous definitions. To some, leadership refers to a personality trait or behavior, while others comprehend it as the information-processing perspective or relational standpoint (Northouse, 2016, p. 1). The first definitions of leadership began emerging in the early 20th century when the main emphasis was on control, domination, power centralization to one person, and subordinates' respect and compliance (Rost in Northouse, 2016). Over time, definitions were reformulated to include more concepts such as shared goals, team leadership, and the ability to influence and motivate (Ibid.). Although despite the multiple conceptions and various focus elements, some of the components are relevant to all definitions meaning that leadership can be understood as the process where one individual influences a group of individuals in order to achieve common goals (Ibid.). An important distinction is the conception of process. As Bennis (1989) notes, it involves transactional events between leaders and followers where one affects the other and vice versa. Northouse (2016, p. 6) adds that by such definition, leadership belongs to everyone in the organization and is not restricted to only a formal leader.

Over the years, researchers aimed to define the most effective leadership type. The concept defined by Blake and Mouton (1964) of task-oriented vs. relationship-oriented was perceived as one of the ways to recognize a leader's effectiveness. Generally, task-oriented leadership prioritizes performance to achieve goals and aims to assure work precision, and employee & resource management, although is criticized for the lack of creativity and riskless attitude (Ruzgar, 2018, p. 51). In contrast, relationship-oriented leadership places a strong emphasis on employee satisfaction, motivation, and work balance, although it is

vulnerable to incomplete goals, low performance, and low profitability (Ibid.). For the inability to claim effectiveness, Fiedler (1964) introduced the situational leadership concept noting that leadership effectiveness cannot be related to one type of approach but rather to the current situation (Verker, 1990). Production and task orientation as well as a focus on employees' well-being can both be effective, but it is up to the leader to determine the situation and apply an appropriate approach to make it functional (Ibid.).

Theoretical Framework

In this section, we will present two theories that will form the foundation of our analysis and help answer the main research question. Generally, the study aims to examine the process of cultivating creativity in a dynamic gaming company and how the concept of shared leadership impacts it. To understand the creative process and its elements, we have chosen the Componential Model of Creativity as it provides an insightful framework depicting all components at the individual and organizational levels that drive creativity and innovation. Furthermore, we will use the shared leadership concept which will help us find out if partaking leadership roles improve employee creative processes as well as determine the role of management in creating an open environment conducive to innovation. Consequently, by combining these theories, we will obtain a detailed overview of the creativity-fostering process in Tactile.

Componential Model of Creativity

To understand the model, it is first crucial to know the meanings of the terms creativity and innovation. One of the best-known contributors to the creative studies field - Teresa Amabile, suggests that creativity should be seen as the “production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or a small group of individuals working together” (Amabile, 1988, p. 126). Creativity then leads to innovation, which is the “process of a successful implementation of creative ideas within the organization” (Ibid.). Generally, innovation can be seen as the end result of putting new ideas to use and generating new products or procedures in line with the organization's business.

Individual and organizational components

In the early 1980s, Amabile conceptualized her first widely cited framework for understanding social, psychological, and technical components that conduce to the production

of creative work in organizations, highlighting two interrelated primary aspects of organizational innovation and individual or group creativity (Adil and Hamid, 2019, p. 60). As the theory states, in order to induce individual creativity, three components are crucial: expertise, creativity-relevant skills, and motivation (Ibid.). Expertise or domain-relevant skills are the basis for creative work within any field and refer to factual knowledge and technical skills (Amabile, 1983). Generally, domain skills can be understood as an individual's *raw materials* that help synthesize new responses to occurred possibilities and are dependent on innate cognitive abilities, such as motor and perceptual abilities as well as education on the domain endeavor (Amabile, 1988, p. 130-31). Simply stating, expertise refers to the knowledge an individual has of the working subject and the ability to solve issues based on that knowledge.

The second component of creativity-relevant skills is the combination of personality traits and cognitive styles conducive to developing new ideas and solutions (Amabile, 1983). The cognitive styles include flexible and out-of-the-box thinking, ability to synthesize information in a new way or see new perspectives in it, instead of on a traditional or prescribed organizational behavior (Amabile, 2012). Whereas personality traits relate to self-discipline, ambiguity to ideas, independence and risk-taking attitude (Ibid.). The ability to think creatively is inherently acquired, but it can also be trained and taught within the organization (Amabile, 1983).

The third component, intrinsic motivation, notes the drive to engage in the task due to personal interest, passion, or positive challenge (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010, p. 574). The main argument for engaging in the task is based purely on the pleasure of the challenge and satisfaction of the process, rather than being driven by external motivation or rewards (Amabile, 2012). Intrinsic motivation is the central element of creativity, as it is argued that people are more creative when motivated by interest and enjoyment than extrinsic motivators. As Amabile (2012) notes, the strong presence or complete absence of outside motivation factors in the social environment can undermine individual motivation, therefore balance is essential.

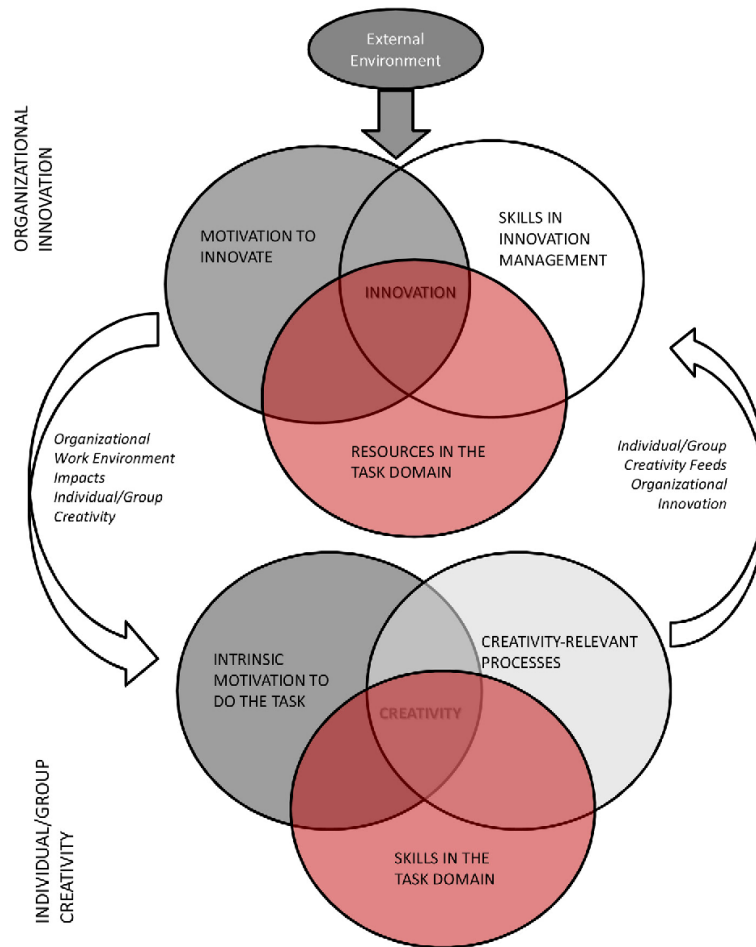


Figure 1. Components influencing creativity and innovation and their interaction (Amabile and Pratt, 2016)

After touching upon the individual level of creativity, it is essential to discuss a second part of the framework - organizational innovation fostering. Similarly to individual creativity, organizational innovation can be broken down into three components: motivation to innovate, resources, and management skills, each of which corresponds to the aforementioned elements (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 161-62). For starters, motivation to innovate can be seen as a ground organizational orientation towards motivation - more precisely, the display of the organizational motivation to innovate and grow further (Ibid.). It notes an organization's ability to survive by developing new capabilities that stem from competitive environmental pressures (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2013). Instead of exploiting existing solutions, organizations create new ones that eventually lead to innovation (Ibid.). Amabile highlights that such innovative motivation is related to high-level leaders who display qualities of risk-taking, openness to new ideas or systems, and offensive strategies (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 161).

The second component of resources denotes basic resources or raw materials needed to support creative work within the organization (Ibid., p. 162). For instance, creativity-driven people with the sufficient expertise skills are viewed as an essential company resource, while financing, providing access to information, and internal company infrastructure is regarded as support mechanisms (Ibid.). The third component of skills in innovation management refers to the factual management skills of combining innovative thinking with raw materials and support mechanisms (Ibid.). Skills in innovation management can be understood as the higher level unit in the organization (managers, leaders, etc.) ability to establish a fruitful work setting for employees. As Amabile et al. (2016) explain, these include setting goals to have all units strive toward the ultimate strategic aim while simultaneously maintaining autonomy for employees to explore new ideas; providing open communication systems within the organization; facilitating idea exchange and collaborations among the teams; setting work assignments that match individuals' interests and stimulate positive challenge; providing constructive feedback to help build competence; and needed resources that would allow deep engagement with the task (Ibid.). These skills can be regarded as extrinsic motivation factors that positively support individual motivation.

Organizational innovation process

Before diving into the model as a whole, it is essential to get a grasp on the separate parts and linkage between the two. The first part we will discuss is the organizational innovation process which proposes a five-stage model along with the external influence factors of innovation components we mentioned earlier. The three organizational components here constitute the *work environment* and will be reflected in how each influences different stages. The figure below (Figure 2) depicts the model, while the following will briefly review all essential parts.

Stage 1 refers to the agenda-setting process (Ibid., p. 163). In simple terms, it refers to the activity when the top-level of the organization or unit managers set particular goals, indicate problems that require solving, or prepare statements and action plans for innovation. This stage primarily depends on the first organizational innovation component of motivation to motivate, as here motivation is the primary manifestation directed toward innovative solutions (Ibid.).

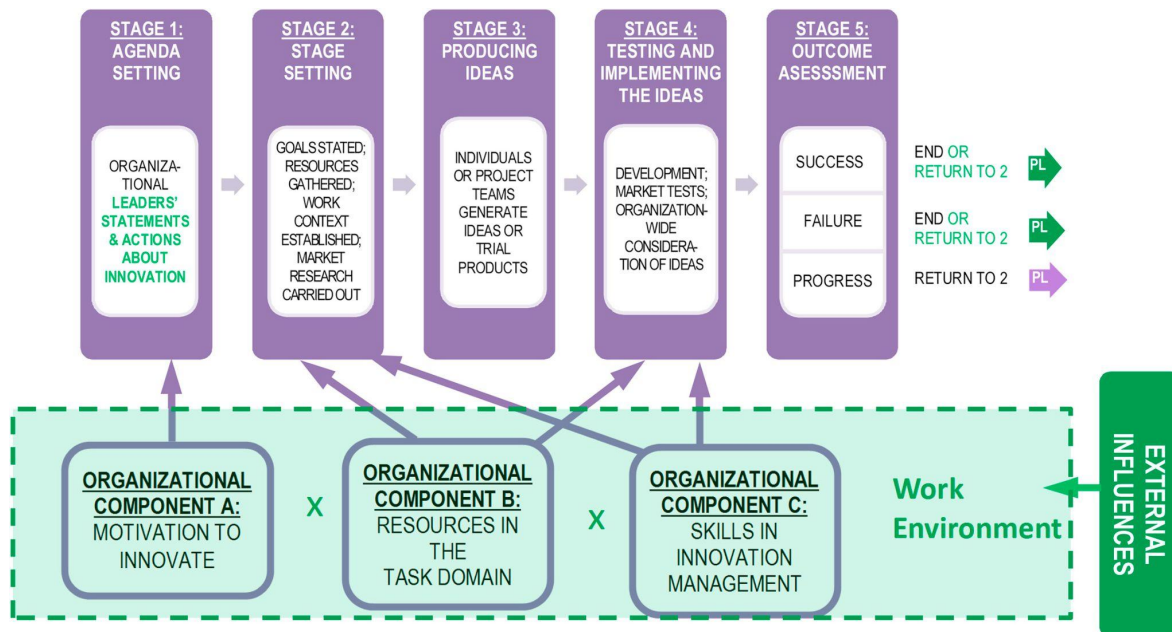


Figure 2. The dynamic componential model of innovation (Amabile and Pratt, 2016)

Stage 2 focuses on preparation for a successful process for projects and work context (Ibid.). It includes gathering resources, such as skilled personnel and market insights, and setting up leadership structures, deadlines, and budget plans. This innovation stage is dependent on two organizational components, resources in the task domain and skills within innovation management (Ibid.).

After the initial steps, Stage 3 moves on to generating ideas. Here the process solely falls into the hands of the individuals or small groups working on the projects and developing ideas, however, the prosperity within this stage relies on the foundations built within the two first stages as well as the onward going process in Stage 4 (Ibid.).

In Stage 4, the organization moves further with ideas by testing, filtering, and developing the chosen ones presented by individuals or project groups (Ibid.). This stage highly depends on the resources component and skills in innovation management, as higher-level managers are bound to filter out ideas: implement prosperous, and kill poor ideas (Ibid.).

The last, Stage 5, includes an assessment based on the outcome of the previous stage. A key understanding here is how the ideas and projects move further on. According to Amabile (2016), there are three possible outcomes: success, failure or progress (partial success). If the process toward solution or idea implementation happens to be positive - the activity can be finished, likewise with the negative process. However, this stage proposes an essential element of the feedback loop where the final output can be returned to the earlier

stages for renewal (progress) or be utilized as a starting point for future operations (Ibid.). Important to note that each of the three possible outcomes is marked with ‘PL’ which refers to the *progress loop* that reflects an overview of the progress made (Amabile and Kramer, 2011). The progress loop holds that the more managers support people and their progress on a daily basis, the better their inner work life is, and the better the organization’s performance in the long run and vice versa (Ibid.).

The individual creative process

As in the previous model, the individual creative process framework has five stages that are influenced by different components of creativity. We will now go through the essential parts indicated in the following Figure 3.

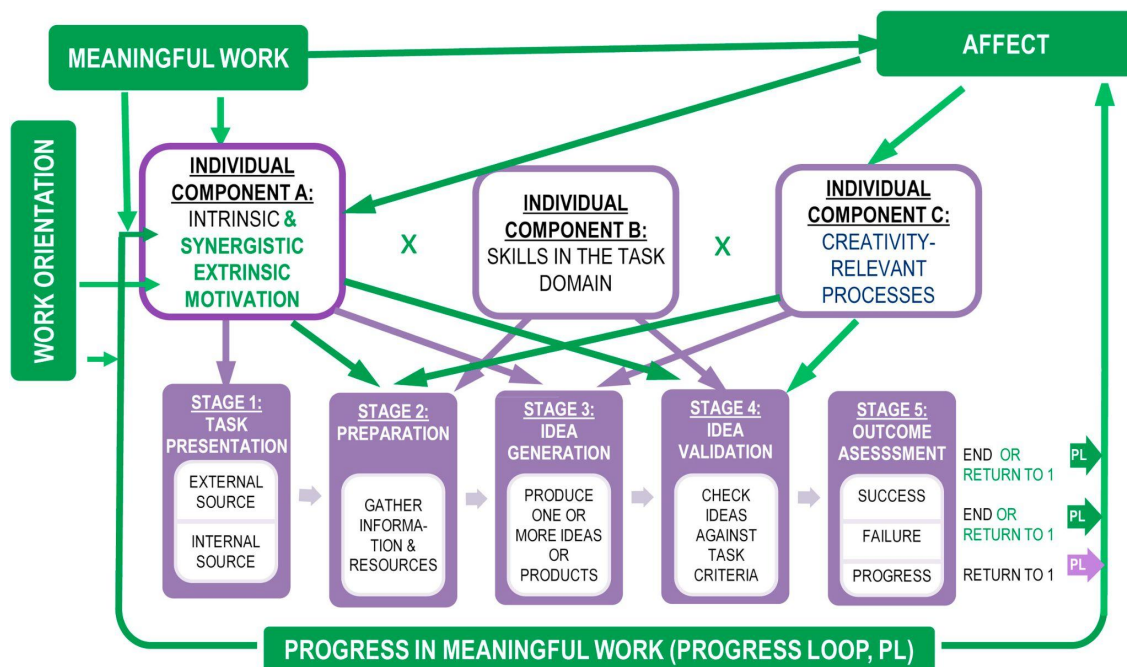


Figure 3. The dynamic componential model of creativity (Amabile and Pratt, 2016)

Stage 1 is named *Task presentation* and is focused on identifying goals or problems. The process can be induced by an individual intrinsic motivation to tackle a specific issue or flourishing opportunity (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 164). Later, the formulated task moves onto the preparation process in Stage 2. This step focuses on the preparation of individual resources for the upcoming task and involves processes of building knowledge, skills, and information gathering that succeed if they are based primarily on the domain skill component - the more skilled individuals, the less time preparation takes (Ibid.). When the task is formulated, individuals or project teams can move on to Stage 3 to generate new ideas. This

process mainly depends on task motivation and creativity-relevant processes, as individuals driven by intrinsic motivation and possessing creative skills have more success in developing novel ideas or projects (Ibid.). The next stage relies on expertise and individual domain skills in order to validate generated ideas appropriately in accordance with the task criteria or general domain requirements to ensure their usefulness. Lastly, Stage 5 concludes the process with the outcome assessment, which, like organizational innovation, has feedback loops where ideas can be refurbished by returning to earlier stages, finalized depending on the positive or negative outcome, or progressed to future projects (Ibid.). As Amabile et al. (2016) highlights, the ultimate success of innovation and creativity in the organization depends on the strength of all six components and how they are realized in each stage. However, in the creative process, even though some of the stages were linked with certain components (see purple arrows in Figure 3), they are accounted as possible sequences, meaning that each organizational context will have specifics of which component supplements which stage the best (see green arrows in Figure 3) (Ibid.).

Besides the creativity process stages, the model has four additional elements that will be revised: work orientation, meaningful work, affect, and progress in meaningful work, where each is interconnected, influencing one another as well as the components for individual creativity. The first element of work orientation explains the effect of leaders' innovation-related statements (Pratt et al., 2013, p. 175). More specifically, work orientation reflects how individuals evaluate leaders' innovative motivation, based on their internal values to determine whether the work is *worth doing*. These evaluations are based on the social influences stemming from individuals' backgrounds, educational experiences, media, etc. (Ibid.). Therefore, there is a link between work orientation and creativity: the latter becomes more intrinsically driven if one sees it as worthy and valuable (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 171).

The second element of meaningful work is defined as a positive and significant experience that brings a beneficial affect when engaged in the activity (Deci and Ryan, 2008). The notion of meaningful work also impacts internal employee motivation, stimulating their engagement and satisfaction with the tasks (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 170). As the model notes, meaningful work also influences work's progress. Similarly to work orientation, understanding that the task is valuable enhances persistence in creative endeavors. As Amabile et al. (2016) claims, creative work is often set with hardships and failures, thereby meaningful work offers a justification perspective that clarifies why the work is worth doing.

The progress has three possible outcomes: when the goal is achieved, the loop is closed - the work is meaningful as the final outcome results in success. When the goal is partially reached or incomplete, the work is still justified as meaningful as the progress has been made and individuals can strive for improvements or refurbishments of the ideas. Lastly, when the goal is far out of reach, the progress loop returns to the starting point although the work can still be viewed as meaningful and the failure can be justified as progress as employees can reevaluate mistakes and learn which paths to avoid when moving forward (Ibid.).

The third element of affect explains the involvement of emotions when working on a task. The research carried out by Amabile et al. (2005) showed that general positive mood and joy induce better creativity in employees, while negative emotions like anger and fear significantly reduce creativity. Following this, Amabile et al. (2016) draw connections between affect and intrinsic motivation, as positive emotion evokes greater personal motivation to engage in the work simultaneously affecting individual cognitive attitudes since positive emotions will encourage employees to willingly explore riskier or different prospects for ideas. The work progress also positively reinforces affect as it feeds it with the satisfaction that meaningful work is constantly advanced and the goals are reached or in progression (Amabile and Pratt, 2016, p. 173-74). Generally, all four elements are closely interconnected, consolidating each other and the components for individual creative development.

Limitations of the theory

Even though Amabile has produced a well-comprehensive framework for understanding creative processes, the research has shown that the model has a few consideration points for gaps and limitations of the theory. One of them is the emphasis on the individual-level components, namely expertise, creativity-relevant skills and motivation while overlooking the influence of contextual and social factors (Shalley et al., 2004). By incorporating social constructivism that looks at socio-cultural contexts we overcome the shortcomings of the theory in this sense. Creativity is a complex interplay between the individual and work environment, therefore Shalley et al. (2004) suggest that various factors like job complexity, work relationships, and spatial configurations should be considered more thoroughly. Another aspect is de-emphasized importance of team collaboration and team creativity. Even though the creativity model does mention working in teams, it does not delve into the greater detail of group creativity. In organizations, many innovations are done within

teams as creativity emerges through group interactions and diverse knowledge streams (Paulus and Nijstad, 2003, p. 4), therefore Amabile's framework lacks applicability if analyzing teams-based creative processes. In this case, we incorporate the Shared Leadership theory that will be discussed below, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration that can be facilitated and encouraged by the management.

Shared leadership

To make a seamless connection between our inquiry and the first theory, we chose Shared leadership to fit the best for our objective. In this paper, we want to dive deep into how a Manager can empower their team, distribute resources, and make sure their individual voices are heard. By analyzing the data we have with Shared leadership theory, we can better understand the mechanics that influence individual stages of the Componential Model of Creativity thanks to the flexibility of various leadership styles this theory includes.

As previously established, a company's ability to survive lays largely on skilled and well-educated workers (Pearce, 2018, p.72). These workers require various motivational factors that include autonomy and involvement in decision-making (Ibid., p.72).

This concept highlights that employees ought to have a bigger variety of tasks and take part in task planning, goal setting, and evaluating situations & resources (Ibid.). In combination with Amabile's theory, Managers are expected to give access to resources to be managed by employees who possess the expertise and the ability to coordinate with others when attending complex tasks and challenges. Likewise, these employees are highly valued assets and are expected to take on leadership roles for the team (Ibid.).

Drivers supporting shared leadership

It was discovered that shared leadership improves the team's performance thanks to its effect on team cohesion and enhancement of collective vision (Ensley et al., 2006, p.77). Drivers that support shared leadership and team knowledge learning include:

- 1) Formal (vertical) leader
- 2) Knowledge sharing and team learning
- 3) Team member attitude
- 4) Team dynamics, potency, and trust

- 5) Team member voice
- 6) Organizational culture (Ibid., p.77).

Role of the vertical leader

The vertical leader ought to provide guide lines that include participation from all team members. These include common purpose, clear goals, that will enable the team members to take on leadership roles, such as decision making or helping to define goals. In retrospect, the vertical leader needs to take on a motivation role, whilst monitoring the team's dynamics and be ready to step in, in case of a conflict (Ibid., p.78).

Knowledge sharing and team learning

Team members widely acknowledge that the establishment of shared leadership in a team setting requires an ample amount of time to comprehend each other's competencies and assets. In effect, to achieve team effectiveness, individuals must gain a comprehensive grasp of each other's strengths and limitations. The concept of transactive memory refers to the compilation of knowledge possessed by each team member and their cognizance of the information held by others, thus highlighting its significance in team dynamics (Ibid., p.78). The leader can foster team learning by supporting the environment with open communication, collaboration, and focus on continuous improvement through meetings, brainstorming sessions, or knowledge-sharing platforms (Ibid.). In consequence, the team will be able to make informed decisions, solve complex problems, and enhance productivity (Ibid.).

The attitude of a team member

The emergence of shared leadership is a consequence of a transformation in mindset from a vertical, individualistic, and heroic outlook to one that is more relational and collective. Cox, Pearce, and Perry (2003) assert that this transformation is contingent upon team members' acceptance of three crucial aspects:

- 1) constructive lateral influence, where employees can affect each other without being recognized as a formal leader,
- 2) responsibility to respond suitably to constructive peer leadership,
- and 3) the inclination to hone their skills as both leaders and followers.

Team members must be willing to embrace leadership roles with tasks such as decision-making or goal-setting, and collaborate interdependently to establish shared leadership effectively (Pearce, 2018, p.79).

Team dynamics, potency, and trust

The cultivation of shared leadership is dependent on team members' openness to being influenced by others, thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to others' actions. This is in line with Mayer et al.'s (1995) conceptualization of trust. In turn, team members' collective conviction in their capability to fulfill objectives is referred to as team potency where open communication and collaboration with active information sharing and feedback facilitate effective teamwork (Ibid., p.80).

Team member voice

Based on Pearce (2018, p.79) findings, a team member's "voice" is defined as the readiness to exert and accept influence from others, contingent on each team member's level of involvement in decision-making regarding the team's purpose and actions. When individuals feel supported by their colleagues, they are more prone to being dedicated to the team's purpose. Shared leadership is fostered within an internal team environment, composed of three mutually reinforcing and complementary dimensions:

- 1) shared purpose,
- 2) social support,
- 3) and voice.

Shared purpose denotes the point at which team members have a shared comprehension of their collective objectives. Social support pertains to the provision of emotional and psychological resources to the team. Lastly, voice is the extent to which a team member can contribute to fulfilling the team's purpose and monitor their performance to hold each other accountable (Ibid., p.81).

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is often identified as an external factor that can significantly impact the development of shared leadership within a team. Erkutlu (2012) notes that the relationship between team proactivity and shared leadership is particularly robust in a supportive culture. This is likely because team members feel that their input and involvement

are valued, thereby increasing their willingness to undertake leadership roles within the team (Ibid., p.81).

Limitations of the theory

On the contrary, the theory possesses certain limitations such as not addressing contextual factors where the effectiveness of the theory may be impacted (Dionne et al., 2014). There are factors such as task characteristics, and team composition that the theory does not address, however, as we are utilizing Amabile's theory of creativity which covers such topics, thus the paper will not lose its relevance and theories will enhance each other respectively.

Methodology

Research Plan

To comprehend and elucidate the decisions made in this research, we will adopt the research strategy known as the "Onion" approach (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). With the Onion strategy, we can outline the sequential steps required for our investigation. Similar to peeling an onion, we initiate the process by selecting a research philosophy and subsequently delve into the finer details of the project. In the subsequent sections, we will dive into each layer of the Onion strategy and expand on the rationale behind our choices pertaining to them.



Figure 4. The 'Onion' (Saunders et al., 2014, p.108)

Philosophical view

Social constructivism has been used as a perspective to support various practices in different fields such as education, conflict resolution, or organizations (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013). The approach highlights the diversity of views and emphasizes two factors, namely the culture, and context, in order to comprehend what happens in society and knowledge construction (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). The basis of reality for social constructivism depends on social groups, cultures, and historical periods (Egholm, 2014). Thus, it is not a fixed entity but a byproduct of social construction. Moreover, Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe this byproduct as being influenced by shared meanings and human interactions, as individuals collectively participate in creating and interpreting the world around them through language and cultural practices. Therefore, reality has been contingent on both social and cultural levels.

Another imperative factor is knowledge. Wertsch (1991), attributes knowledge to be acquired through meaningful interactions with others through cultural tools such as language (Ibid.). Knowledge is, therefore, always influenced by time, place, and cultural norms (Ibid.). As these change, the knowledge is also changeable (Egholm, 2014). With this notion, individuals shape their existing knowledge that was acquired in their cultural environment

with Tactile's socio-cultural environment. Therefore, employees create knowledge through interactions with themselves and the environment they work in. Consequently, knowledge is considered both a result of the context and a tool with which to transform it (Ibid.). Similarly, an individual is described as a general collective representative that has been defined by discourse and social constructions (Ibid.). As Tactile reaches almost 300 employees, we need to comprehend how social groups in the company understand and shape each others' perspectives. This can happen on an individual or collective level, where they reflect on their situations, and suggest a better understanding of other perspectives, such as customers, colleagues, or competitors. By diving deeper into this factor, we can determine social dynamics which have an impact on the creative endeavors employees have, such as sharing or developing ideas and attempting to take a lead role in projects. Since language is a powerful tool with which individuals assert meaning, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987), it is never value-free as it is formed by our cultural aspects. By utilizing this philosophy, we can analyze how Tactile looks at creative outcomes and creates an environment that nurtures them, while taking into consideration various understandings of reality that can emerge in different social groups, especially with employees from all around the globe.

Inductive research approach

For the research steps taken in our paper, we consider the inductive approach to fit our purposes. The intent of this research is not rooted in testing the theories, but to generalize our findings and apply them to companies which can find themselves in similar contexts, i.e. gaming industry. The process includes collection of data from a specific company context that can be generalized at the end (Bryman, 2016, p.691). We begin with observations and data gathering to identify patterns from which we then create a theory.

Qualitative research strategy

We have considered various forms of this research such as qualitative, quantitative or a combination of the two. Consequently, we chose the qualitative research to be best suited for our case. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.8), highlight the nature of qualitative research as a strategy that puts the quality of the entities and the meanings that not measured in quantity, amount, or intensity forward, as it dabbles into the socially constructed nature of reality and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry. The strategy focuses on rich descriptive data

that are provided by the researchers interacting with the interviewees (Wilson, 2019, p.15). These researchers seek answers to inquiries that emphasize how social experiences create and give meaning, in contrast to quantitative studies that emphasize the measurement or casual relationships between variables rather than processes (Wilson, p.38).

Case study research design

Our paper can be described by Yin’s (2003, p.13) view on case study, as an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between them are blurred. We are performing an in-depth analysis of an individual organization in a specific gaming sector - mobile gaming, as this field lacks research in terms of creativity and leadership areas. We aim to provide an extensive analysis of a specific problem with thorough interviews from individuals from different departments. Generally, the idea of Tactile as a case focus is to become a representative case that will shed light on how leadership can shape and enhance employee creativity and help to create a creative environment (Bryman, 2016, p.62). Tactile is looked upon as an exemplifying case, as it is not an extreme example of a mobile gaming company since it offers puzzle mobile games with a few in-game purchases (Ibid., p.64). Our intent is to emphasize that engaging employees in leadership activities during the five stages of their creative process can enhance their creative components, consequently building and nurturing a creative environment. Furthermore, we utilized Yin’s case study model and its 5 main parts to construct our research (Yin, 2003, p.5).

Strategy	Form of Research Question	Requires Control of Behavioral Events?	Focuses on Contemporary Events?
Experiment	how, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
History	how, why?	No	No
Case study	how, why?	No	Yes

Figure 5. Yin’s case study (Yin 2003, p.5)

We began the research with identifying the concept of interest and creating a fitting research question. With Yin’s table model, the query’s emphasis was to capture the specific knowledge gap which in our case was the combination of shared leadership and creativity (Ibid.). Moreover, the main units of analysis include Tactile’s and employee’s creativity components, as these are the factors that are influencing each other and organizational & individual innovation process through Shared leadership. These at the end have an effect on creativity that fuels the creative environment in the company.

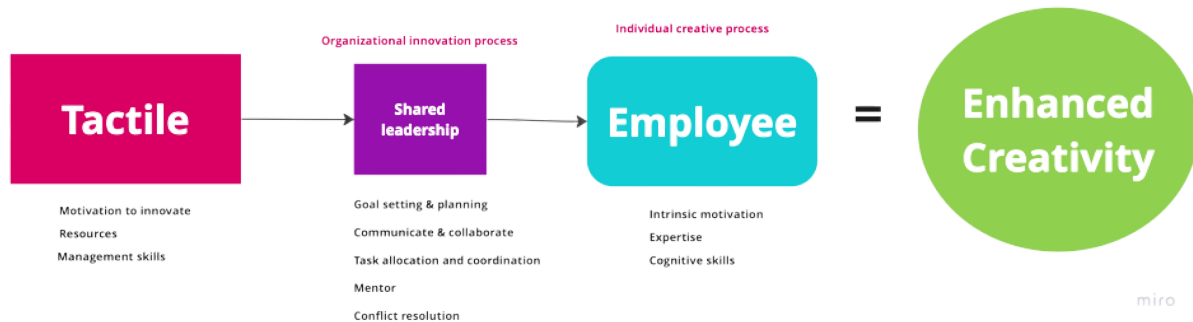


Figure 6. Research Strategy

Lastly, to uncover the patterns forming between the data and the goal of this study, we related the data with theories and our research question.

Data Collection

Primary Data

In this paper, we utilize first-party data, meaning it has not been processed by other parties (Klenke et al., 2016). In connection with our approaches, social constructivism emphasizes qualitative and interpretive approaches to uncover subjective meanings, experiences, and interpretations of specific social contexts (Crotty, 1998). With these methods, we can comprehend how reality is created and maintained through employee interactions and language (Ibid.). In the case of sampling, we utilized purposive sampling as the interviewees were not selected aimlessly but to create an exemplification of the inquiry’s interest - the mobile gaming industry (Bryman, 2016, p.408).

Semi-structured Interviews

In our first phase, we conducted an introductory interview with the Head of Game Production, in order to gain insights about the company structure, leadership practices, and

company culture. We utilized a semi-structured method due to its conversational versatility, such as asking follow-up questions in case the interviewee mentioned an interesting event or we required more context to their answer. Therefore, topics that were not included can be discussed even if they were not mentioned in the interview guide (Bryman, 2016, p.468). Nevertheless, we created a questionnaire that included the basic structure of questions and topics we were interested in, however we did not need to strictly follow. This way, the facilitated conversation felt more natural and created an immersive flow that occurs typically in normal conversations (Ibid.).

The following interviews with the Game Designer, Art Director, Writer, and User Support were also conducted individually, as we encountered a few challenges such as availability. On the contrary, by administering individual interviews, we could bring our focus on the interviewee more delicately than in a group setting, which helped us to create relevant follow-up questions (Schröder, 2003). In the same way, the interviewee had more space to express and elaborate on their opinion as group interviews can present a certain risk of conversation disturbance from others (Ibid.). Moreover, as we are interested in individual experiences and opinions, we tried to avoid a situation where an individual could succumb to peer pressure and agree on one verdict instead of establishing their own (Ibid.). On the other hand, we are also aware of the group interview benefits such as more natural feeling, or dialogue with multiple viewpoints, however as interviewers, we focused on creating a natural discussion with the goal of interviewee self-reflection the best we could (Ibid.). The conducted interviews can be seen in Appendix 1 along with the interview guide in Appendix 3.

Interview guide

To elaborate on our interview guide, our aim was to interview a main Manager - the Head of Game Production, middle manager - the Art Director, and regular employees who need to utilize a certain amount of creativity in their everyday tasks to acquire reflective information from both sides. The Head of Game Production was chosen as they are one of the main Managers along with the CEO and CTO. Afterwards, we included the Art Director, as they directly translate upper management's vision to the employees. On the other hand, as it might occur, some Managers might perceive their practices to be beneficial even if the employee experience might differ, thus we made sure to obtain data from the other side of the table as well. Ergo, the regular employees, who were a Writer, a User Support, and a Game Designer, were chosen as they are in the most distinctive creative field the game studio has.

Since the IT department would be quite difficult to categorize based on creativity needed, which by no means implies there is none, the visual and textual departments were a clear path in comparison with the purely technical ones. In the semi-structured format, the interview guide includes a set of questions that do not need to be strictly followed. Thus, the interviewer can take advantage of asking multiple follow-up questions to investigate and collect additional data (Bryman 2016, p.201). On the contrary, the loose interview structure also represents a considerable contrast between interviews, therefore the researcher needs to assert more time towards coding and exploration of correlations (Ibid.).

Interview questions

Our interviews included 15 questions for the Head of Game Production and 28 questions for the employees (Appendix 3). The first interview with the Head of Game Production uncovered the company culture, expectations, and management logic, whereas the employee interviews included us in how situations are handled and what processes employees utilize. As we focus on creativity and shared leadership practices, the interview structure was made from the skeleton of Amabile's Creativity theory with follow-up questions sourced from the Shared leadership theory.

As previously mentioned, the base structure of the interview, or the interview skeleton, was made out of Amabile's Creativity theory, with supporting questions sprouting from the Shared Leadership theory. The idea of having open ended questions was to discover and comprehend the processes that we might have not been aware of and discuss them further.

For the Head of Game Production the interview skeleton comprises of 15 questions, with an introductory question "What is your organizational structure?" focused on getting familiar with Tactile's hierarchy. Following question sheds light on the team structure and who directly reports to the Head of Game Production. With the third and fourth, question "Who hires team members", "Based on what are you choosing your candidates?" and "Do you consider if they fit in the company culture?" our aim was to understand the qualities Tactile looks for in candidates and what company culture they match it with. With that being said, we took into consideration the possibility of an external company being the hiring force behind sourcing the employees, however the candidates always need to be approved by an individual coming from the company, therefore we deemed it imperative to question the process behind it. With questions five, six, and seven "How do new ideas reach the right people?", and "What's the process of suggesting a new idea/process implementation?", and

“Is taking ownership encouraged?” our aim was to gain insight into the initial innovation stage of company’s processes when it comes to generally sourcing and filtering new ideas, as well as the level of independence and responsibility they expect from an employee. Following questions eight to ten, “Is optimization of outdated processes encouraged?”, “Did the company ever make a risky implementation? Why yes or no?” and “Do you tend to avoid risky implementations? Does it happen often? Include a situation example if possible.” were aimed at the internal innovation of the company. From the first set of questions we assumed we would gain the overall or rather a brief impression of how and which factors Tactile wants to innovate. Our aim was to uncover whether the company wanted to innovate their product but was rather conservative when it comes to the processes, therefore we wanted to include a more specifically aimed question at the internal process implementation. Question eleven “How would you describe the company culture? Do you have any dress code, rules, or events?” was again aimed at the internal culture to make the interviewee think about the employees or the internal side of the company instead of the product itself. The following questions twelve and thirteen, “Do you have any reward system for your employees for a job well done? If yes, what is it for each department?” and “Are there any other external motivation rewards?” were intended to look closer at how the company motivates the employees with the intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Since a lot of the departments include employees that are not from the Sales or departments where achieving a certain target goal per month or quartal results in a reward or celebration, we were interested in the ongoing reward systems that Tactile implements to stimulate their staff. Question fourteen, “Do you think the employees are getting challenged in their work? What about thinking outside of the box/creative problem-solving?” was connected to the intrinsic motivation of employees. Since some individuals enjoy challenging parts of their workload as they need to utilize and improve their problem-solving cognitive skillset the viewpoint of the Manager was an important standpoint we wanted to obtain and compare with the employee’s points of view. Lastly, question fifteen, “Do you support the employees? Verbally or with resources?” was directed at the leadership part of the Head of Production’s work to comprehend, and similarly as in the previous case, compare it to the employee’s points of view.

For our questionnaire for the employees, we created the skeleton with both theories. The part one to two “Could you tell us a little bit about your background and how you got to work for Tactile in your current position?” and “What do your regular tasks look like and are they the same with a new project?” were asked to get ourselves familiarized with the

interviewee and their experiences and their everyday work environment comprised of tasks and the level of difficulty. The following question two ‘‘(If not answered before) What skills do you need to be able to perform your job tasks? Did you learn them on your own?’’ was asked to make the interviewee reflect on the skills needed for their tasks and critically or even narcissistically think self-assess the level and need of experience and expertise for their job. The next question ‘‘How do you enjoy the tasks and challenges at your job?’’, ‘‘When a new project gets announced, are you excited for it? Why?’’, and ‘‘What do you do when you do not enjoy the tasks at hand?’’ were aimed at the challenges the interviewee might experience as an employee, to give us an idea of the cognitive thinking they need to be able to utilize, and whether they have any interest or get any cognitive stimulation thanks to them. The last question in the set, ‘‘When it comes to a new task, do you usually employ used processes or would you consider yourself somewhat of an innovator with your approach?’’ was similarly as previous questions aimed at self-reflection of their capacities and the deeds done at the company in their time to push Tactile further with any of their actions. We were aware that some of the tasks might have been forgotten and left unmentioned, thus we asked following questions, that were not included in the initial skeleton of the questionnaire, with the aim to describe the experience that might have made the interviewee remember similar occasions. This first set of questions focused on creativity, whereas the following questions eight to ten were aimed at the innovation spectrum. The first question of the set ‘‘How would you describe Tactile and its processes and product in terms of novelty, innovation, and creativity?’’ was focused on the company’s will to innovate from the point of view of the employee, which was an important factor to consider, since the company might express their intentions that would point to their wish to innovate but not the actions. Question nine ‘‘How difficult is it to get resources in your position? (Finance, internal information, training)’’ focused on the managerial capabilities and processes in the company with the intention to uncover the level of attention an employee in similar position might have. The next set of questions, ten to sixteen were based on the stages of creativity according to Amabile’s theory. First question, ‘‘How does management introduce you to the next project or tasks? Or do you come up with them on your own?’’ was the introductory question to the innovation process of the organization, and the level of involvement of the employee with novel projects. The following question eleven, ‘‘What is the level of involvement of the management when it comes to identifying and problem solving?’’ was to understand when and where does the management step in to identify a need for a change. We were aware of a few options that could be present, which included the company being the driving force behind the tasks and

projects, leaving no space for the employees to come with the initial steps. The next question ‘‘When it comes to generating ideas (or brainstorming) for the new project, how does that process look from your point of view?’’ was asked to uncover the first creative input in a form of a process that is performed after the problem or need is identified. Following the question thirteen and fourteen ‘‘How do you present the finished project?’’ and ‘‘Based on what does management decide with which idea to go with? Do you have any influence in that?’’ with the aim to uncover who are the stakeholders that need to be approached and reported to, along with the type of information that is needed to be addressed in the thought process. With this type of question, we wanted to get closed to comprehending the amount of attention the employee puts into presentation of the solution or finished work, as that indicates all of the possibilities that might shape, or rather change, the outcome of the implementation of the solution they spent their time on. This can create either a motivating or demotivating scenario. For the next question, fifteen ‘‘How do feedback sessions about new projects look like?’’ is to see what type of feedback strategy the management uses and how does the outcome influence the employee. There are various ways how to give feedback and depending on the manager, and their leadership skills, the employee can receive it in different manners and forms which will affect their next course of action. Lastly, with the question ‘‘Did you ever get frustrated during any of the stages we talked about (preparation, brainstorming, feedback)?’’ we wanted the interviewee to reflect on the different stages, namely the preparation, brainstorming, and feedback where they could think and mention anything that could have slipped their mind in case the interviewee lost their train of thought at any point during the interview. The last set of questions, questions eighteen to twentysix were to obtain information about leadership the employees experienced during their time at Tactile. Starting rather broadly, ‘‘Do you feel empowered to take on a leading role when it comes to new projects and tasks?’’ was to reflect and understand the dynamics between the employee and the manager with the tasks they are assigned or responsible for. Since the company has a variety of workers, there might be some who value their work but do not go above and beyond, which is also understandable as it requires a certain level of commitment that some individuals do not have the means to offer or are not motivated to offer. Thus, we cannot forget the position of the manager in this formula, as they can motivate the employee to feel more committed and empowered to take on the leader role of some of their tasks. The next question, ‘‘When working on a project, do you work in a team? How well aware are you of your teammates’ abilities? (Strengths and limitations)’’ was targeted at the familiarity the employee has with the team they are a part of. Even if the tasks they perform are their own,

or they do not work in a team most of the time, they ought to be aware of the skillsets their coworkers have in case they would need a helping hand when stuck. Question nineteen “Does your team motivate you to get things done or procrastinate?”, was focused on getting us closer to understand the dynamics between the team members and the influence they have on each other. Along that, we could obtain new insights on the company culture as well. The following question “Are you confident that your team members will get things done?” was connected to the following “How do you respond to peer feedback?”, since the first line of question led the interviewee to reflect on the capabilities of their teammates, following the quality of the feedback they will be receiving from them, which made the interviewee reflect on their reaction to the feedback quality they identified initially. Sticking to the skillset theme, question twentytwo “Do you look forward to honing your skills further? When was the last time?”, addressed the means through which the employee reviews and obtains their skills. We were interested in identifying the process, starting from identifying the need to the action taken, along with an explanation for the specific decision made. Question twentythree “Do you feel heard in a team meeting? How prone are you to sharing your ideas and insights?” looks deeper into the idea sharing in a team meeting. There are different situations where employees can share their thoughts, however we were interested in this specific setting due to the familiarity with the department’s environment and colleagues. Least but not last, after the set of questions that would explain, or zoom in, on the contributions the employee makes within their team and the dynamics between their coworkers and them, we looked for the emotional support that the employee receives whether it is from a coworker or a manager by asking “When you feel demotivated, do your team members support you emotionally? Could you give an example?”. Lastly, we wanted to receive a comprehensive answer with the twenty fifth question “How would you describe Tactile’s work culture?” that could unveil any other details the interviewee thought of when it comes to the Tactile’s work culture.

Coding

The choice of coding depends on the intention and data comprehension of the researchers (Bryman, 2016, p.581). This paper focuses on how the interviewees feel and why they take actions they do, therefore process coding was the most fitting method due to its ability to capture one’s actions and their conceptual perception (Saldaña, 2009). Moreover, the method takes into consideration concepts such as identity which fits with the rest of the research strategy (Ibid.). As we need to correctly interpret the message it is imperative to

comprehend the feelings behind what the interviewees say (Ibid.). Nevertheless, as researchers we are not value-free and subjective interpretations may occur during coding. Nonetheless, our focus is to minimize our own subjectivity by reflecting on the interviews through repeated listening and reviewing the transcriptions. The interview coding can be seen in Appendix 2.

Subject	Statement	Concept	Interpretation
Game Writer	For the guy who wanted to write his own stories. It was awful. He was very prescriptive, as I said, just like, we're just telling you to do this, this and this. And if you disagreed with the feedback, he would not, it's fine. And so you kind of you get demoralized because it's like, Oh, why even? Why even think I'll just do whatever he wants.	Feedback & reward system	Feedback where the employee is criticized for giving inputs that could shape the product, affects the employee in a demotivating way.

Figure 7. Coding table

Secondary Data

In this paper, secondary data was used to establish the initial point of the research. With the variety of sources, including peer reviewed articles to occasional blog posts from respective business websites to enrich the opinions and challenge the subject matter, we developed our fundamental understandings and formed the first pattern connections that would lead us to our research question being formed. For the basic investigation and the deep dive into the concepts, secondary data was studied early in the research process. We, as researchers, have investigated scientific journals, books, and scholar articles related to the topics of creativity, employee engagement, social interactions, innovation, and leadership to obtain a general awareness of the available resources and existing knowledge. With this step, we increased the reliability of the paper, and developed a deeper understanding of the topics. We included works of Csikszentmihalyi, Nakano and Wechsler, Slavich and Svejenova, Amabile, Sternberg, Drazin, and others. Furthermore, we built our methodology section on writings of acclaimed authors such as Bryman, Yin, Egholm, Wilson, etc. By utilizing the knowledge offered by these authors, we were able to develop our research paper with a well-thought structure that could be utilized to look at data from the angles supporting the

research. For our theoretical section, we mainly reflected on the work of Amabile who collaborated with Hennessy and Pratt, whereas for the leadership theory Pearce was the leading author.

Reliability

Yin (2003, p.37), characterizes reliability as a concept through which the research operations can be repeated and the same outcomes can be obtained. Wilson (2013, p.145), simplifies the concept to a degree of consistency when measuring a phenomenon. Thus, for our research to be reliable and errorless, we have incorporated a variety of data sources, such as different interviewees and peer reviewed literature materials to analyze the case. Taking into consideration potential weaknesses in said data, this type of method often produces extensive findings while being time-efficient (Ibid., p.215).

Validity

Validity is defined as the mechanism to measure what is intended to be measured (Wilson, 2013, p. 148). Validity can be distinguished into two types: internal and external.

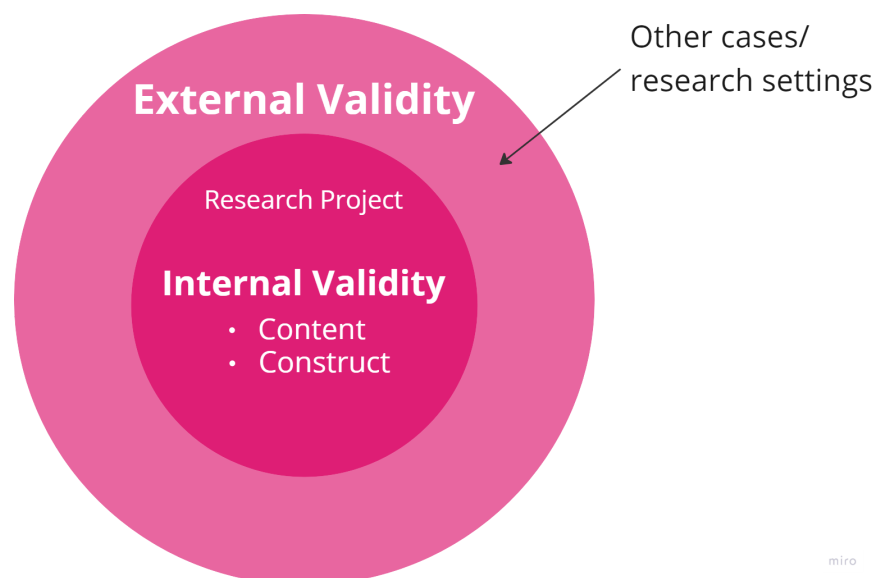


Figure 8. Validity (Wilson, 2013, p. 148)

The internal validity further breaks into two more aspects of content and construct. The content validity is separated into two factors: face and sampling. Face validity is concerned with the instrument the measures are carried out (Ibid.). For this, the instrument was the English language which is common both for us as interviewers and the participants as interviewees. Our goal was to ensure that questions were well understood by interviewees,

who were also welcome to express uncertainty and ask for clarifications if needed. The sampling validity ensures that all the measures within the study are included (Ibid.). Therefore, when interviewing Tactile employees, we aimed to incorporate various topics, such as their backgrounds, required skills, challenging work situations, and interactions with other team members.

The construct validity reveals established operational measures for the study (Yin, 2003, p. 34). It is achieved when the interview questions are formulated based on the relevant literature (Wilson, 2013, p. 149). In our case, the interview questions were developed according to the theoretical concepts gathered through readings in research journals and scholarly papers.

External validity is defined as the extent to which the findings can be generalized (Ibid.). We base our knowledge on social constructivism that relies on the premise that social context is essential. The conclusions on Tactile creativity processes highly depend on their social context and organizational environment. Thus, the findings can serve as the starting point for other researchers analyzing the subjects.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Before conducting the interviews, we aimed to get in touch with people who would work in a creative setting. The three interviewees Game Designer, Art Director, and Game Writer were included due to their involvement in creative organizational processes, while User Support was targeted in order to get a contrasting perspective. More precisely, the latter interviewee provided insights into how company players whose work setting is less creatively demanding produce value from the interactions with game players, which is translated into creative solutions. Another interview participant was the Head of Production who gave us an understanding of the company's structure and the general vision the management displayed to its employees. In retrospect, if we had a chance to talk with the CEO of Tactile, we may have obtained more detailed insights into the vision which would have enriched the organizational innovation component of motivation to innovate. Nevertheless, in the company's hierarchical structure, the Head of Production is at the same level as the CEO, thus we can assume that insights into the vision reflect the general organizational picture.

Another limitation was the interview setting with the Art Director. Our initial plan was to have a physical meeting at Tactile office premises and have a one-on-one conversation, however, on the interview day, we received news that the interviewee was ill, thereby unable to participate as expected. The interview was eventually rescheduled but due to both of our time schedules, it was conducted remotely. Generally, the participant was elaborative enough, although if the interview would have been on the physical site, the more natural flow of interactions might have stimulated more explicit reflections.

Lastly, we were planning to get one additional interview from another User Support Specialist, located in the Tactile office in London, UK. While being in the company on the interview day, we learned that the possible participant, unlike his peers, is utilizing a rather creative approach to user query management. We have tried to contact the Specialist by email. Unfortunately, at the time of the contact, as we discovered soon later, the employee has gone on vacation without responding to our request. Consequently, due to the lack of time and resources, we were unable to reschedule and conduct an additional interview that would have provided us with additional data.

Delimitations

One of the main delimitations of the project is the implementation of Amabile's componential model of creativity. As we have learned, in recent years the model has been expanded from the three-component framework to the dynamic stage structure, considering both individual creativity and organizational innovation aspects. However, due to the complexity and time management, we have excluded the third part of the dynamic componential model that combines both creativity and innovation frameworks simultaneously and analyzes how both processes interconnect and affect one another. We have decided to implement processes separately in the analysis section to have a more comprehensible overview and avoid repetition. The lack of literature on the element is another reason why the model has not been included. As the updated version of the componential model is relatively new (released in 2016), there have not been many scholarly papers reflecting on the model. Many of the peer-reviewed papers are utilizing the classical three-component model from 1983, thus it was challenging to implement the complex framework that lacks literature on it. Another framework aspect that has not been excluded from our research was the element of the progress loops. As we utilize the inductive approach, we derive the theory from the gathered data. Analyzing the progress loop would

require an excessive amount of additional data and participation from other members at Tactile, which in this case, is limited due to the time and resources at hand. Instead, we have focused to analyze Amabile's model by retaining the main parts of creativity and innovation processes simultaneously incorporating shared leadership aspects

Analysis

Going forward we will keep in mind Tactile's hierarchy based on the data we have gathered from the interviews from the Head of Production, Game Designer, Art Director, and Game Writer (Appendix 1). The Figure x reflects the hierarchy described by the employees, and the chain of communication about Tactile product innovation.

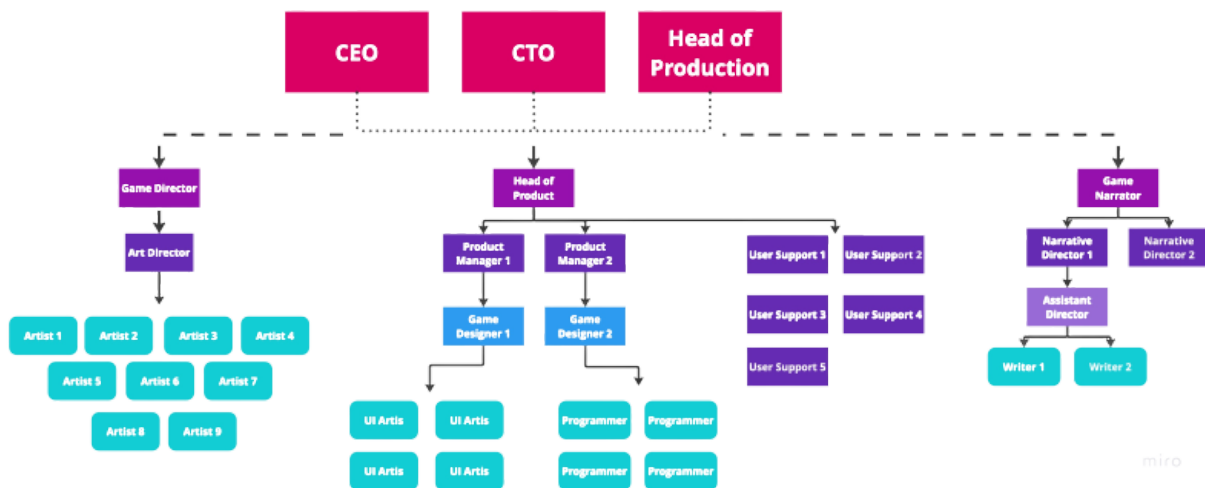


Figure 9. Tactile's hierarchy

Individual creative process

The individual creative process outlines the personal factors and qualities that are accounted as focal drivers for creativity at the individual level. Elements such as general intelligence, creative thinking and experience in the field have a considerably major influence on how well creative ideas are generated and expressed (Amabile, 1988, p. 128). Additionally to that, motivational state and involvement in tasks play a significant role in individuals' creative nature and understanding of work meaningfulness (Ibid., p. 129). The following section will review creativity components on the individual level to grasp how different personal factors play out in regard to idea development in Tactile.

Domain relevant skills

Knowledge & technical skills in the domain

The individual level of expertise in the domain is considered the basis from which any performance must proceed (Ibid.). When hiring new employees, Tactile emphasizes that the right organizational attitude and motivation to grow are desirable qualities, however, the right skill set is the primary criterion to obtain the position (Appendix 1, p. 45). Indeed, it seemed that most of the interviewees have eligible professional backgrounds and levels of qualifications to be proficient in their tasks. For instance, the Art Director has reflected on their previous work experience as a 2D artist in Argentinian game company and study background in multimedia design that contribute to their skills in designing new features and sceneries for the two most recognizable company games: Lily's Garden and Penny & Flo.

Similarly, The Game Writer's expertise has been built within the narrative design field. The interviewee's study background in playwriting helped to get a job at a video game company right after college, and their adventurous personality led the way to get employed at Tactile as a Narrative Designer writing dialogues for Lily's Garden (Ibid., p. 20). In contrast to previous responders' experiences, the Game Designer has a broader extent of expertise, as the interviewee stated that prior to working at the game company, he was studying teacher's education and had worked at the elementary school for four years. Shortly after, the focus from teaching switched to the mobile game industry while obtaining a master's degree in games at the IT University of Copenhagen (Ibid., p. 10). Yet a different experience could be seen in User Support's case since before landing in the position, the respondent's occupations were primarily within the hospitality industry. Nonetheless, to ensure efficiency, User Support specialists are expected to have good communication skills to work with and understand user requests. Therefore, the previous work experience gave an advantage for the participant to grasp the current job's principle (Ibid., p. 34).

Besides the educational knowledge relevancy, individuals must have the technical skills required in the specific domain (Amabile, 1988, p. 131). To put it simply, technical skills refer to an individual's ability to perform the tasks defined in their work position. When asked about required skills, The Art Director emphasized the importance of an organized attitude and good communication proficiency (Appendix 1, p. 2). Their current position requires splitting the focus into two aspects: collaborating with the Story Director to define the features and work on them artistically, i.e. creating sketches and outlines for the in-game

sceneries; and managing artist teams by distributing tasks and organizing deadlines for the process (Ibid.). In the position of Game Designer, more technical and analytical skills are required (Ibid., p. 11) as they are responsible for managing game mechanics, creating level designs, and defining gameplay features to continuously improve player engagement and satisfaction. As the development process requires collaboration with teams of design artists and programmers, the interviewee likewise emphasized communication skills. Additionally, to convey the ideas more vividly, the interviewee noted that basic knowledge of programming or drawing skills helps to enhance the work process and have a smoother collaboration experience (Ibid., p. 12). We recognized a certain level of brilliance from Tactile employees as they possess a flexible skill set that can be applied to a multitude of work tasks. Interestingly, we can assume Tactile either creates these circumstances where employees have an opportunity to employ and develop such flexibility, or they already own it.

Working within the framework

Like other workplaces, Tactile has established certain processes for tackling tasks. For instance, one of the ways to understand this is to look at how the initial creative processes begin for each of the interviewees. The Art Director noted that, from a personal perspective, the introductory process is a rather complex procedure due to the possible streams of incoming information (Appendix 1, p. 4). The new projects are usually introduced in the form of new in-game features, which in this case, are primarily the new scenic and environment settings for the game plot and are delivered from either the Story Director or the Marketing team. The artist explained that the process is dependent on the situation: completely new sceneries or game areas tied with the storyline mainly come from the Story Director, while adds-on and eye-catching design elements can be requested by the Marketing department to make the game more appealing for the players (Ibid.). Moreover, the Art Director is in a position to make their own contributions regarding new game scenery propositions as a supplement to the story director's ideas (Ibid.). Another type of initial task definition can be seen in the case of the Game Writer, where the tasks are predominantly planned ahead of the process. The Writer clarified that the usual assignments require writing weekly scripts for the newly released episodes for the most popular company game Lily's Garden. Every Wednesday, the Writer and the Game Director meet to receive the flowchart that breaks down the plot into chapters and then further into game days. Such process structure is ingrained, allowing the employee to effectively divide work efforts and set the right pace, thus avoiding delays and meeting the deadline until the new script is presented (Ibid., p. 20). While some

employees are directed or welcome to participate in decision-making, others are expected to be autonomous in defining initial tasks and processes. In the case of the Game Designer, the material for the first stage is obtained from external sources. More particularly, the problems are identified by the management and passed on to the game design team, which then begins formulating tasks accordingly. As the Game Designer pointed out, the new game projects can be perceived as the team's regular tasks since their responsibilities include defining new in-game features to enhance the player experience. In terms of the initial processes, the participant outlined that there is no playbook to which the tasks are generated or monitored as the team itself determines the tasks based on market research and internal data (Ibid., p. 11). By this, the Game Designer and the team gets more control over the situation and the freedom to discover the best solutions to determined problems, which according to Amabile's findings, is the central organizational environment quality inducing individual creative processes (1988, p. 147).

The actual process of engaging with tasks is likewise distinctive to each interviewee. The Art Director is maintaining a more structured approach primarily due to the variety of projects. More particularly, working on different game features requires the Art Director's collaboration with each new team of artists and programmers (Appendix 1, p. 3). In order to reach the objectives by the deadlines, the Art Director employs organizing skills in preparation of calendars for teams, visual whiteboards with the assigned tasks and tools that will be used throughout the process, and sketches for the ideas that need to be developed (Ibid., p. 6). Such a structured attitude not only helps monitor tasks effectively and assure all teams' productivity but also helps to release the initial stress the Art Director feels when new projects are announced (Ibid.). For the Game Designer, analytical skills and research become the basis when carrying out tasks. After the management hands over the problems, for instance, diminished player engagement with Lily's Garden on specific weekdays, the Game Designer begins generating solutions by executing market research, specifically investigating competitors' games (Ibid., p. 16). As we have learned from the Head of Production, the mobile game industry is ever changing with each of the market players copying each other's materials (Ibid., p. 48). By analyzing competitors, Game Designer gets insights into the new in-game features that could be optimally replicated in Lily's Garden. A rather simple approach is also seen in User Support's way of tackling the tasks. Generally, the interviewee is responsible for monitoring and responding in user communication and feedback channels, such as in-game message boards and Facebook and Google review sites (Ibid., p. 33). Besides

communication proficiency, daily tasks require solid personal skills such as politeness, patience, and detail orientation. As the interviewee reflected, the main customer base is middle-aged American women who may lack the technical abilities to comprehend game errors, thus a friendly, polite tone is essential to impart the solution and minimize user frustration. A thorough understanding of the gameplay is crucial since players often vaguely explain errors, aggravating the support process. An emphasis on details acts as a detector to link bits of information to potential causes of a problem, enabling it to be resolved faster (Ibid., p. 35). We can spot the differences in the ways each employee approaches their task. Starting with the Game Designer we can see they have a certain framework in place, from which they deviate when a problem arises by approaching their Manager. Next is the Writer who utilizes tools that help them to gain an overview of the vision which is when they employ their own methods to succeed. Lastly, the Art Director works in a quite structured way even when collaborating with the team.

Critical utilization of the domain skills

Following Amabile (2012), individual domain skills are incorporated into the idea processing to determine the viability of the potential solutions. With domain-specific knowledge and an appropriate level of expertise, individuals can make strategic evaluations of idea usefulness to task objectives. In the creative process, the validation relates to the fourth stage, when novel ideas are checked against the task criteria to measure their appropriateness. In the case of the Art Director, such a process is relevant when proposing new features for the game scenes. Generally, potential ideas must align with three fundamental criteria: go in line with the storyline, follow the established game style, and be appealing to the player (Appendix 1, p. 6). The evaluation points create certain bounds, therefore, to assure that potentially effective solutions that would enhance player engagement are considered, the Art Director must critically filter out the ideas by how well they match the established validation criteria. As such, when proposing a feature, the artist aims to project its alignment with the story and design style highlighting the element of joy and appeal it will have on the player. For instance, when playing Penny & Flo, players can design various interior design objects. In such case, the Artist Director could work on drawing the shelf or instead propose the idea to incorporate an aquarium, which, in comparison, would kindle more joy and have a stronger appeal to players (Ibid.). For Game Designer's idea validation process, the criteria for the solution appear to be more subjective. Many probable ideas for the game features are generated throughout the competitors' product research (Ibid., p. 13).

The process here does not seek to copy the idea entirely but rather to evaluate its potential establishment in any of the company's products. As a result, the interviewee's analytical behavior comes into play in evaluating the solution in terms of its potential effectiveness in generating revenue and engaging players. The process includes weighing the pros and cons of the ideas, namely considering the price of implementation, the possible duration of making features, their complexity, and technical requirements (Ibid., p. 12). When the idea is filtered out through the criteria, it is then introduced to the Head of Product to receive input on the progress and direction for further development. Similarly to the Art Director, the Writer's suggestions are evaluated based on the criterion of narration style (Ibid., p. 23). Essentially, when new features are on the spot, the Writer can experiment with ways of incorporating them into the storyline. The interviewee noted that often they will use a riskier narration style for the sake of personal enjoyment. Ultimately, however, the potential suggestions must adhere to the general tone of the storyline, so the ideas are filtered out accordingly (Ibid.).

Creativity-relevant skills

Idea generation

As understood from previous stages, the Art Director's working process includes close collaboration with the Story Director to keep aligned with the storyline; and project teams to design and deliver new features for the game. We can identify they have excellent social skills and are a good team player with an open mind when it comes to input from others. The ideas that the interviewee suggests arise through interactions with the Story Director, who delivers the initial suggestions that go in line with the envisaged plot. When getting insights into what the plan for design is, the Art Director can come up with propositions for the features that could attract more attention from the players and boost engagement, for instance when dealing with requests for inputs about specific areas that can be inspired by real cities or countries (Ibid., p. 5). Taking into consideration their background in the game art field, they are bound to bring a diverse experience that contains broad general knowledge within that area, which also implies risk orientation which can be a valuable skill, especially when working with task planning.

On the other hand, the Game Designer utilizes a specific idea generation process that is split into two steps: first, identifying what feature needs to be developed and second, deciding on its appearance. We could assume they work in a quite rigid way and utilize the

same process over and over without straying away from it, however, as they pointed out in the interview, when collaborating with other colleagues a sudden problem in the process can arise and must be changed (Ibid., p.14). This implies that the Game Designer is able to orient in crisis and possesses a good amount of flexibility when it comes to thinking on the spot. When it comes to competitor analysis, their thinking process is not to entirely copy the element but rather to discover the solution of how to implement a better version of the feature in one of the Tactile games. As the Game Designer noted, one of the primary differences Tactile games offer in contrast to similar type Match-3 games is the focus on the storyline. When implementing new features, the team always aims to develop a narrative spin around them so the new element would not just exist in the game but have significance to the story plot (Ibid., p. 13). When the ideas for the potential features are gathered, the Game Designer then makes a design file with descriptions of the elements, emphasizing how the following process should be executed, passing the file further to the manager for feedback, followed by the UI artists and programmers for development (Ibid., p.14).. The interviewee, however, stressed that even though he works on defining game features, he is never the owner of it since the main stakeholder, in this case, is the Head of Production who appeals for their delivery. The Game Designer's focus is to analytically construct propositions that are approved by or reformulated at the request of the management. Thus, tackling multiple tasks that need to appeal to different stakeholders implies a certain brilliance that can be spotted.

The Game Writer appears to be working in collaboration with the other Game Writer, or solo (Ibid., p.20). Essentially, the Game Writer highlighted that to ensure productivity in the domain, it is crucial to possess the ability to produce even under writer's block circumstances (Ibid., p. 21). As the Writer's position is creative in its nature, narrative design production is the first and foremost required skill. To fight writer's block, the participant has established specific techniques to get into the "hypnotic state", such as listening to the same song continually or watching movies during working hours (Ibid., p. 20). Eventually, the Writer explained their attitude toward their philosophy, which is not to take the work and themselves that seriously (Ibid.). Undoubtedly, it is a rather unconventional method of working, however, the Writer describes that the movies inspire them with the way they portray dialogues and the overall construction of the story. Additionally, we identified that weekly meetings with the rest of the company brings in a variety of individuals who are facing different problems which they can still relate to as they are working on the same product feature (Ibid.).

As is known, Tactile organizational culture enables every employee to participate in the idea development process via weekly game meetings and new feature presentations. The User Support themselves pointed out that they do not have a strong opinion on the features as they do not actively engage in their generation process. Although, some of the game change suggestions do arrive from the User Support team in the form of players' suggestions that would make them personally more engaged with the storyline. In Lily's Garden, for instance, the pet element was suggested by a player whose dog passed away, so the game developers designed the dog as a way to express support and sympathy (Ibid., p. 39). Ergo, the user support team operates as a bridge between the potentially valuable ideas coming from the players to the ideas' establishment in the development team.

Intrinsic task motivation

Task motivation

According to Amabile (1988, p. 133), internal motivation is the most fundamental component in individual creative processes. A high level of intrinsic motivation can compensate for the lack of domain or creative skills as it determines how the two former components will play out when engaging in creative performance (Ibid.). The concept of task motivation refers to the individual positive or negative inclination toward the task and is derived from the general satisfaction or displeasure with the job. In principle, all interviewees seem to appreciate the work environment and organizational culture Tactile has established. One of the aspects is autonomy in performing the tasks. As the Game Designer highlighted, they do not experience micromanagement from higher-level managers, as they are allowed to generate own approaches in processing the objectives (Appendix 1, p. 18). Another essential element is the challenge the tasks induce. As the Art Director noted, project challenges create circumstances to practice skills in organizing. As unfolded until now, such attitude helps the Art Director to retain productivity and feel self-satisfaction when neatly structuring team assignments and deadlines (Ibid., p. 2). Moreover, it stimulates the notion of empowerment in the position when generating methods to solve problems and challenges (Ibid., p. 6). Additionally, when the task is comprehended as having a degree of significance to the company, it likewise impacts the positive inclination. For instance, the Game Designer emphasized that they find pleasure in the tasks that have an impact on how beneficial the outcomes are predicted for the company's revenue, and how well will the new game features influence player engagement (Ibid., p. 13). More specific reasoning for the task entertainment

is seen in the case of the Game Writer. For them, tasks bring general enjoyment due to the opportunity to realize themselves from a new perspective (Ibid., p. 22). More specifically, the interviewee shared that the previous narrative subjects they were working on were primarily within the comic books genre, namely superheroes, shooters, etc. At the moment, the focus is drastically opposite as stories are more emotional and take a female standpoint, thus it provides the interviewee with a new narrative experience and opens up the mind for creativity (Ibid.).

Meaningful work

A second aspect of intrinsic motivation is the individual perception of reasoning for undertaking the task (Amabile, 1988, p. 134). As stated by Amabile (2016) meaningful work provides justification clarifying the task's worth to the individual. One of the aspects of detecting value in the task is to determine its alignment with personal values. As the Game Writer noted, they find joy in narrating female-centric perspectives with an emphasis on the emotional factor, which is often disregarded in most male-centric stories. Nevertheless, the interviewee feels distanced from the gameplay structure built to gain more monetary player engagement. In terms of the work's meaningfulness, the Writer specified that they find meaning not in the gameplay but in the story they create. The storyline development not only impacts the Writer by allowing creative expression but also provides more playfulness to the game. As the interviewee claimed, the stories they create give heart to games and establish stronger connections between the players and the company. Nevertheless, the interviewee feels disconnected from the game in terms of the gameplay structure that is built to encourage player monetary engagement. The interviewee noted that despite that, there is no consideration for expressing any dissatisfaction with the matter as they have obligations to the company and get a salary for the work. In the case of the Art Director, the meaningfulness in work is comprehended in the process of making ideas into the reality of new in-game features. The interviewee noted that seeing their ideas implemented in the game evokes feelings of pride and happiness to have an impact on how the players will experience the game. In terms of personal values, the interviewee emphasized the importance of diversity in the team. Indeed, diversity is deemed a highly valuable element in Tactile, as more than 40% of the employees are women. The aspect of diversity is understood as the norm in the organization, and is hence, aligning with what the employees find important in their personal lives. Hence, it is evident that work is deemed to be meaningful as individuals are obtained

with the circumstances to not only realize themselves creatively but also have a part in developing an influential product regarding players' investment in the company's games.

Shared leadership

In relation to shared leadership, we can note a pattern in how certain elements are relevant in the different stages of the individual creative process. Generally, in the first stage, where tasks are identified and introduced to individuals, the role of the vertical leader becomes an essential factor. More particularly, with the notion of vertical leadership, managers are able to define project goals clearly and ensure that each team member shares a common purpose in the aspiration of reaching objectives. Further, when objectives are clear to team members, the second stage begins in order to gather individual resources and knowledge needed to generate ideas for the task. As the example of the Game Designer pictures, most of the ideas are brought through the research of competitors' games. For the respondent, the stage enables them to get insights into the potential features of the company's games. In this stage, the team dynamics come into play. As the Game Designer's example reveals, the insights and the initial research for the task help collect the material for the group brainstorming, where with the help of peer feedback, the insights can be reflected on through the lens of different perspectives that provide the basis for the following stage where potential ideas are generated (Ibid., p. 15). Subsequently, once the ideas are generated, they move onto stage four to determine their relevance and usefulness in achieving project objectives or accomplishing tasks. In this stage, the element of team member attitude plays a significant role, as there is a switch from individual thinking to team thinking. To imagine this, we can refer to the example of the idea validation processes by the Game Writer. The respondent can generate various ideas when working on new feature narration, however, in the end, the final solutions must reflect the general norms of the company's narrative style (Ibid., p. 23). Moreover, the aspect of team dynamics is likewise relevant as at this stage, the feedback cycles come in to help evaluate the idea's likeliness to succeed. As the Art Director pointed out, constructive feedback helps assess the process in regard to the taken directions and get insights into how to improve processes in the future (Ibid., p. 8). Lastly, the aspect of the team member's voice is relevant in stage four as well, as during interactions, team members can establish standard procedures to which the tasks should be carried out in a specific department. As in the case of the Art Director, establishing shared purpose refers to the notion of defining certain criteria that is applicable when producing design elements, to which the intended in-game features must be evaluated (Ibid., p. 6).

Organizational innovation process

When we talk about the organizational creative process, we talk about the environmental factors that promote and inhibit individual creativity. These factors include high-level management that sets the general organizational climate, which includes the level of emphasis on creativity and innovation (Amabile, 1988, p.150). Additionally, an emphasis as such, can be established with reward and evaluation systems, as well as resources for these creative efforts (Ibid.). On the other hand, middle management and project management influence individual creativity by coordinating the targets, deadlines, feedback, and the degree of freedom and constraints laid on the employees (Ibid.). When we go deeper, we can also notice the coworker level of influence, where individuals influence each other's creativity with their levels of experience, technical know-how, and social skills (Ibid.).

In the previous part of our analysis, we talked about the individual creative process, which based on Amabile's theory, is the heart of the organizational ability to innovate (Ibid.). Nonetheless, as the organizational components of innovations directly influence the creativity components of an individual, they will be studied in detail in this section of the analysis.

Motivation to innovate

Innovation value & enthusiasm

With the variety of companies, especially in the gaming environment, the general direction the organization takes towards innovation is imperative, as it sets the scene for the rest of the company. These directions are often communicated in a top-to-bottom direction, as they are translated through middle management (Amabile, 1988 p.153). Interestingly, Tactile prides itself on not having middle management, but rather a main leadership team that consists of a CEO, CTO, and the Head of Production (Appendix 1, p.48). This would create a rather interesting environment, as the employees would be one step closer to the source of innovation direction than they would be in a non-flat hierarchy. It also would mean that the employees need to be able to comprehend the strategy laid in front of them more cohesively. However, Tactile's upper management includes individuals such as an Art Director or Live Operations Manager, who act as middle managers and offer guidance in terms of details on designs, deadlines, resources, etc. (Ibid.,p. 7).

When looking at their internal processes in terms of sharing ideas and such, there are still layers of hierarchy included, however, not in a big corporate sense. Meaning, that the

employees such as the Game Designer do not necessarily perceive the individual who is above them in the chain of command as their boss, but they are seen equally instead (Ibid., p.14). Additionally, glimpses of motivation can be seen in the corporate vision and values, where the areas of innovation ought to be mentioned (Ibid.). The eye-catching headline on Tactile's website states "We create games with heart." (Tactile, n.d.). This opens up the discussion about their position toward the main product. The first thing we ought, to begin with, is the market Tactile is in. Of course, we are investigating the mobile gaming industry, however, it has further categorizations we should not ignore. The most recognized genres include action, adventure, arcade, battle royale, card, MOBA, puzzle, racing, strategy, sports, trivia, and word (Brittney, 2023). After a discussion with the Head of the Product, they established Tactile is in the puzzle genre within a substantial mainstream market (Appendix 1, p.50). The game has a specific target audience that includes thirty-plus-year-old women in the US who are rather conservative towards new features rather than not (Ibid.). This slightly limits the number of possibilities for innovation Tactile can bring. Seemingly, the highest level of management is aware of this factor, and through their user research tries to find the right places where innovation can be talked about (Ibid.). Consequently, the employees such as the Art Director, understand the window of innovation is limited, in a way that the product needs to some extent learn from the competitors and replicate the other mobile games, when they notice the market takes liking to the new feature (Appendix 1, p.4). Moreover, the Game Designer compares the lifecycle of the mobile game industry to the triple-A PC or console games (Ibid., p.13). They recognize the pace at which the industry is moving, which is rapid compared to the triple-A titles, and the inevitability at which competitors copy each other, and Tactile does not differ in this sense. We can assume Tactile might be taking small steps towards innovation, which can be considered to be conservative, whilst the competitors, who were not mentioned, are the ones taking bigger steps and being more open to failing. However, as that can be applied to any industry, it is visible that Tactile is pushing the boundaries even if it takes inspiration from the competitors, as the Game Designer mentions, the company tries to take it one step further by iterating on the feature to fit in their game product by synchronizing it with their story narration (Ibid.).

In connection to the narrative, we talked to the Game Writer. They reflected on the innovation window being present in how they are able to tell the stories (Ibid., p.22). Thus, the innovation from the top management is translated into the various forms of narration in combination with the new iterated features the teams bring in. At its core, the innovation ought to make sense and be in line with the user research data, as the game values its

profitability as much as its novel yields. When looking at the process, however, we can identify a rather progressive and enthusiastic attitude toward internal innovation. With Tactile's current size and the revenue it generates, described to be close to a company with three times the amount of employees, its main innovation focus lies on its processes (Ibid., p.49). For instance, utilizing automatic scripted quality assurance testing, which minimizes the number of recurring tests needed. These automatizations happen in multiple departments, such as the Game Production department, specifically for Writers for whom the text is automatically translated (Ibid.). The company appears to focus its attention on emerging technology and optimize its processes accordingly.

Risk-taking and exploration of new ideas

As mentioned above, Tactile is in an interesting climate where risk-taking is not always an option when it comes to its product. We can look at their limitations from several angles. With their current target audience, technological literacy may play a role in the gameplay, whereas their location might indicate the level of conservativeness, as the Head of Production mentioned (Appendix 1, p.50). Tactile considers these angles based on their game and user data (Ibid., p.49). If we look at this through the lens of creativity theory, the motivation to innovate is closely related to the first stage of the innovation process - setting the agenda. The information we obtained through our interview suggests that when it comes to the product, it is often the upper management that comes with an identified problem that needs a solution (Ibid., p.11). However, Tactile incorporates two types of means by which employees can share new product ideas. Firstly, there are meetings for different departments, where they share feedback and ideas (Ibid.,p. 46). The second option includes the company's roadmap which portrays a collection of targets that need to be accomplished in the established period of time (Ibid.). A way in which Tactile gathers these ideas is in teams which can then approach the Product Manager who collects inputs for the idea and after they evaluate it based on data relevancy, the idea is added to the roadmap board (Ibid.). From the management point of view, the identification process of the problem is data-driven, which we can see in the Thursday low-player count example. Tactile possesses a variety of game data, which reveal different information about the game performance, including a reveal about a significant player drop during one of the days (Ibid., p.47). We can hypothesize how far Tactile reaches when it comes to the solutions due to their limitations. One of the possibilities that are visible from the interview, is the willingness to optimize and maximize existing in-game features. As the Head of Production suggested a comparison between Thursday and

Saturday, a day with the highest player count due to an in-game tournament and a following replication of said tournament during Thursday (Ibid.). It is logical to maximize the inputs the game already possesses, and even if the solution is not novel, we cannot completely rule out its innovative undertone. Looking at internal processes, employees appear to be encouraged to explore new possibilities within process optimization as well (Ibid., p.49). The company discourages the utilization of unnecessary processes and instead questions their usefulness and need (Ibid.). With their current practices, the Head of Production maps out the current process of an employee, identifies the pain points, such as long feedback time, and suggests optimizations (Ibid., p.49).

Organization members

As discovered, people are the main powerhouse of the organizational capability to move ahead of the competition. Tactile is no different, as it realizes its own position on the market, with fewer people generating the same revenue as the big players, the company needs employees who are just as passionate about their work (Ibid.,p.45). Seemingly, the company has its own advocates, who consider releases of new game features with a focus on the story narration, player's experience, and the quality of animations to be something to take pride in (Ibid.,p.37). There is a sense of pride and support in teamwork from the management point of view as well. In situations where stress reaches the middle managers, they turn to their team members who support each other with their capabilities and points of view, and they begin to focus on the creativity flow in the company rather than the stress from the uncertainty (Ibid.,p.3). Additionally, the difficulty in bringing novelty into the oversaturated and mainstream market requires a degree of wit and creativity that the management is aware of, therefore they focus on sourcing talent that can be inspiring and add to the dynamic that is sought after (Ibid.,p.4). On the contrary, the desire for creativity and passion does not mean that Tactile's workforce is not improving, the Art Director identifies that improvement happens especially during feedback sessions, which also indicates the growing skills and expertise of Tactile's employees (Ibid.,p.8). In connection to the dynamics, team spirit is an imperative part of Tactile's problem-solving. As the Art Director described, everything happens in teams, from the moment the game is created until the moment a problem is solved (Ibid.,p.5). When it comes to teamwork, being aware of the team's strengths and weaknesses deeply affects Tactile's ability to an effective work distribution (Ibid.,p.7). Seemingly the awareness of strengths and weaknesses prevails mainly in the middle management, rather than the team members (Ibid.,p.8,30). We can assume that the workload distribution is up to

the Managers rather than the team members, as they do not have to coordinate to that extent. However, from the interviews, we can identify that various employees are aware of what their team members work on, therefore if they were in need of advice, they know who to approach. Otherwise, the individuals might have independent and specific work tasks that cannot be assigned to other team members.

Resources in the task domain

Organizational resources might be one of the most obvious factors, ergo its analysis is not always included, however, satisfactory resources appeared as the third most important quality of the environment that influences creativity, which implies it is worth investigating (Amabile 1988, p.147). These resources are not limited to the creative departments, such as Game Production, but also the finance, manufacturing, or HR (Ibid.). Moreover, investigation at Tactile helped us to identify the task domain where innovation is developed, as the game product i.e. Lily's Garden, Penny & Flo, and the internal processes.

Personnel

When it comes to Tactile's employees, their backgrounds vary to a great extent. The Art Director possesses skills relevant to their department, with the experience in illustration and animations they are bringing from an international mobile game company specializing in asset design for multiple clients (Appendix 1, p.1). With such background, they are familiar with the mobile gaming market, have extended experience within the game asset development and creation, and are able to coordinate the team on a daily basis (Ibid.). From their point of view, such a position requires solid organizing skills and communication with artists and the Story Writer (Ibid.).

Interestingly, the Game Designer arrives from a pedagogical background combined with IT (Ibid.,p. 10). Their view on the skills needed in such a position is being able to communicate the design blueprints to the rest of the graphic department (Ibid., p.11). Additionally, a robust understanding of programming and drawing allows for utilizing the same language which results in effective communication (Ibid.).

When looking at the User Support's background, their education did not necessarily correspond or relate to the User Support or gaming field, however, as a business unit, the company needs to perform the basic business operations for which there might not be a specific educational department yet (Ibid.,p. 33). Interestingly, their experience as a barman,

added to their skillset of patience and understanding of individual requests and needs, which is needed in the game support practice (Ibid.).

On the contrary, the Game Writer has a background that aligns with narrative writing in terms of education and previous experience at past companies (Ibid., p.20). Different from the previous interviewees, the Writer's reflections on skills did not include an understanding of different departments or other professions within the mobile gaming industry. Thus, they do not seem to deem it necessary to learn additional skills outside their expertise that can be utilized in collaboration with different departments such as UI artists.

We can see that Tactile possesses individuals who are bringing in skills from other relevant industries. Therefore, its ability to implement innovation whilst being market-aware points toward a smooth implementation phase. Nonetheless, the diverse experiences of the rest of Tactile's employees, arguably allow them to communicate in an effective manner either due to their efforts to use the same language as the other actors they need to communicate with or be relatable with their audience and translate the technical implementation in a non-technical fashion. Moreover, during the second stage of the organizational creative process when tasks such as market research need to be done, each actor can enrich Tactile's strategy with their specific point of view. For instance, the Art Director with their design understanding of game animations and illustrations can help to point out the differences that can help Tactile to distinguish itself and its new feature from the competitors and stay on-brand, as well as effectively distribute the work and create a leadership structure if needed. In the same manner, the Game Designer can offer level design insights, and the Writer being aware of the competitor's story can utilize the information and create a compelling story where the newly developed feature is seamlessly introduced to the audience. At stage four, when the new feature is tested, User Support can offer relevant feedback as they comprehend the user language and can identify potential hardships.

Material resources & data

As previously established, Tactile is a data-driven company. The company possesses game data that everyone has access to, including specific live data testing to drive the data-driven mindset among the employees (Appendix, p.47). Arguably, everyone has 24/7 access to this data, to navigate their decisions and create possible inputs for new product features. Data availability aside, when talking to the interviewees, all of them confirmed the resource possibilities are within obtaining more personnel, skill improvement courses, or materials such as books, or new software (Ibid., p.4, 13, 24, 54). As it seems, the possibility

to increase skills through courses is moderately utilized by the employees to either grasp the understanding of other departments or hone their own skillset. On the other hand, it is not as useful for middle managers, which we based on the discussion with the Art Director, perhaps due to their existing experience with multiple operations that happen within the department, or they are able to learn from existing resources that are free. The Head of Production further elaborated on personal development and its possibilities, which range on the logical relevance to individual jobs and the gaming industry (Ibid., p.54). Furthermore, when it comes to innovation of the internal processes, as Tactile is keen on keeping up with the trends and maximizing the value of the tools they offer to their employees, there is a significant support for the exploration of new relevant software and dismissal of irrelevant tools, even in a short period of time (Ibid.).

Innovation Management skills

Management & work environment

In general, when we look at management skills, we are interested not only in the ability to set targets but also in the distribution of work, how collaborative the management team is, and how can we characterize the communication when talking about top to bottom and vice versa (Amabile 1988, p.155). When talking to the interviewees, everyone except the Art Director, comprehend Tactile's organizational structure in a similar way. Their way of looking at the hierarchy is not recognizing the person above them in the chain of command as their boss, but a stakeholder (Appendix 1, p.14). Meaning, that they do not have a bigger voice in terms of decision-making, but their suggestions are weighted equally. Moving to the organizing factor, the Art Director's daily routine unveiled their attention to team organization when it comes to deadlines, details on designs, and resources based on the communication they have with the other Director (Ibid., p.1,7). We can identify a high commitment to connecting the expectations coming from the upper management with effective execution by the art team. They utilize a variety of tools to keep an overview of the deadlines which are shared with the artists (Ibid., p.6). At this point, the manager needs to be aware of the team's strengths and weaknesses to assign them tasks they have skills for and genuinely enjoy (Ibid., p.8). Nevertheless, micromanagement has been mentioned as the extreme solution for employees who do not abide by deadlines (Ibid.,p.9). Consequently, micromanagement can be a daunting experience, however, if others depend on the task the individual could have a more pressuring sense of responsibility, similar to the Game Designer

(Ibid., p.17). However, the Game Designer, Game Writer, and User Support appear to be quite autonomous in their line of work (Ibid.,p.25,41).

Another aspect is the communication level between the management and the employees (Amabile 1988, p.155). We can identify the desire for effective collaboration in the Art Director's interest in how their own working methods fit with the methods the team is used to, which can have an impact on the overall team dynamic as well as on the deadlines (Ibid.). Additionally, their eagerness for open communication with other employees is due to the empowered feeling that goes both ways (Ibid.,p. 8). Similarly, the Game Writer could also identify the usefulness of the bi-weekly meetings, as they described the writing process might get isolating, thus an event like a team collaboration meeting can open up discussions about problems their colleagues are having as well (Ibid.,p.21). When it comes to User Support, the Head of Product showed interest in inputs on various elements of the new features, especially due to Support's access to immediate feedback from the audience (Ibid.,p.38). These elements indicate that input from different individuals is desired, and autonomy is granted in terms of processes, but, tightened in terms of how the suggestions are implemented or to what extent they are implemented (Ibid., p.23).

Another factor to look at is the absence of a formal hierarchy (Amabile 1988, p.155). Interestingly, when talking to the Game Designer, they could be seen to take the lead in multiple cases, specifically when collaborating with other designers who revealed certain weaknesses in a process, which the Game Designer later changed (Ibid.,p.14). Moreover, a visible take on mentorship by the Game Designer toward the artists can be also identified (Ibid.,p.17). Additionally, the Writer highlighted that during the absence of their team leader, a few decisions and leadership roles, such as being the go-to person on the narrative vision of the new game feature, were open for employees to step up to (Ibid.,p. 29). As creative as Tactile's environment can be, there are limitations in terms of how far the product can be innovated, therefore the middle management, such as the Art Director, needs to make sure that employees' suggestions are recognized, but still fit within the company's product to ensure profitability (Ibid., p.4). When the Art Director wants to make suggestions for new areas they can freely approach the Game Director who is eminently open to receiving suggestions for the in-game environment (Ibid.,p. 5). In the case of the Game Designer who reports to the Head of Product, in their line of work, the solution finding happens in close collaboration between the two (Ibid.,p.15). In contrast, the Game Writer could identify the difference in management and how much they valued the input from the Writers, which was not something the team appreciated (Ibid.,p. 26). Thus, we can identify frequent collaboration

within the company, whether it is cross-department or in the same department, even if the individual has a solo task. Lastly, we look at the way Tactile's management empowers its employees is reflected in the emotional and problem-solving support. Art Director recognizes that the different Managers have contrasting focuses when it comes to supporting the employees. Some are more focused on the product, whereas others can lend a hand even in the personal sphere (Ibid.,p.4). As the Art Director described, at the beginning of a new project uneasiness can be felt even by them, and once they start to facilitate team communication the uneasiness transforms into creative thinking (Ibid., p.3). Ergo, we can see that support can be facilitated by a simple conversation in the team. When it comes to a private matter the support we could identify was also present in a form where an employee can take a longer vacation or the company can facilitate further support depending on the situation (Ibid., p.54).

Feedback & reward system

In terms of feedback, from the middle management point of view, the Art Director is comfortable giving and receiving evaluation (Ibid., p.8). They compare the feedback process to a bonding experience, where visible progress is desired and observed (Ibid.). When employees receive feedback it is mostly to give them pointers, so they can improve on their craft, however as the Game Designer described it, it is an empowering space where one can voice concerns, needs, and requests (Ibid., p.14). We can also identify the feedback received from coworkers, specifically from the Game Designer who actively reaches out for it (Ibid., p.19). On the other hand, the Game Writer receives mostly cheering feedback from their colleague, rather than constructive criticism (Ibid., p.31). We could assume it is due to previous experience with the last Narrative Manager who did not allow Writers to give input into the story (Ibid.,p.31). This could have been an experience where only criticism occurred, therefore the Writers resorted to supportive feedback to each other instead.

Another element of management is the company's reward system (Amabile 1988, p.155). Currently, Tactile does not seem to offer any reward system for individual achievements (Appendix, p.51). This does not necessarily mean there are no achievements happening at all, but rather that they become overpowered by the noise in the room, which is where the company identified another need to improve (Ibid.). Furthermore, the company does not offer any financial bonuses, which was a decision based on the data the company acquired (Ibid.). Instead, the company focuses on a fair evaluation and offers a respective salary (Ibid.).

Shared leadership

Based on the interviews, the new product features arrive mostly from the management rather than the employees. From the shared leadership point of view, the managers at this stage should be able to establish a common purpose and clear goals, as any uncertainties will affect the overall willingness to take on any leadership role (Pearce, p.78). Zooming in on the Art Director, as previously mentioned, their attention is on giving their team a sense of common purpose as well as concrete goals with clear task directions, which aligns with the role they ought to take to create a base for any leadership that can emerge within the employees. Additionally, the Art Director considers the opinions of other employees when they encounter a problem, which actively includes them in the decision-making (Ibid.,p.8).

Following is the second stage during which a variety of resources and analyses ought to be prepared to set the right conditions for the team. Our interviewees confirmed that the acquisition of resources could include personnel such as external artists or a course to develop your skill set was extremely easy. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the company incentivizes the employees to be data-driven, therefore they are able to acquire performance information about any of their games and current tests, thus there is no gatekeeping when it comes to data information.

The third stage focuses on producing the ideas for the product. During this stage, each department offers their inputs, as can be seen from the Writer's point of view, during the weekly writers' meetings where employees are comfortable with offering suggestions that are beyond the scope of need. This can occur when the Manager encourages open communication and collaboration with idea sharing.

Stage four is idea testing, where the applicability of team member attitude and team dynamics appears to play a big role at Tactile. For instance, the interactions between the Game Designer and their Manager enable the Game Designer to monitor the additions to the new product features and take action in case of problematic processes that could be optimized, which is also highly encouraged by the company. As they take the lead on shaping the new feature, we can see they engage in cross-department collaboration to discuss and solve complex issues and offer support (Appendix 1, p.15).

At last, stage five where ideas can succeed, fail, or move to the previous stages. In this stage, we noticed the presence of team learning that is created through the possibility of developing skills further or in other dimensions thanks to Tactile's personal development support. This could enable new employee leaders to emerge during new projects, as they will

gain a bigger overview of tasks in the other departments and become experts in their own line of work, which they could use to guide other employees. A worthwhile factor to mention is decision-making. We can identify the desire to obtain input from the employees through a variety of meetings happening at each department, as well as giving them an opportunity to approach a Manager about additional suggestions that could be added to the roadmap or impact the development of the feature.

Discussion

Throughout this section, we will discuss the data and research findings in relation to the literature concepts. For starters, the notion of creativity built the basis for our research, as we implemented one of the concepts in explaining creative individual and innovative organization processes - Amabile's (2016) Componential Model. With the help of the framework, we were able to distinguish different creativity aspects, such as motivation, resources, and knowledge on both individual and organizational levels when structuring our analysis section, meaning that the management representatives who in this case is the Head of Production was analyzed against the organizational innovation components, while the rest of the interviewees - Art Director, Game Designer, User Support Specialist, and Writer were primarily related to the individual creativity components. By this division, we derived a fuller picture of the Tactile organizational environment as well as got to understand each individual's creative ideas development processes.

The contemporary notion of creativity takes the standpoint of creativity being a continuous, non-linear process considering the contextual organizational setting as the focal element in creativity fostering (Slavich and Svejnova, 2016). Indeed, as the data findings revealed, organizational environment circumstances play a significant role in how individuals express their creative nature. For instance, the Writer appears as a generally creative person who has established unique techniques to get inspiration and stimulate the creation of potential narration ideas, such as watching movies at the workplace or getting comfortable on the couch instead of at the desk (Appendix 1, p. 24). The previous workplace had stricter rules forbidding the Writer's creative techniques, which as a result, caused writer's block and disrupted the employee's working process. In Tactile, specific individual needs are recognized by equipping employees with freedom and autonomy for them to establish problem-solving procedures and tackle tasks in their own comfortable way. Moreover, as the interviewees noted, the company emphasizes both game innovations as well as empowering

its employees. The incentive for the latter is carried out by resourcing employees' needs when taking leadership roles (Ibid., p. 7), acting on the concerns and hearing employee voices (Ibid., p. 14), and providing constructive feedback on the performance (Ibid., p. 38).

We have considered the ways in which Tactile might be measuring the creative inputs of their employees. We did not identify the utilization of creative test assessments, however, we found several ways how they utilize the creative judgments of their experts in combination with their data sets and business values to ensure relevancy. The surprise factor does not seem to be so relevant, as they mentioned their audience rarely appreciates the novelty in their products. The following attribute is satisfaction, which is highly valued as the new features need to fit in the game narrative and setting. Moreover, the stimulation factor seems to be somewhat acknowledged, as they need to successfully implement the newly developed feature, that can be inspired by the competition, into their product in a relatively short amount of time, as the gaming industry moves at a rapid pace. Lastly, the savoring aspect is another high value element, as their audience appears to demand and enjoy emotionally stimulating elements in the game narrative.

On a more specific note, considering the concept of a creative environment helped us to determine what are the positive qualities Tactile conveys to its employees that, in return, enhance their creativity and what aspects could be improved. As Amabile (1988) specified, freedom is considered one of the primary drivers for creativity flourishing, which in this case, is what Tactile is promoting in its environment. Employees do not experience excessive micromanagement on the tasks (Appendix 1, p. 18) but are rather free to experiment as long as the final objective is achieved (Ibid., p. 23). In terms of work pressure and deadlines, the interviewees did not emphasize grand hardships on the matter. The reason for that could be individual qualities, such as Art Director's organized attitude and Game Writer's ability to finish tasks quickly. Moreover, if the employee had difficulties with the task due to a lack of understanding or pressure, the interviewees were confident that the management would help resolve the issue (Ibid., p. 12). On the other hand, some of the qualities are not the primary focus of the organization, for example, the rewarding element. The Head of Production stated that Tactile has no established bonus system but rather focuses on paying fair market salaries. The reasoning for that is not to create a feeling of reliance on the bonus as previous experiences and research revealed, that not receiving a material reward might induce feelings of disappointment (Ibid., p. 51). Another aspect the company is lacking is the concentration on potentially beneficial projects. Working in the mobile game industry requires an abundance of innovative solutions in order to stay dominant in the market, thus some of the

ideas might be overshadowed by new projects. According to the Game Designer, it is the idea pioneer's responsibility to remind the managers about the potential projects, which, unfortunately, do not always get implemented, causing general frustration (Ibid., p. 17).

The engagement process combines group or individual dedication to the task and employee self-efficacy (Slavich and Svejenova, 2016). In light of the research outcomes, it is evident that interviewees feel more committed to the task when they find enjoyment in it on a more personal level. A Game Designer stated, for example, that tasks that have a potential benefit to the company's revenue or players' engagement with the new feature induce more joy, allowing the employee to think more creatively and generate a more varied set of solutions. Less interesting objectives, such as setting up technical systems in the game, do not receive as much engagement and are mostly done as a matter of duty (Ibid., p. 12). Additionally, the freedom to take part in decision-making likewise improves engagement as the example of Game Writer showed. According to the interviewee, having a say in how the story should unfold increases emotional investment in the process and allows to express himself more creatively (Ibid., p. 26). In terms of self-efficacy, we can state that the participants are fairly confident in their own capabilities and skills acquired both in previous experience and while working in Tactile. Besides that, the company has plenty of resources for employees seeking more knowledge, such as sponsoring courses or purchasing wanted books that would improve or benefit their skills.

Moving on, Glaveanu (2014) referred to creativity as the dynamic quality that evokes through shared interactions in the organization. In relation to our research findings, we could understand that interactive activities among the working teams have different meanings depending on the role in the organization. In the case of the Art Director, most creative ideas are developed through interactions with the manager as contributions to predefined ideas. However, group interactions with other team members help to shape her knowledge when facing decision-making: insights and different perspectives help define which approach should be taken to tackle problems, therefore interactions here do not act as creativity itself but rather are understood as means of shaping creative thinking. In contrast, to the Game Designer and Writer working processes, shared interactions mark the whole creative process. The idea generation begins on the individual level that can later be reformulated when brainstorming with the working team. Once the idea is established, other team members (artists, programmers, etc.) take roles in order to materialize the vision, thus it can be perceived that creativity is the attribute evoked in the group interaction to achieve objectives.

The concept of innovation was likewise a recurring element throughout the paper. The notion of Schumpeter's classification of innovation, namely incremental innovation is reflected in the Tactile's production processes. The company has established games that are complemented with additional features to enhance user engagement and retention. The Head of Production emphasized that when having a well-defined target audience, there is no real need to redevelop products or take radical innovative measures (Appendix 1, p. 50). The interviewee reflected that in order to release a rather riskier feature, the company needs to undergo extensive market research to assure that the new implementation will not negatively affect player engagement with the product. Lastly, we focused on understanding the role of leadership in regard to creativity and innovation processes in Tactile. The research outcomes revealed that the company's culture is defined in a way to include employees in the decision-making and enables them to partake in leadership roles when tackling tasks within the teams.

When it comes to leadership types, we can state that the approaches some of participants employ relate to Fiedler's (1964) situational leadership concept. For start, the Art Director highlighted that work methods, such as task assignments and deadlines, must be congruent to the situation at the time (Appendix 1, p. 3). Essentially, the interviewee strives to find the balance that would satisfy both team members' needs and would not hinder the work plan and objectives. A different perspective can be seen in the Game Designer's case. The approach he seems to be utilizing is primarily focused on the product. However, it is important to distinguish that the interviewee has a rather different role in the team than the Art Director. The Game Designer's leadership skills are practiced when collaborating with teams to fix or maintain in-game feature functionality. Generally, leadership in Tactile is not perceived as one man's position but rather as a transactional event where both leaders and employees have an impact on one another. As noted by the Head of Production, the company's organizational environment is open for the expression of employee wishes and ideas, thus there is no such concept of a leader coming up giving out orders, although they are always available if help is needed (Ibid., p. 42).

Conclusion

In order to find the answer to our inquiries, we analyzed both the individual creativity and the organizational innovation processes. One influences the other, thus an analysis consisting from both points of view was necessary. Before answering our main research

question, we will build our point on answering our sub questions first. Firstly, we will dive into how the employees perceive the innovative and creative climate at Tactile. The gathered data points at a diverse set of opinions which are mostly positive. Tactile seems to innovate in two directions, their product and their internal processes. Their product innovation seems to be focused on incremental innovation due to the limitations their target group implies. On the other hand, when it comes to their internal processes, the pace of innovation appears to be rapid and less limiting than their product innovation. Tactile's employees are aware of these limitations, starting with the Head of Production who identifies the product innovation needs and conveys them to the rest of the employees, down to the middle Managers such as the Art Director who also sees a certain window of innovation opportunity which opens only to specific inputs. We also had the chance to interview regular employees, who have a good grasp on Tactile's target group and can identify the needs and offer input that pushes the boundaries just enough to appeal and make the product profitable. Nonetheless, we can also identify the employees are aware of the contributions they can bring by spotting processes that are lacking or are not optimal, by introducing new paid tools which in return increase the effectiveness or compatibility with the rest of the arsenal that is available. Consequently, the reason for addressing both creativity and innovation together is due to their nature, as one cannot exist without the other, thus they are intertwined. As a result of the noticeably narrow window of innovation when it comes to the product, some would think creativity ought to be one of the factors which is not greatly impacted. However, at Tactile that is somewhat the case. The perception of the staff and the management appears to be emphasizing the creativity happening within the organization, not only due to the flexibility the employees have to utilize their skills in a variety of areas, but also their ability to take into consideration above mentioned limitations and work within a narrow scope of contingency. The perception of Tactile's environment can be conveyed to the newcomers as well which can impact the overall impression and engagement the newcomers can have when approaching tasks and collaboration. We identified that the creative perception greatly depends on the resources that are available for creativity related activities for the particular domain, as well as on the skills of the employees. Based on our data, Tactile offers both resources and support to their employees, which is respectively reflected on the data we gathered from the employees themselves.

Our second sub question dives into the motivation of the employees and how Tactile utilizes its skills in innovation management to impact it. Firstly, we identified several positive influences Tactile employs. The first area is focused on meetings through which Managers

and employees collaborate in a form of offering feedback and inputs on current or further implementations. Additionally, the meetings not only facilitate open communication but also a bonding experience where both managers and employees can talk about their hardships and emotionally support each other. Another way Tactile's management influences an individual's motivation is through the identification of their interests that can be matched with respective and relevant areas where they can be assigned with tasks they will enjoy. This not only maximizes the utilization of their skills, but also positively impacts their intrinsic motivation to do the task. Arguably, the intrinsic motivation might be the most imperative factor as it determines the effectivity and engagement the employee will have with the task.

Our last sub question touches the shared leadership utilization to nurture the creative environment at Tactile. Interestingly, we identified several areas where the shared leadership can be applied. Firstly, at the organizational innovation process, we were interested in how the management at Tactile facilitates the shared leadership and which roles can be shared. We identified the applicability of the supportive organizational culture to be imperative for the overall organizational innovation process. We could see its impact in terms of sharing the ideas on the upcoming product innovation, as well as the team's perception of the company valuing their involvement, which increased their willingness to take leadership roles. The employees felt that their input was heard which caused them to not shy away from offering feedback on the upcoming innovations. Following is the second stage, where the data gathering such as market research, and resources allocation happens. During this stage, the responsibilities of a vertical leader were identified as creating a common purpose based on the vision established in the previous stage, setting clear goals for the team, and empowering the team members to take on leadership roles where they ought to participate in monitoring and stepping up in case of an emerging problem. Furthermore, the second stage also encompasses the opportunity to nurture the knowledge sharing and team learning, as the company tries to gather capable personnel with relevant skills that can be utilized in the upcoming stage. We can see that the Game Designer emerges as a temporary leader as they keep track of the collaboration between different departments that work on the new product feature, whilst coaching the other team members who are lacking in understanding. During the following stages three, four, and five, we found three applicable factors; team member voice, attitude of a team member; and team dynamics. We found that Tactile puts emphasis on the environment where team members can hold each other accountable without pointing fingers, and instead offer guidance and support, as was the case for the User Support, Game Designer, and the Game Writer. Being able to collaborate within teams and cross-department

enriched the idea creation stage. Notably, it allowed monitorization of processes that had impact on the stage four's development and testing, where true team dynamics with adequate feedback processing influenced the overall success of the product's new feature in a positive way.

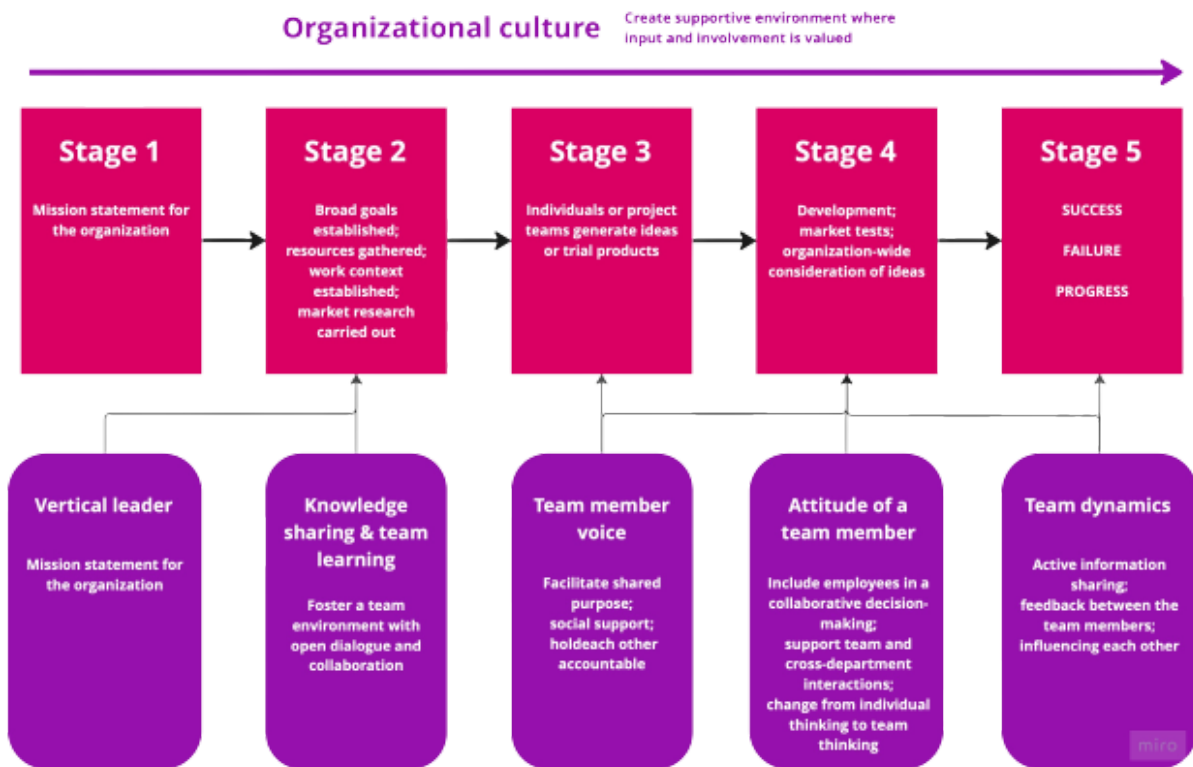


Figure 10. Organizational innovation process with shared leadership utilization

Finally, to answer our research question, *How does Tactile as a gaming company cultivate a creative environment for their employees to develop innovative ideas through shared leadership?*, we utilize the information gathered throughout our research on the creative environment at Tactile, and its implications applied on the individual's creativity process.

The creative environment Tactile has created consists of bounded innovation possibilities when it comes to their product, unlike their processes which are limitless in terms of innovation. Nevertheless, we can identify a high appreciation for innovative endeavors from their employees, thus they do not feel bound, as they can still produce ideas that are beyond the limitations. Moreover, the company focuses on sourcing talent that has a rather extended knowledge when it comes to the specific departments, which implies the individual is going to be able to produce novel ideas when given the resources. Additionally,

when talking about resources, the company does not stray away from material or personal resources, thus the employees have the necessary tools and development opportunities needed. Last but not least, the management is well aware of the characteristics of the employees, thus they are well matched with their tasks and given a sufficient amount of autonomy. Finally, the company does not offer any monetary rewards, it rather focuses on the staff development that would support the internal motivation of the individual.

Looking back at the organizational innovation process, stage three includes influence from the individual creative process itself, thus it is imperative to dive deep into how shared leadership can empower these stages in detail. Taking the individual idea generation process that was observed during our interviews, the stage one encompasses the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of an employee. This stage can be influenced by the vertical leader, in a way where any poorly defined goals are further explained and a common purpose is established. During this stage we also noticed the influence of the organizational management skills which included task assignment that matched with the skills of an individual. Moving on, the second stage where information gathering happens in the form of playing competitor's games, team knowledge sharing and open dialogue can greatly enhance the process to make others aware of the emerging new features. What made an impact on this stage were the team dynamics, which were visible on the Game Designer's team where they asked for frequent feedback sessions on their process. In the case of the Writer, we could see the influence of knowledge sharing about which competitor games to play. Following is the third stage where an individual creates some ideas that they will present to the team or relevant stakeholders in the company. During stage four where the ideas need to be evaluated against certain criteria utilized the team dynamics where information and feedback between team members was shared during meetings or casual feedback. Additionally, the team members had influence in the decision-making as their needs were included, for instance the Game Designer needed to think about the resources needed for the new game feature. Similarly, the Game Writer gets feedback on the applicability of their ideas from their coworkers as well. During this stage, a shared purpose and team member's voice play a role as well, as they can influence the testing criteria. Later the idea continues to the organizational innovation process, and is taken back to the previous stage for reconsideration, or fails and is considered abandoned.

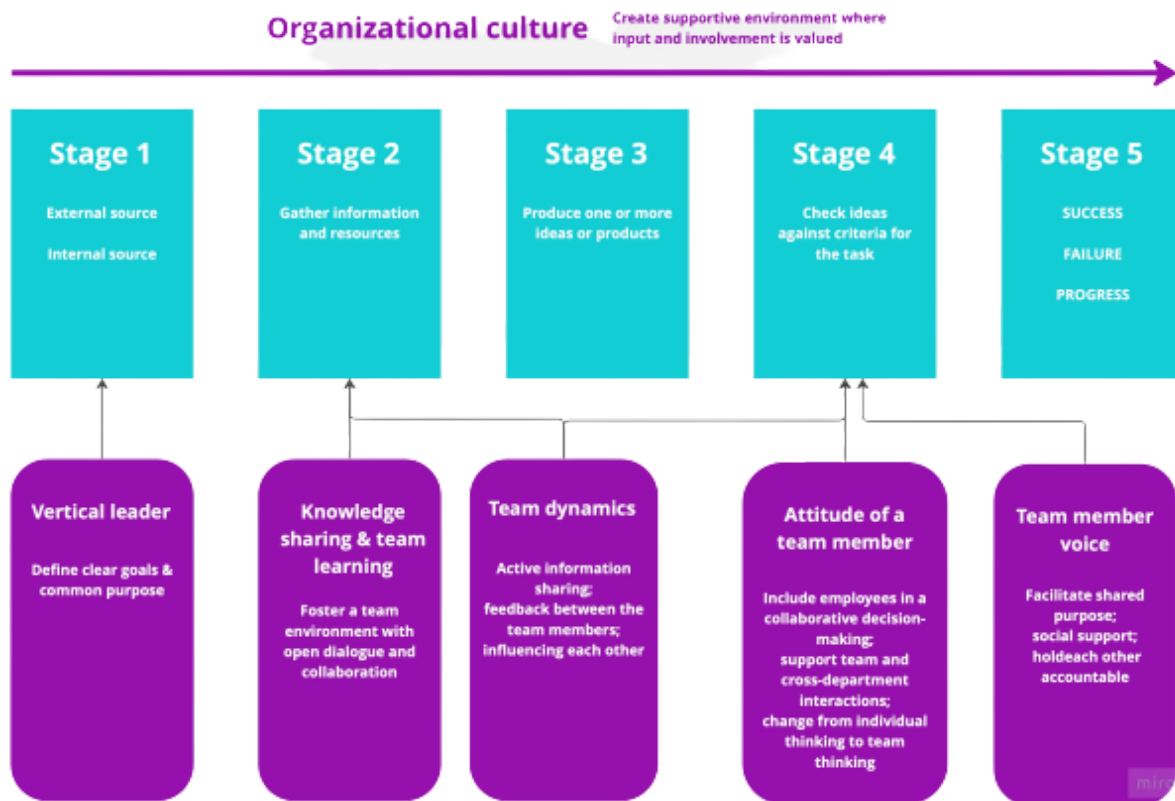


Figure 11. Individual creativity process

In conclusion, we identified significant effects of shared leadership utilization in Tactile’s creative environment, when it comes to the development of innovative ideas. With a supportive organizational culture, shared leadership enhances each stage on organizational and individual level, as the actors are more inclined to develop their skills, become better at their craft, and collaborate or even mentor other team members.

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