



ANALYSIS OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FASHION ARTICLES

ANÁLISE DO PROCESSO CRIATIVO NO DESENVOLVIMENTO DE ARTIGOS DE
MODA

ANÁLISIS DEL PROCESO CREATIVO EN EL DESARROLLO DE ARTÍCULOS DE
MODA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the creative process during the process of developing fashion articles, based on the perception of professionals who work in companies in the leather-footwear sector in the Vale dos Sinos region.

Methodology: We opted for a qualitative approach and a field research strategy, in view of its exploratory nature. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then analyzed through discursive textual analysis.

Results: It was found that the creative process consists of stages of desire and intrinsic motivation, preparation, manipulation, generation, verification and validation of ideas. However, many external elements, such as the pressure to reduce the lead-time to create, and the responsibilities for sales success and cost reduction, are part of the whole that comprises the complex phenomenon of creativity at the organizational level.

Theoretical implications: The results contribute to a better understanding and a new way of looking at organizational management studies, with a view to promoting adjustments in creativity management models.

Originality: There is a need to apply creativity throughout the stages of the production process when referring to the fashion industry; this is in contradiction to fashion structures that often see the creative process alongside the production process. Therefore, it is opportune to contribute to an investigation that seeks to understand creativity as a complex phenomenon in companies in the creative fashion industry, more specifically in the organizational environments of the footwear sector in the Vale dos Sinos region.

Keywords: Creative Industry. Fashion professionals. Footwear Industry.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar o processo criativo, durante o processo de desenvolvimento de artigos de moda, na percepção dos profissionais que atuam em empresas do setor coureiro-calçadista localizadas na região do Vale dos Sinos.

Metodologia: Optou-se pela abordagem qualitativa e estratégia de pesquisa de campo, considerando seu caráter exploratório. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, sendo analisados por meio da análise textual discursiva.

Resultados: Constatou-se que o processo criativo é constituído de etapas de desejo e motivação intrínseca, preparação, manipulação, geração, verificação e validação de ideias. Contudo, muitos elementos externos, como a pressão para reduzir o *lead-time* para criar e as responsabilidades sobre o sucesso de vendas e redução de custos, fazem parte do todo que compreende o fenômeno complexo da criatividade no âmbito organizacional.

Implicações teóricas: Os resultados contribuem para um melhor entendimento e nova forma de olhar para estudos de gestão organizacional, com vistas a promover ajustes nos modelos de gestão da criatividade.

Originalidade: Existe uma necessidade de aplicação da criatividade ao longo das etapas do processo produtivo quando se refere a indústria da moda, o que se contradiz com as estruturas de moda que, muitas vezes, veem o processo criativo a par do processo produtivo. Portanto, torna-se oportuno contribuir com uma investigação que busca a compreensão da criatividade como fenômeno complexo em empresas do segmento da indústria criativa de moda, mais especificamente nos ambientes organizacionais do setor de calçados, na região do Vale dos Sinos.

Palavras-chave: Indústria Criativa. Profissionais de Moda. Indústria Calçadista.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Analizar el proceso creativo, durante el proceso de elaboración de artículos de moda, en la percepción de los profesionales que laboran en empresas del sector cuero-calzado ubicadas en la región de Vale dos Sinos.

Metodología: Optamos por el enfoque cualitativo y la estrategia de la investigación de campo, considerando su carácter exploratorio. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, siendo analizados mediante análisis discursivo textual.

Resultados: Se encontró que el proceso creativo consta de etapas de deseo y motivación intrínseca, preparación, manipulación, generación, verificación y validación de ideas. Sin embargo, muchos elementos externos, como la presión para reducir los plazos de creación y las responsabilidades para el éxito de las ventas y la reducción de costes, forman parte del conjunto que comprende el complejo fenómeno de la creatividad en el ámbito organizativo.

Implicaciones teóricas: Los resultados contribuyen a una mejor comprensión y una nueva forma de ver los estudios de gestión organizacional, en cuanto a promover ajustes en los modelos de gestión de la creatividad.

Originalidad: Existe la necesidad de aplicar la creatividad en todas las etapas del proceso de producción cuando se hace referencia a la industria de la moda, lo que contradice las estructuras de la moda que a menudo ven el proceso creativo junto con el proceso de producción. Por tanto, se vuelve oportuno contribuir a una investigación que busque entender la

creatividad como un fenómeno complejo en las empresas del segmento de la industria creativa de la moda, más específicamente en los entornos organizacionales del sector del calzado, en la región Vale dos Sinos.

Palabras clave: Industria creativa. Profesionales de la moda. Industria del calzado.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association (ABIT, 2020), the fashion industry is the second largest employer in the Brazilian manufacturing industry, second only to the food and beverages sector. Regarding the division of fashion segments, according to the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio De Janeiro (FIRJAN, 2019), one of the categories is footwear, bags and accessories. This includes tanning and other preparations involving leather and the manufacture of footwear, articles and artifacts made of leather, synthetics or the use of any material in this manufacture.

The Brazilian footwear industry is made up of clusters, one of which is the Vale dos Sinos, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. According to data from the Brazilian Association of Footwear Industries (ABICALÇADOS, 2020) that this region represents 45.1% of the state's production. It is important to highlight that the national footwear industry has faced stiff competition from Asian products, which are of similar quality but at lower prices (ABICALÇADOS, 2020).

Allied with this scenario, it is also worth noting that the fashion sector has a very peculiar dynamic. A problem attributed to the fashion footwear area is the industrial logic and its characteristics, which require faster fashion cycles, in contrast to the constant need to use creativity for product development (Treptow, 2013). In addition, some creative activities impact on adding value to products, as in the case of product design, which values, in the market, objects manufactured in the fashion and footwear industry (Núñez, 2016).

From an economic perspective, the fashion sector seeks to differentiate its performance in the market, launching new products with greater frequency, with new proposals for use and new characteristics, including demands to meet specific market niches (Treptow, 2013). The emergence of the term "creative industries" is associated with movements that took place from the 1990s onwards in some industrialized countries, and its advent stems from economic and social changes that caused the focus of business to shift from industrial activities to knowledge-intensive activities, within in the service sector (Bendasolli et al., 2009).

Within the context of creative industries, defined as economic activities that employ creativity as a central element of the business (Bendassolli et al., 2009), this article aims to analyze the creative process during the process of developing fashion items, in the perception of professionals working in companies in the leather-footwear sector in the Vale dos Sinos region. Besides design professionals, who use creativity as a raw material for their work, some managers were also interviewed. The choice to interview managers is justified by the fact that these are the individuals who tend to be the decision-makers at strategic hierarchical levels.

The research is based on the concept of creativity as a multifaceted phenomenon (Amabile, 1988) and that, as such, can be analyzed individually, in groups and organizations, in a complex and systemic context (Klein & Kozlowski, 1999). It was decided to adopt a qualitative approach, with exploratory field research as a research strategy, considering a descriptive study. The results showed that the creative process consists of stages of desire and intrinsic motivation, preparation, manipulation and generation of ideas, verification and validation of ideas. However, many external elements, such as the pressure to reduce lead-times in the creation process, and the pressures to increase sales and reduce costs, are part of the whole that comprises the complex phenomenon of creativity at the organizational level.

As the challenges of organizations are increasingly related to problems of a multidisciplinary nature, this study offers contributions to encourage more researchers to explore the complexity that is inherent to the creative process. Thus, the greatest contribution of this research is the data that can serve as a basis for new models of creativity management.

After this introduction, the article presents the conceptual bases of the fashion industry and creativity. The methodological procedures are detailed below, followed by an analysis and discussion of the results in the next section. After the description and presentation of the researched corpus, some final considerations are given in relation to the aims of the research, its contributions and limitations, and some suggestions for future research.

2. SPECIFICITIES OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY

The fashion industry presents a fundamental duality in that it is, at the same time, an economic activity (Loconte, 2020) and an artistic activity (Hartley, 2005). Lipovetsky (2009) considered fashion as one of the drivers of societies: the seduction and the ephemeral have become the organizing principles of modern collective life. People change the way they dress depending on social influences (Treptow, 2013). This is because we live in a society of mass consumption (Berlin, 2020) and fashion not only transforms fabrics into clothes; it creates objects that carry meaning (Godart, 2018).

As people consume, they guide relationships based on appearances and a cycle of gradual use, in which the new is given preference (Treptow, 2007). This completes the marketing cycle that comprises a productive, commercial and industrial demand (Moura, 2008; Conti, 2008). Thus, a cultural product or service is derived from the consideration of the type and value that it encompasses or generates. It is possible, therefore, to understand that there are cultural values, in addition to commercial values, in these products and services, even if the cultural aspect is not fully measurable in monetary terms. It can therefore be said that these products and services are creative (UNCTAD, 2018).

A strategy used by the product development area is to move away from stereotypes in order to increase the impression of novelty, seeking a project that increases the harmony, elegance and symmetry of a design. The aim of this strategy is to grab the consumer's attention and make them want to buy the product. In this relationship, creativity an essential vector and the raw material of the entire creative product process (Mozota, Klöpsch & Da Costa, 2011). Fashion, therefore, is an area of activity that is closely related to industrial design, having the characteristics of commercial and industrial activity, implicit in mass production and sale (Rech, 2008).

Fashion seeks to create new products on a continual basis. The creative professional in this market is called a fashion designer, stylist and/or draftsman/draftswoman (Godart, 2018). Their job is to produce new products in a way that is aligned with the reality of the company and the market in which it operates. This is, therefore, a broader scope of professional action than just the moment of creation (Treptow, 2013; Pires, 2008).

The cycles of change and the market's hunger for new products have forced companies to launch new products with greater frequency. In small companies, such as micro clothing companies, weekly launches are expected (Treptow, 2013). The scope of action of the fashion designer extends beyond thinking only about the aesthetic aspects of the product; they must also ensure that the new product is inspiring and inventive, while taking into account its commercial, financial and productive viability (Millsbaugh & Kent, 2016).

Löbach (2001) adds, to the designer's role, those of research and learning more about the consumer, as professionals need to understand their relationship with the product and with the characteristics that add value to it. For professionals to be able to explore their full creative potential, some organizational aspects are important. These will be discussed in the next section of this work.

3. TYPES OF CREATIVITY AND THEIR INTERPRETATION AS A PROCESS

Although it would be impossible, not to mention pretentious, to give a single definition of creativity, it is important, if we are to use the term in this article, to point out that it proposes to investigate the influence of the organizational environment on the creativity of individuals. It should be noted that the study of creativity is inherent to dialogical thinking. Therefore, we propose to study the phenomenon at its individual, group and organizational levels, inspired by Klen and Kozłowski (1999). The result of this multilevel analysis is a deeper and richer portrait of the organization, which recognizes the influence of the organizational context on the lives of individuals, their actions and perceptions and their influence on the organizational environment.

When it comes to the individual level of creativity, Amabile (1983, 2005) states that it comprises three aspects: mastery skills, relevant creative skills and intrinsic motivation. Mastery skill refers to technical skill and talent in a specific field, and the cognitive ability to interpret and learn based on prior knowledge to create or modify something.

Creative ability is the way in which the individual uses certain knowledge. It includes work style, cognitive style, and the mastery of strategies that favor the production of new ideas, and personality traits. Intrinsic motivation refers to the individual's satisfaction and involvement in task. It encompasses interest, competence and self-determination. None of the other creative thinking skills or methods can compensate for a lack of appropriate motivation to carry out an activity (Amabile, 2016).

Amabile (2005) emphasizes that creativity can be encouraged within work groups, based on autonomy, openness to ideas, and encouragement, as well as sharing objectives and the possibility of challenge, which generate collective commitment. However, Paulus and Baruah (2018) point out that a team, with a variety of different skills, can outperform an individual, whose knowledge base and experience is concentrated in just one area.

For Caniëls and Rietzschel (2015), organizational creativity is the result of individual creative behavior, which comprises a complex interaction between the individual and the environment. Manenti (2013) points out that at the organizational level, creativity is related to the generation of new ideas and is utilitarian in nature, generating value. Group creativity is a function that arises from individual creative behavior, the interactions among these individuals, the characteristics of the group, the processes, and the contextual influences.

Stacey (2005) and Dong (2017) add that an individual can impact creativity in the group. For Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017), in a social context, the journey of an idea to a greater degree of success requires the network to be articulated and activated differently, at different stages of implementing the idea, and they argue that an individual needs different relational and structural elements at each stage of the process. Creativity, therefore, can never be considered an individual process, as it involves interaction with other people in a group. It can, therefore, be analyzed as a process.

This work does not claim to be exhaustive regarding sources that explore the creative process. Rather, it seeks to determine the fundamental concepts that are sufficient to demonstrate the effects of the work environment on fashion design professionals. From this perspective, it is necessary to analyze creativity as a process.

For Fabun (1969), the creative process comprises the following steps: (a) desire: the motivation and will to create something original; (b) preparation: the process of gathering information, through research, experimentation or experiences; (c) manipulation: trying out syntheses, looking for patterns and relationships of apparently unrelated concepts; (d) incubation: moving away from the idea and being guided unconscious act; (e) anticipation: a kind of premonition, in which the person realizes that the solution is about to be found; (f) illumination: the moment when the idea finally arises; and (g) verification: testing and validating the idea.

From the perspective of using creativity as a problem solver, Amabile (1988) explains, based on the individual conceptual model, how the process can take place, from the initial presentation of ideas through to the solution. The process occurs in stages; the first is the identification of the task/problem. The second is the preparation, in which the individual looks for information to solve the problem. The third stage, called idea generation, is when the level of originality of the product or response is determined. In this stage, the individual creates several possible responses, making use of relevant creative processes and intrinsic motivation.

Next is the validation of the idea, when an idea or product is presented. Here, the individual uses his or her skills of mastery to assess the extent to which the product will be creative, useful, correct and valued by society, according to established criteria. The last stage, is the analysis of the results. This is when decisions are made regarding the response, based on the analysis carried out in the previous stage. At the end, it is identified whether the idea has solved the problem. If so, the process is considered to be complete. But if not, even a partial result can represent progress towards the solution, and the cycle returns to the previous stages, learning from the experience gained.

The process does not necessarily occur in accordance with all the steps described above (Baxter, 2011; Fabun, 1969). The production of new ideas is not static; as ideas emerge, they evolve simultaneously, adding something that makes them feasible (Bruno-Faria, 2007). In the nineteen-sixties, Fabun (1969) highlighted that in this process, consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness operate, and that these transactions occur in the internal and external spheres of the human being, i.e., we are stimulated according to the interferences we receive from the environment around us. Of all these stages of consciousness, creativity takes place mainly in the individual's unconscious.

Regarding the social approach to the creative process, Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017) state that steps similar to those outlined by Amabile (1988) require social inputs. For example, in the idea generation phase, the individual must have cognitive flexibility; and in the elaboration phase, the support of other people is needed. When it comes to defending the idea, social influence and legitimacy are necessary, and in the final phase, the implementation, there must be a shared vision and understanding among those involved. Studies in Psychology currently tend to see creativity as a behavior resulting from particularities, constellations of personal characteristics, cognitive problems and social environments (Amabile, 1983; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). At the organizational level, creativity is the result of individual creative behaviors (Amabile, 1983; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991; Sternberg, 2006) and their complex interactions (Stacey, 1996; Morin & Lisboa, 2007; Morin, 2000; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993) with the elements and the social system around them (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Thus, it is understood that interactions throughout the process result in greater or lesser creative potential.

4. METHOD

For this research, the authors opted for a qualitative approach, using field research as a strategy, in view of its exploratory nature. Bauer and Gaskell (2002) define qualitative research as a strategy that generates data that can be used to further develop and understand beliefs, attitudes and values in relation to people's behavior in social contexts. Gil (2002) corroborates this classification, stating that this type of research brings the researcher closer to a given problem with the intention of analyzing the phenomenon more explicitly.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, conducted from March to April 2020, in order to understand individuals' perceptions about the organizational universe. The questions were prepared based on the theoretical framework and validated through the Delphi technique, by two PhD professors, both specialists in the field of this study. After validation by the experts, a pilot test was carried out with a fashion footwear stylist with more than fifteen years of experience in the market. Through these procedures, two scripts of questions were created: one to be applied to managers of creative sectors and another to be applied to professionals in the creative areas, in companies in the fashion footwear sector. The interview script is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Interview Script

Approach	Authors	Theory	Key Questions (Managers)	Key Questions (Creative Professionals)
Multifaceted concept	Amabile (1997)	Approached from different points of view, depending on the field of application.	How do you identify that creativity is stimulated?	What is your level of motivation to propose new ideas/products/collections? Why?
	Amabile (1983)	Mastery and creative skills and intrinsic motivation.	How does the process of creating new products occur in the company?	What characteristics (personal/behavioral) can favor or hinder the activities performed in the sector?
Group	Amabile (2005)	Creativity can be encouraged by sharing goals, which generate collective commitment.	What criteria are used to select professionals to work in the creative areas?	Is there good exchange of ideas and knowledge with your colleagues?
	Paulus and Baruah (2018)	A team can outperform an individual.		
Organizational	Manenti (2013)	Creativity is related to the generation of ideas and presents a character that generates value.	How do you perceive the participation of other sectors in the creative process of the organization? How does this interaction take place, and who interacts?	In your view, how well do other sectors participate in the organization's creative process, and how does this interaction take place?
	Stacey (2005) and Dong (2017)	An individual can impact the creativity of the group.		
	Caniëls and Rietzschel (2015); Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017)	It arises out of the relationship between individual creative behavior and the interaction among individuals in the group.		
Creative process	Fabun (1969); Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017)	It comprises: desire, preparation, manipulation, incubation, anticipation, illumination and verification.	If you had to establish stages for the creative process that takes place in the company, what would they be and what would happen at each stage?	How do your ideas for new products/collections come about?
	Amabile (1988)	It goes through four stages: identifying the task/problem, preparation, generating the idea, and validating the idea.		What do you do to get these ideas off the ground and turned into fashion products, or components of fashion products?

	Fabun (1969); Baxter (2011)	The steps are not static and sequential.		What would you suggest the sector or organization could do to facilitate/ stimulate the creativity process?
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Source: Survey data (2020).

In order to carry out the interviews, seven professionals from the leather-footwear sector of the Vale dos Sinos region, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, were selected by non-probabilistic, intentional, convenience sampling, adopting the criteria of accessibility and availability of the interviewees. Data were collected using technology tools such as Skype and WhatsApp, and the interviews were recorded, with the respondent’s permission, for later transcription and analysis. The profile of each interviewee can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Profile of Respondents

Interviewee	Position	Time in the Company	Time in the Career	Category for Research
E1	Style coordinator	2.5 years	18 years	Management
E2	Stylist	5 years	35 years	Creative
E3	Designer and product manager	6 years	20 years	Creative
E4	Product manager	4 months	35 years	Management
E5	Stylist	1 year	9 years	Creative
E6	Innovation manager	1.2 years	10 years	Management
E7	Stylist	1.10 years	15 years	Creative

Source: Survey data (2020).

E1 is a manager and coordinates the style area of one of the company's brands, which serves a variety of female publics. Her focus is on creating shoes and bags, and her team currently has three stylists and an assistant. E2 is a shoe, bag and belt stylist for one of the corporation's brands. E3 is the head of department and a product designer. Also, given that the company's structure is quite small, he also performs administrative tasks. Due to his twenty years of experience in the footwear market, he answered the questionnaire aimed at creative professionals.

E4 is a product manager and has worked in some leading companies in the fashion footwear segment, working in areas from product design to more technical areas, such as engineering and production. E5 is a stylist at E1's organization, working as part of the team coordinated by E1. E6 is an innovation manager whose focus is technology in leather, footwear and artifacts. E7 is a stylist at the same organization as E5, where E1 is manager.

For the data analysis, we opted for discursive textual analysis, as proposed by Moraes (2003). This type of analysis rejects the neutrality of the discourse and considers the subjectivity of the surroundings. Qualitative textual analysis can be understood as a self-organized process of building comprehension, in which new understandings emerge from three components analyzed sequentially: deconstruction of texts from the corpus, categorization, and finally, the understanding of the new theoretical aspect that emerges out of the empirical data. The author presents a sequence of steps that make up this methodology. In the first stage, the texts are deconstructed and disintegrated, highlighting their constituent elements. Next, the units of analysis are added; these are defined in accordance with the research purposes, and are also called, here, units of meaning. Finally comes the production of a new order, a new understanding, a new synthesis.

The discourses gathered by means of the interviews were broken down, as proposed by Moraes (1999), into units of meaning, culminating in the deconstruction of the texts. At the end of this process, it was possible to create the set of meaning units, which were grouped according to the relations of similarity identified, resulting in a broader meaning that encompassed all these smaller meanings. From this process arose the unit of analysis denominated “the creative process”, which formed four categories of analysis: “Desire and intrinsic motivation”, “Preparation”, “Manipulation and generation of ideas” and “Verification and validation of ideas”.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Fabun (1969), Amabile (1988) and Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017), the creative process can be divided into stages, ranging from the individual's desire and motivation to the proposal of new ideas for verification and validation, which can generate new products or services. Based on an analysis of the empirical results, it was found that the footwear segment uses a process with similar methods. It was also found that all levels of scope of creativity exist, throughout the creative process, as discussed in the theoretical framework. However, given its complex characteristics in the organizational context, and corroborating the theories of Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017), taking a social approach to creativity and its process, it was seen that these levels may vary, according to the moment and the requirements of each stage. The categories of analysis used are shown below, in sub-items 5.1 to 5.4.

5.1 Desire and Intrinsic Motivation

This stage is understood to be the one of motivation and the desire to create something (Fabun, 1969; Amabile, 1988). In this sense, it was identified, through the analysis of the interviewees' discourse, that the beginning of the creative process in a fashion footwear company is based on consumer motivation, since, when asked where the ideas to create come from, everyone gave the same answer: it is based on the consumers' needs.

This was corroborated by the response given by E3: *"[...] we look at how the consumer is behaving and we start a work to develop the collection"* and also that of E1: *"[...] it's all for one question: how is women's behavior? So it's a consumer need and then we come and search and the brand takes advantage of this"*; and also that of E7: *"[...] it's not so much spontaneous; it always came from some market need"*.

E3 highlights that the Brazilian fashion industry does not have the characteristic of being creative, as designers do not make entirely authorial productions. The interviewee attributes this to the fact that the industry itself, and the market in general, do not accept this format, as what is valued and, consequently, what will bring security to the shopkeeper, is where the idea comes from -- and that is generally from overseas market trends. It is noteworthy that the consumer profile was also important in relation to the manifestation of the designer's creativity. E2 stated that consumers of classes A and B consume fashion in a faster and more profitable way. The interviewee understood that these classes of consumers are more likely to accept products with fashion information printed on them, as they consume in higher quantities, and they already know that these products have higher costs. Even in times of recession, it is a public that continues to consume.

The practice of starting the creative process is similar to that proposed by Amabile (1988), corroborating the pragmatic idea that creativity is an inherent part of problem solving. According to that author, identifying this need is the first step, and the movement that is perceived is the combining of skills of individual motivations, to engage people in the search for solutions. It was identified that companies have an on-board guide, as named by E4, the "sell-in" calendar. Professionals who work at the fast fashion segment, in particular, cite this component as a driver of the entire creative process.

Rech (2008), Moura (2008) and Conti (2008) point out that the fashion sector is very dynamic and requires a lot of creative effort, since the sector is part of an industrial logic that constantly demands greater speed in presenting news through fashion items consumption cycles, as pointed out by Treptow (2013). E1 highlighted: *"[...] we have 70 models and we deliver one collection a month"*. E7 added that production can reach up to more than one collection per month. Although perceived as common practice, E5 reinforces this characteristic as a demotivating aspect: *"[...] every month we have to bring out a new collection and this is very demotivating, because sometimes we haven't even finished the previous one and we're already thinking about the next one, and this is quite common"*.

The sell-in calendar establishes the duration of each project, from creation through to the product being in stores. Based on this information, a briefing is carried out, which shows the revenue from previous collections, what items sold the most and what did not sell, seeking to analyze trends in order to identify changes in consumer behavior. Some designers receive the briefing from the merchandising area and only propose solutions. Others, who work in organizations with leaner structures, report doing this analysis. For professionals who do not work with their own stores, the process involves analyzing shopkeeper's expectations regarding sales of a particular collection and brand.

Regarding the influences on the creative process at this initial stage, it is seen that external factors play a major part (Fabun, 1969), and these, in turn, condition the creative thinking of the designer and the team, which ranges from monitoring consumer behavior and the brand characteristics to the numbers of products that have sold well and will, therefore, be brought out again. Regarding the analysis of the multilevel of creativity, it is clear that this initial stage is more collective, although the theory brings, as a characteristic, the intrinsic individual motivation, as cross-sector briefing

meetings are generally held with the creative team or with the creative and the sales teams, for the exchange of information.

5.2 Preparation

Following the market analysis, the stage of greatest inspiration begins: fashion research, which, according to Löbach (2001), is when the designer establishes a relationship between the product and the needs of consumers. This is the moment when professionals are inspired by trends. These sources are not necessarily from the footwear sector, as highlighted by E2: “[...] sometimes from an idea or something that is seen completely out of the norm serves as inspiration, with a visit to a museum”. E5 states that “there are no formulas for new ideas, they come from different sources and all this, combined with market analysis, can serve as inspiration to create”.

This stage is when all the necessary information is gathered, through research, experimentation or experiences, which Amabile (1988) calls mastery skills. To study the trend, it is common, in the footwear sector, to conduct research on foreign markets. The interviewees also highlighted research on the domestic market, to find out what is new in their collections, and what happened in their previous collections.

It is worth mentioning the report by E1, in which the manager says: “[...] when I travel abroad, I always have my cell phone in my hand. I take pictures of everything and send them online to my team. So it's as though they were looking at it with me”. In this excerpt, the relationship of collaboration is clear, corroborating the theoretical precepts of Paulus and Baruah (2018), who state that the team's success is the result of the sum of individual knowledge and experiences. On the other hand, there is an information filter that the manager brings to her research perspective, which can influence, condition or limit the perceptions of others. Following the research process, the manager states that “it is the role of the stylists to create proposals for new products and collections”, revisiting here the individual level of creativity.

Another factor considered in the preparation stage concerns is the fierce competition, which requires the development of collections with competitive prices. The respondents pointed out that some competitors produce visually similar but cheaper models, or even fakes, which leads to the emergence of a trade war and inhibits creativity. The respondents claimed that designers and stylists all look for trends in the same fashion sources. But the differentiating factor lies in how the designer absorbs the concept and proposes the collection. E2 emphasizes: *everyone has access to information, but the ability to interpret it depends on each one*”.

Regarding the multilevel analysis of creativity in the preparation phase, it is noticed that, at first, it is more collaborative among the team. At this stage, however, it is necessary for the professional to align external references with their internal references in order to seek a differential in relation to the competitors, given that the sources of external stimulus are practically the same for everyone.

5.3 Manipulation and Generation of Ideas

In this phase, creativity becomes is more open to the influences it has suffered, identifying alternatives, synthesizing, manipulating materials, linking concepts, looking for patterns, experimenting with combinations and proposing new things (Amabile, 1988). Here it is critical that creativity has cognitive flexibility to make new associations and changes in cognitive schemas that will provide new associations for conceptually distinct ideas (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). According to the interviewees, this is a stage that is more individual, and relies more on intrinsic motivation. At this stage, creativity “begins to tell a story”, as highlighted by E7. In this step, the designer suggests alternative materials that may be different, the types of sole used on the shoes, for example, and identifies the need to develop new products, shapes and soles that must be executed by the engineering and production team, if the ideas are validated by the whole group.

In the manipulation phase, there is also a step that E7 claims is less creative, but at the same time, it is when new ideas can arise; the technical processing. It involves the engineering area because this is when the ideas developed will be turned into a sample. It is worth noting E6's warning about the fact that this interaction among teams can also be harmful to the issue of novelty: *“Productive sectors tend to simplify a lot, or limit creative capacity, as they focus on productivity, and on the volume of production, and tends not to consider all the ideas of creation that deviate from this pattern.”*

Regarding the scope and space given to creativity, it was seen that from this point, creativity starts to take on a more macro characteristic, as it starts to be discussed beyond the individual and his work nucleus. It is also in this phase that the identification of individuals' positions in the informal structures of the organization is generally identified, as the task of creating new products goes beyond the walls of a predefined area for this attribution and, in the interpersonal relationships with people from other areas, new ideas can emerge again, as pointed out by the interviewees and corroborated by the authors Amabile (2005), Paulus and Baruah (2018).

5.4 Verification and Validation of Ideas

The aim of this phase is to present the compilation of ideas in research presentation format, showing how the proposed collection will demand for that sell-in calendar. Generally, there is a committee made up of people from various areas, including CEOs, directors and managers, who will validate the collection. To encourage the exchange of ideas, companies use brainstorming and design thinking tools, as well as mood boards, according to E7. It is interesting to note that there is an open environment of exchange of ideas and collective construction.

It was at this stage that it was found that creativity becomes a more organizational phenomenon, as ideas are no longer worked on and discussed at the individual level or in small groups, but start to take on a project proposal. Now, they depend on the approval and support of members of the group for their implementation, and creativity must have strong arguments and a favorable performance history if it is to be validated by the superiors responsible for approving the idea, and depositing financial, human or technological resources in it, as Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017) point out. Notably, ideas are predisposed to change and adjustments, which, if not well followed up and argued, may not become the product.

According to E3 and E7, it is important that the designer knows how to receive criticism, as he will receive it all the time. But according to both respondents, it is important for the designer to strongly defend his ideas, as a market analysis was carried before proposing the collections. However, the professionals emphasized that they have space to create, within parameters linked to brand identity and commercial, financial and technical viability. As E2 highlights:

It is necessary to innovate, but at the same time, one cannot rule out the possibility of bringing a financial return for the manufacturer and the employees. So it's a very objective thing. This is where we leave creativity behind and delve into numbers and values.

E3 points out that companies that do not have their own store, therefore, besides defending their collection ideas on behalf of the company itself, the designer also needs to do it for the multi-brand storekeeper, competing with industry giants, referring to the large brands that have their own physical stores and can take the risks and try to gain acceptance from consumers. Thus, they are able to present more differentials, with more aggressive prices.

It is worth noting that in the analyzed companies, the designer also presents a pre-analysis of product costs. Within this perspective, it was found that the professional has a broader role than just the task of using his creativity and inspiration to generate ideas for products. Fashion design today is very close to the concept of product design. To create, the designer needs to keep in mind innovation, reliability, rationalization, technological evolution, the aesthetic standard, the quick perception of the use-function, and the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the products and users, corroborating the theoretical precepts of Godart (2018), Treptow (2013).

It is in the verification and validation stage that the creative process ends, making room for the production process, in which the approved collection is delivered to engineering, which produces the samples and makes the final adjustments. After that, the raw materials can be registered, so that the production area can start manufacturing the collection.

It should be noted that the stages of incubation and anticipation proposed by Fabun (1969) were not seen in this study. These phases, for the author, would constitute a pause at the beginning of the process, when there is the motivation to think about the ideas and their materialization. It is believed that, given the fast pace identified in the industry studied, the pressure to meet the plans stipulated by the fashion calendars, and the interdependence of this system, there is a very short space of time for the incubation of ideas.

Table 3 summarizes the interviewees' views on the categories of analysis that guided the research.

Table 3
Summary of analysis of results by units

Process step	Main results	Multilevel of Creativity
Intrinsic desire and motivation	Established methods and techniques; Not very intuitive; Guided by the external desire (of the consumer), sales of past collections and loyalty as brand characteristics; National market characteristics; Social classes of consumption; Conducted according to a sell-in calendar; Fashion cycles, they go very quickly.	Group and individual
Preparation	Fashion research; Sources other than fashion; Concerns about sales, competition (competitive price), foreign market and copying; Little boldness/few take risks.	Group and individual
Manipulation and generation of ideas	Experimenting with color charts, materials, soles, heels, etc.; Panels (moods), visual process – drawings; Story to tell the collection; Interrelation with engineering/production areas; Troubleshooting (technical/process).	Group and organizational
Verification and validation of ideas	Presentation of ideas to senior management; Use of skills such as argumentation, communication and resilience; Limited creativity (time pressure); Exchange of ideas and open communication; Creativity tools; Cost analysis and (prior) product pricing; Broad scope of work of the creative professional.	Organizacional

Source: Survey data (2020).

After completing the stage of analyzing the results, in which the relationships between the information obtained in the field research interviews and in the theoretical framework studied on Creativity were identified, some final considerations on the research carried out are presented.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the creative process in the development of fashion articles, according to the perceptions of professionals working in companies in the leather-footwear sector in the Vale dos Sinos region. Based on the results of the analysis, it was identified that the creative process presents the stages of desire and intrinsic motivation, preparation, manipulation and generation of ideas, and verification and validation of ideas. It was identified that the time for the embryonic development of ideas, at the individual level, is increasingly reduced due to the pressures on creative professionals, mainly due to marketing aspects outside the organization. Thus, the creative process takes the form and characteristics of industrial design, guided by methods to be followed to generate the fashion product as a result, which, in this case, is footwear collections.

It is also concluded that throughout the process, there are interactions with other actors in the organization, which demonstrates an intense participation in the work. It was identified that creativity is exercised at all its levels; in the first moments of the process it is individual, but then passes to the other levels after that. Hence, as the stages are being developed, it is clear that the phenomenon of creativity takes on group and then organizational proportions, being influenced by the environment to a greater or lesser extent, and these are influenced by both relational and structural elements of the network that surround the journey of the idea through to the final creative product, in this case, fashion footwear.

At the end of these considerations, it is worth noting that this study takes a multidisciplinary view of creativity within organizations. As such, this study offers data that can serve as a basis for new models of creativity management, in order to encourage more researchers to explore the complex bias inherent to organizations regarding the themes of creativity.

Although this study investigates its proposed objective, and pursues the due methodological rigor, it has some inevitable limitations, one of which is that only one employee from each company was interviewed, which, despite adhering to the selection criteria, could lead to a bias in the responses.

As a suggestion for future research, it is considered relevant to deepen the theme that comprises the triad organizational culture, creativity and complexity, through single or multiple case study methods, in order to investigate this phenomenon in more depth. Specific results and frameworks of the interaction of a system and the main elements that make up the culture that governs the organization can be evidenced: individuals, as vectors that start the creative process, and the field, which corresponds to those who recognize the space for creativity and, finally, validates innovation, which is fundamental for the survival and competitiveness of organizations.

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