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**Humble Leadership:
Relevance to Employees' Creativity and Innovation Under
the Consideration of Time Pressure**

Master Thesis for MSc in Business Administration (Double Degree)

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Abstract

Creative and innovative behavior of employees became increasingly important for organizations seeking to compete in fast-moving environments where innovation increases the likelihood to gain a competitive advantage. One of the key sources of employees' creativity is seen in successful leadership. Meanwhile, corporate scandals and the remarkable failures in moral and ethical judgment by highly visible leaders contributed to an increased focus on the topic of humility in organizational research and to the conceptualization of humble leadership - a leadership style that considers followers as equal and valuable partners. The aim of this research is to investigate humble leadership as defined by Owens and Hekman (Owens & Hekman, 2012) in an organizational context and its relevance to employees' creativity and their innovative behavior. Time pressure is also integrated here as a contextual factor since it was found to influence the effectiveness of humble leadership (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

By employing a qualitative approach, the research builds on the interviews with 16 leaders from several German organizations who have a professional background in creativity and innovation. The analysis has revealed that humble leadership is beneficial for the creativity and motivation of employees and facilitates an independent and engaged working employee. However, under time pressure leaders tend to demonstrate a less humble leadership style and incline towards more structured and intervening behavior. These findings suggest that humble leadership does not always produce beneficial outcomes but rather depends on the employees' personality.

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If you can keep your head when all about you
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
 But make allowance for their doubting too:
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
 Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
 If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
 If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
 And treat those two impostors just the same:
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
 Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

 If you can make one heap of all your winnings
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings
 And never breathe a word about your loss:
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you
 Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
 Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
 If all men count with you, but none too much:
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
 And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

“If” by Rudyard Kipling

1 Failure in Ethical Judgment Raises the Need for Leader Humility in Organizations

Corporate scandals and remarkable failures in moral and ethical judgment by highly visible leaders challenged their integrity (Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay, 2010), leading to a request for greater accountability of organizational leaders (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). These scandals and the raising complexity contributed to an increased focus on the topic of humility in organizational research (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004) and “leaders engaging in more ‘bottom-up’, humble approaches to leadership” (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013, p. 787). The changing circumstances and the deeper examination of humility in leadership led to the conceptualization of humble leadership - a leadership style that considers followers as equal and valuable partners. Owens and Hekman (2012) developed the first theoretical model of humility in organizational leadership outlining the behaviors, mechanisms, contingencies and outcomes for organizational processes. Humble leadership was found to lead to a perceived legitimization of the employee’s developmental journey that increases the psychological freedom and engagement of employees (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Humble leader behavior creates room for being transparent about the own weaknesses and limitations and reduces the fear of evaluation and results in psychological freedom (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Employees’ perception of psychological freedom was found by other researchers to be related to creativity and innovation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Organizational creativity is often a risky endeavor for individuals because „it may entail some kind of challenge to the status quo“ (George, 2007, p. 454). Leaders showing humble leader behavior by showing weakness and personal limits signals the employees that it is safe to show weakness and to fail and might therefore free cognitive resource and stimulate creativity and innovation. Moreover, humble leadership leads to more follower engagement by enhancing the employees’ intrinsic motivation. This leadership style allows employees to solve a problem or task because it is interesting or challenging to do so than for external rewards (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 804). Intrinsic motivation is a predictor of creativity and together with domain-relevant knowledge and creativity-relevant process necessary for creativity to occur. The findings by Owens and Hekman (2012) suggest that humble leadership might play a role for employees’ creativity. Due to the novelty of humble leadership and to the author’s knowledge no research is known that investigated humble leadership and other

outcomes of humble leader behavior before. Hence, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the role of humble leaderships as defined by Owens and Hekman (2012) in an organizational context for employees' creativity and their innovative behavior.

The aim of this research to investigate employees' creativity and innovative behavior, since they became increasingly desirable and important for organizations trying to compete in fast-moving environments that are characterized by technological change, faster product life cycles and a globalized business environment (Anderson, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2004) leading to a stronger focus on creativity and innovation. Innovations increases the likelihood for organizations to gain a competitive advantage (Ahuja & Morris Lampert, 2001), increase the growth potential (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002) and the survival opportunities of the firm (Gnyawali & Srivastava, 2013) and is therefore, of strategic importance. This stronger focus on creativity and innovations has been a major impulse for organizational research to concentrate on leaders and their implications for employees creativity (Anderson et al., 2004). Investigating both the leader behavior and employees' creativity and innovation is of particular importance because the essence of leaders is their ability to influence employees, in particular their motivation to engage in creative activities and creativity is the basis for innovation (Anderson et al., 2004; Yukl, 1989). The leader sets the framework whether his behavior stimulates employees' creativity or not and plays a role for innovation. Hence, this research will combine the two research streams on humble leadership and organizational creativity in order to understand the role of humble leader behavior for employees' creativity. This research is highly relevant to organizations because in order to channel and direct the creativity of their employees and create innovation organizations need to know the forces and mechanism that lead to creativity and innovative behavior.

The novelty of the humble leadership style creates the need to use a qualitative approach to explore the research questions by conducting interviews- for this thesis German organization's have been chosen. This research approach will contribute to gain an understanding of humble leadership as perceived by leaders in a creativity context and its relevance to employees 'creativity and innovation. Furthermore, the research will incorporate the role of time pressure in the relationship between the humble leadership and employees' creativity and innovation. Time pressure is included in this research because it was found to influence the effectiveness of humble leadership (Owens & Hekman, 2012). In situations characterized by the time pressure humble

leadership was found to be counterproductive and employees tended to question the leaders ability to lead (Owens & Hekman, 2012) . Besides, time pressure is one of the most investigated aspects of organizational creativity that influences creativity (George, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Taking time pressure into account will therefore, contribute to richer insights about the role of humble leadership in a creativity context and how it is affected by the organizational context.

This research responds to the call for a deeper examination of bottom-up leadership approaches (Owens & Hekman, 2012) and for more research on humble leadership in organizations.

The research is organized as follows: first, the theoretical concepts of humble leadership, creativity and innovation and time pressure are elaborated (Chapter 2). Subsequently, the relevance of leader behavior in general to employees' creativity and innovation in previous research will be considered (Chapter 2.2.3.). This is followed by a discussion on the possible relevance of humble leadership to employees' creativity and innovation; further, the motivation for research of this thesis will be derived (Chapter 3). After presenting the methodology and the analysis (Chapter 4) the findings will be explained (Chapter 5). To conclude, the findings will be shortly summarized and discussed in relation to the previous research, moreover, the limitations of the analysis and the implications for future research will be elaborated (Chapter 6).

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Humility

2.1.1 Humility: A Virtue and the Foundation for Moral Action

Having its roots in the early Greek philosophical times (Klijn & Tomic, 2009; Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004), humility is one of the core individual virtues and is derived from the Latin term “humilitas”, referring to “earth“ and “on the ground”, and provides the foundation for moral action in the workplace (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Humility is a foundational principle in many religions, such as Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism because it involves the “recognition and appreciation of knowledge and guidance beyond the self“ (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 788).

In the past, humility was perceived as a personal weakness (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005) and associated with “shyness, lack of ambition, passivity, or lack of confidence” (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 393). This emphasis on the negative aspects of individuals shifted to positive organizational psychology highlighting the positive strength of individuals. In positive organizational psychology, humility is a positive component of the self and defined by Nielsen, Marrone and Slay (2010) as a “desirable personal quality that is an understanding of oneself through awareness of personal identities, strengths, and limitations” (p. 34).

The core dimensions of humility that appear in most of the definitions involve having a grounded view of oneself and others that allows acknowledging own strengths and limitations without feeling superior or inferior to others, which leads to a more objective and accurate view of oneself (Morris et al., 2005; Nielsen et al., 2010; Owens, Rowatt, & Wilkins, 2011). Having this trait allows individuals to value the contribution of others and show a desire to learn in terms of openness to new ideas and seeking feedback and advice (Morris et al., 2005; Owens et al., 2011). This realistic view of oneself and one’s environment allows individuals to be humble and competitive at the same time. Therefore, individuals’ humility has the potential to represent a strategic value for organizations (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004).

Tangney (2000) assumes that being humble involves a shift from a self-focus, i.e. an inward concentration on the self, towards the larger community the individual is involved in. This shift in perception “is an increase in the valuation of others and not a decrease in the valuation self” (Means, Wilson, Sturm, Biron, & Bach, 1990, p. 214). Dynamic in nature, humble behavior can be developed or deteriorated and is shaped by

the context of action (Owens & Hekman, 2012; Owens et al., 2013; Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004).

2.1.2 Humility in Leadership

Although humility was identified early in philosophy it only came recently into the focus of management (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). Owens et al. (2011) assume that changing circumstances through technological innovation, increasing competition and information-based economics led to turbulent and uncertain environments that increased the need for humility in organizations. This growing need led to a deeper investigation of humility in leadership (Nielsen et al., 2010; Tangney, 2000).

Humility produces behaviors in leaders that can be found in several leadership styles. It leads to a behavior that is rather enhancing others than oneself and leaders characterized by this trait are more likely to avoid the center of attention (Falk & Blaylock, 2012). This can also be found in authentic and servant leadership, where leaders tend to avoid the center of attention (Morris et al., 2005). Authentic leaders are able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and express them in a way that is consistent with their inner thoughts and feelings (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Similar to humble leadership authentic leaders show a willingness to learn (Morris et al., 2005; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders show high levels of humility by showing a willingness to learn and acknowledging that they can benefit from the expertise of others (Morris et al., 2005; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Such leaders develop the followers by promoting their performance, providing direction, support and empowerment, moreover they pass success on to their subordinates (Morris et al., 2005; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Although there are some conceptual overlaps between humble leadership and servant and authentic leadership there are major differences that are not part of these constructs (Owens & Hekman, 2012). These are that humble leadership focus is on the mutual developmental relationship with followers while servant leaders focus on modeling serving others (Owens & Hekman, 2012) and authentic leadership is about the leaders own development.

Several researchers proposed that humility in leaders creates an essential contribution to the performance of organizations. Collins (2001) found that humility was one of the most important traits possessed by Level 5 leaders¹ who contributed together with their professional will to an outstanding organizational performance that could be sustained

¹ Level 5 Leadership: Level 5 executives who „build enduring greatness through paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will“ (Collins, 2001, p. 70).

over a longer period of time (Morris et al., 2005; Owens et al., 2011). Reimann (1995) reported that leaders characterized by humility were best able to cope with rapid change but rather pursued incremental change than radical ones (in Owens et al., 2011).

Although humility was found to be an important character trait of leaders and is essential for certain behaviors and outcomes, it was found to be conceptually distinct from established leadership constructs such as transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, authentic leadership and servant leadership (Owens et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Humble Leadership: A Bottom-Up Leadership Approach

Owens and Hekman (2012) developed the first theoretical model of humble leadership outlining the behaviors, mechanisms, contingencies and outcomes for organizational processes.

Humble leadership refers to a bottom-up leadership approach that considers followers as equal and valuable partners. The main identified behaviors of expressed humility in leadership as conceptualized by Owens and Hekman (2012) are acknowledging personal limits, faults and mistakes, spotlighting and appreciating follower's strengths and contributions and modeling teachability, through listening, observing others and learning by doing. These behaviors are highly interrelated and are reinforced through the interaction with others.

Acknowledging personal limits, faults and mistakes involves taking responsibility for the own and the team's past and current failures and admitting when losing control over the own emotions (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Showing personal limits and mistakes is described as fostering improved interactions and is perceived as legitimizing the personal development of the followers (Owens & Hekman, 2012). This legitimization results in higher psychological freedom of the follower's through the reduced fear of making mistakes (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Leaders showing humble behavior by spotlighting followers' strength and contribution tend to push them into the spotlight and "actively engage in behaviors to make these strengths known and salient to others" (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 797). Modeling teachability by showing an openness towards learning, by being a model for followers and by considering alternative views is described as being most important for followers to perceive uncertainty as less threatening (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

Outcomes of humble leadership are a perceived legitimization of the employee's developmental journey that leads to psychological freedom and engagement of the

employees. Leaders who are “transparent about personal limitations and modeling their teachability“ (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 802) signal the employees an acceptance of their personal development. Such behavior results in psychological freedom of the employee due to a feeling of being transparent about the own developmental process and a reduced fear of evaluation (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Moreover, humble leadership was found to enhance the followers’ engagement and motivation to do their work (Owens & Hekman, 2012). It was described as enhancing the followers’ intrinsic motivation because a humble leadership style allows them to solve a problem or task because it is interesting or challenging to do so than for external rewards (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

Owens and Hekman (2012) identified contextual factors influencing the perceived humility of leaders. Contextual factors are factors within the environment of the followers such as time pressure and presence of extreme threat, hierarchical structures or organizational culture of learning that influence the perceived effectiveness of leader humility and produce different follower outcomes (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

In less hierarchical organizations leaders showed humility in a “playful, self-deprecating, or humorous ways, but in more hierarchical contexts, expressions of humility were always described as being serious” (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 800). Leaders in a less hierarchical context were described as giving all the credit for success to their employees, whereas leaders in a hierarchical context gave only some credit to their followers (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Owens and Hekman (2012) reported leader humility to be more risky in a hierarchical context because it was less common and expected. This unusual behavior produced higher returns in terms of heightened follower engagement, trust and loyalty (Owens & Hekman, 2012). In situations of time pressure, humble behavior was found to be counterproductive and followers questioned the leaders ability to lead (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

Despite of these insights humble leadership is still an under researched theme in the academic literature (Morris et al., 2005; Owens & Hekman, 2012; Peters, Rowatt, & Johnson, 2011; Tangney, 2000). This lack in research roots from an absence of concepts and reliable measures to assess humility in leadership (Tangney, 2000). Due to the novelty of the topic, to the author’s knowledge no other research is known that investigates humble leadership and its role for other organizational outcomes. The suggested outcomes of humble leadership leave the impression that this leadership style might indeed play a role for the creativity and innovation of employees. The reduced fear of evaluation and making mistakes was found leading to psychological freedom

that frees cognitive resources of employees and might stimulate more in depth processing and creativity (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Employees' perception of psychological freedom was found to be related to creativity and innovation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010) and intrinsic motivation was said to be a predictor of the creativity (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). Research examining both the role of humble leadership for other organizational outcomes such as creativity and innovation as well as reflecting how it is affected by changing circumstances contributes to the academic literature by fostering a deeper understanding of humble leadership in organizations, its behaviors and outcomes.

2.2 Creativity and Innovation: The Importance of Creativity and Innovation for Organizations

Organizational creativity is an emerging topic in the field of organizational behavior (Zhou & Shalley, 2008). Within this research field, organizational creativity refers to the creation of novel and useful ideas regarding products, services and processes (Klijn & Tomic, 2009; Zhou & Ren, 2012). A novel creation does not need to be new to the world but it should incorporate potential value for an organization and applicability (Zhou & Ren, 2012). It aims at solving a problem or accomplishing a task (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). Hence, "creative outcomes can range from suggestions for incremental changes in procedures to major, radical breakthroughs" (Zhou & Shalley, 2008, p. 6). Organizational creativity is not reserved for individuals with jobs explicitly devoted to creativity - it is rather a process and outcome that is possible in any job and by any individual (Zhou & Shalley, 2008).

Although creativity and innovation are closely interrelated, they are different constructs. While creativity is solely about the production of new ideas, innovation is about the successful implementation of such ideas (Thompson, 2003; Zhou & Ren, 2012, p. 99). Innovations are the "intentional introduction and application of new and improved ways of doing things" (Anderson et al., 2004, p. 148). Creativity serves as the foundation of innovation (Amabile, 1997) and "is essential for organizational change, adaptation and effectiveness" (Klijn & Tomic, 2009; Zhou & Ren, 2012, p. 97) that can create lasting value for organizations (George, 2007). In order to create innovations, organizations need to facilitate and take advantage of the creativity of their employees (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Pina e Cunha, 2012). Innovation will increase the likelihood for organizations to gain a competitive advantage (Ahuja & Morris Lampert, 2001),

increase the growth potential (Mumford et al., 2002) and the survival of the firm (Gnyawali & Srivastava, 2013). Therefore, innovations are of strategic importance.

2.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation as a Key Internal Process Responsible for Creativity: The Componential Theory of Creativity

The componential theory of creativity as defined by Amabile and Mueller (2008) helps in describing and understanding the creative process and its several internal and external influences, which produces the creative outcome (Klijn & Tomic, 2009). For creativity to occur, three components are necessary: domain-relevant knowledge, creativity-relevant process and task motivation (e.g. intrinsic motivation) (Amabile & Mueller, 2008).

Domain-relevant knowledge is the level of expertise in a specific field in which the individual is working (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Soriano de Alencar, 2012; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). This includes factual and technical knowledge, expertise, intelligence, and special talent of the particular domain and can be shaped by training and education (Amabile, 1997; Amabile & Mueller, 2008).

Creativity-relevant processes include the cognitive style and personality characteristics that allow the production of new ideas by being risk taking and by approaching tasks and problems from new perspectives (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Soriano de Alencar, 2012; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). This also involves a disciplined working style and skills in generating creative ideas that allows solving a problem (Amabile, 1997; Amabile & Mueller, 2008). Creativity-relevant processes can be positively influenced through “training in creative skills and strategies, experience in creative activities” (Zhou & Shalley, 2008, p. 13).

The third component of creativity is the task motivation: intrinsic motivation is most beneficial for creativity (Amabile, 1997). The intrinsic task motivation arises from an inner interest to solve a problem or task because it is interesting, challenging, or satisfying to do so than for extrinsic motivation such as realization of work goals or for monetary rewards (Amabile, 1997; Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). Although previous research assumed that extrinsic motivation undermines creativity, recent findings suggest that certain extrinsic motivators can enhance the intrinsic motivation (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). If the extrinsic motivators allow individuals to get more deeply involved in their work or confirms their competence, the extrinsic motivators can cause a motivational synergy with the intrinsic motivation that positively influences creativity (Amabile, 1997). Amabile and Mueller (2008) suggest that the

work environment should facilitate the motivational synergy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and should “support the development of expertise, creativity-relevant skills, and intrinsic motivation” (p. 39).

The intrinsic motivation as a predictor of creativity is highly influenced by the work environment (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Zhou & Ren, 2012). It is to mention that the work environment will not only influence the intrinsic motivation, but has an influence on the domain-relevant skills and creativity-relevant processes, too. Nonetheless, these influences are not found to be as strong as the influence on intrinsic motivation (Amabile & Mueller, 2008).

George (2007) classifies these so-called contextual influences, which influence employees’ creativity via their intrinsic motivation, into four categories: signals of safety, creativity prompts, supervisors and leaders and social networks.

Signals of safety encourage creativity by giving signals that it is safe to contribute creative ideas (George, 2007). Opposed are signals of potential negative implication that come along with creativity (e.g. new ways of doing things). A signal of safety can be how an organization deals with the privacy of employees (e.g. the degree of control an employee has over the collection, storage, dissemination of the own personal information) and perceived legitimation of such practices (George, 2007). Perceived information privacy was found to produce a feeling of empowerment that enables employees to generate ideas without fear of failure or pressure of evaluation, which in turn fosters experimentation. Psychological empowerment was found to be positively associated with creativity (Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala, & Oakley, 2006; George, 2007). Furthermore, information privacy involves a lack of close monitoring which creates the feeling of having time to think, while close monitoring was found to be detrimental for creativity (George, 2007).

Supervisor and leader behavior is a main exogenous factor that can promote or inhibit idea generation (George, 2007). Chapter 2.2.3 will deal with this influence in greater detail.

Another important contextual factor influencing the intrinsic motivation are creativity prompts for example time pressure. Time pressure was found as being detrimental for creativity but can have a positive effect, too (further elaborated in Chapter 2.3).

Networks are perceived as the individual’s social network and depending on the strength of the network ties it can either be beneficial or detrimental for the individuals creativity (George, 2007). Weak network ties are beneficial for the individual creativity

because the individuals interacts with a more heterogeneous group of individuals (George, 2007).

Conclusively, when taking into consideration the organizational environment as a contextual factor and its relevance to the creativity, its influence is on the motivation of individuals among other things through leader behavior, signals of safety and creativity prompts. However, those factors can have an influence on the cognition and capacity of the individual, too (Tierney, 2008). Research by Shin & Zhou (2003) confirms this intrinsic motivation principal of creativity by presenting evidence that the creativity of Korean high-tech employees can partially be explained by their intrinsic motivation (in Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Additionally, another study found intrinsic motivation to be an essential antecedent of employees' creativity and the willingness to take risk mediates this relationship (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).

2.2.2 Linking Creativity to Innovation

An innovation can be seen object-related or process-related. The first is, according to Barnett (1953), "...any thought, behaviour, or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms" (p. 7). The process related definition of an innovation is the initiation and implementation of creative ideas by transforming them into products, processes or services (Baer, 2012; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Zhou & Ren, 2012). For the purposes of this research innovations will be seen process-related.

In general, an innovation is a novel and better means-end-combination that can range from a modest improvement of existing products, processes or services to a significant breakthrough (Selman, 2002). An innovation is something "that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption..." (Rogers, 1995), which can be the individual, group, organization, industry or whole society.

Although the implementation of ideas is often connected to success (e.g. the successful implementation ideas) or to products that need to be viable, it is to mention that organizations can learn from innovations even as they fail in the market (Mumford, Hester, & Robledo, 2012). Successful innovation increases the likelihood for organizations to grow, to gain a competitive advantage and to achieve organizational success (Baer, 2012; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Consequently, organizations need to facilitate and take advantage of the creativity of their employees in order to create innovations and to achieve and maintain organizational performance (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Rego et al., 2012). Although enhancing creativity will not necessarily result in innovation (George, 2007).

West and Richter (2008) propose that creativity calls individuals with creative characteristics, who work in an encouraging environment and are free from pressure and threat while innovation “requires diversity (of knowledge), integration of peoples knowledge and efforts, external challenge or demand, and practical support for innovation” (p. 212). Innovation is distinct from creativity in terms that different antecedents influence the outcome (Baer, 2012). While personal and job variables are found to be antecedents that foster creativity, organizational antecedents are more relevant to innovation such as rewards and resources and support for innovation (Baer, 2012; George, 2007).

Amabile’s (1997) componential theory proves to be useful not only to understand the process of creativity and the importance of the organizational environment for creativity, but also for the role of creativity for innovation and the factors influencing innovation. The theory suggests that creativity is the main source for innovation and that certain organizational components are required for innovation. These components are resources, management practice and organizational motivation. Figure 1 visualizes how the work environment impacts the task motivation, which feeds - among other factors - the creativity of individuals that in turn feeds innovation.

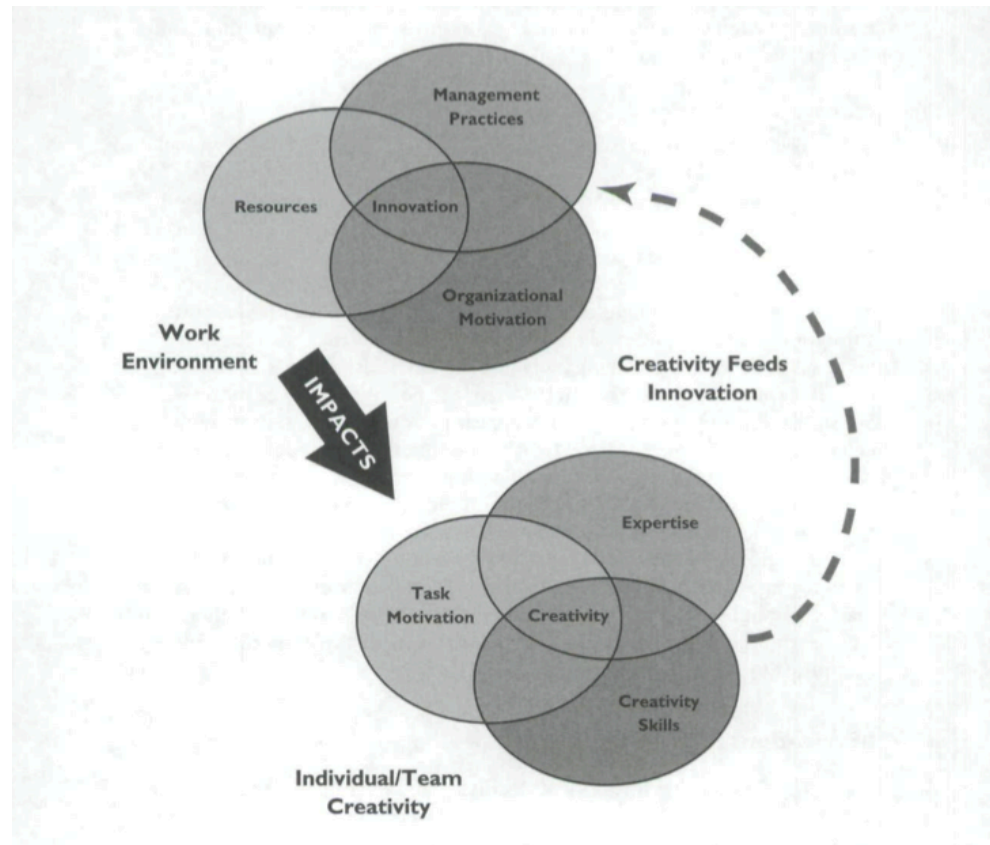


Figure 1: Relationship of the Organizational Environment, Creativity and Innovation by Amabile (1997)

Resources concern everything that supports the individuals to work on the innovation in the particular domain. Resources are; for example, “sufficient time for producing novel work in the domain, people with necessary expertise, funds allocated to this work domain, material resources, systems and processes for work in the domain, relevant information, and the availability of training” (Amabile, 1997, p. 54). Management practices are supervisory encouragement, work group support, a challenging work and freedom. Supervisory encouragement deals with the leaders’ ability to set clear overall goals but also to allow autonomy in the execution at the same time, fostered by good communication and planning (Amabile, 1997). A challenging work is created by matching a person’s skills and interests with the work task itself (Amabile, 1997). Work group support fosters effective work groups that consist of individuals with a variety of skills who challenge and support each other in the work they are doing (Amabile, 1997). Organizational motivation towards innovation is the organization’s orientation towards innovation. This orientation should be enforced from the top management that has a focus on valuing creativity and innovation, risk aversion and pride and passion of organizational members for their work (Amabile, 1997). This orientation appears to be essential for an open communication of ideas, developing those ideas, reward, recognition and the fair evaluation of creative work (Amabile, 1997).

2.2.3 Leadership as a Contextual Factor for Creativity and Innovation

In the past years, the creative and innovative behavior of employees became increasingly desirable and important for organizations “attempting to compete in a fast-moving and changeable, globalized business environment” (Anderson et al., 2004, p. 148) - placing a stronger focus on innovation knowledge, skills and capabilities. This changing focus has been a significant driving force for organizational research to concentrate on leaders and their implications for employees creativity (Anderson et al., 2004). But why is it important to examine the behaviors of leader and their role for the employees’ creativity?

The essence of leadership in general is its ability to influence the employees’ (Yukl, 1989) willingness to engage in creative endeavors (Anderson et al., 2004) by creating a work context that is beneficial or detrimental for creativity (George, 2007; Tierney, 2008). The most direct and powerful force on employees creativity is therefore, the leader or supervisor (Gupta & Singh, 2013; Jaussi & Dionne, 2003). A leader can express his immediate influence by directing and evaluating the employees’ work and by controlling the access to resources and information (Gupta & Singh, 2013). How the

supervisory shapes this influencing mechanism, sets therefore the framework whether his behavior is beneficial or detrimental for creativity.

Several factors were found to be beneficial for creativity and are among others: autonomy in the work, challenging work task, support for innovation, appreciation for creative work, feedback (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007), providing vision, stimulating knowledge diffusion, intellectual stimulation, and treating employees as partners by involving them in decision-making (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). However, De Hong and Den Hartog (2007) found that some of these factors also play a role for the application behavior of employees. These are innovation role modeling, providing vision, autonomy in carrying out the work, support for innovation, appreciation of creative work, feedback for creative ideas, rewards and resources and participation in decision-making, a sense of positive challenge in the work, collaborative work teams (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Factors found to constrain creativity are among others “emphasis on the status quo, a conservative, low-risk attitude among top management, (...) criticizing new ideas, (...) excessive time pressure” (Amabile & Mueller, 2008, p. 37) and monitoring (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). The following section will explain some of these factors in greater detail.

2.2.3.1 Freedom & Autonomy and Participation in Decision-Making

The extent to which leaders control and monitor the employees’ work is essential for idea generation (Tierney, 2008), but also plays a role for idea application (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Freedom and autonomy in the work is an important factor of the work environment that is described to influence the creativity of employees via their intrinsic motivation (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Having freedom and autonomy creates a feeling of empowerment and control over the own work that increases employee’s intrinsic motivation to engage in their work (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Also, employees’ perception of empowerment was found to be related to creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Having freedom and control over how one executes the own task and which methods to use is positively associated with self-reported creativity (Ohly, Sonnentag, & Pluntke, 2006). In addition, De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) found in a study with German middle managers that granting freedom and autonomy is associated with idea generation, testing and implementation. Nevertheless, granting freedom in the execution of the own task should not lead to the avoidance of structure in an employee’s work (Mumford et al., 2002). In fact, “most recent studies of creativity

explicitly recognize the need for the imposition of some structure” (Mumford et al., 2002, p. 725) in leading creative individuals. Research found that structuring activities in terms of providing objectives and task orientation are important for creativity and innovation in an organizational context while the absence of structure within groups will lead to a decrease in creativity (Mumford et al., 2002).

Freedom and autonomy involves that leaders allow the employee a degree of participation and involvement that was found to be beneficial for employees’ idea generation (Tierney, 2008). Employees’ participation in decision-making includes consulting them before “initiating changes that may affect them, incorporating their ideas and suggestions in decisions” (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 49) and was found to have a strong influence on innovative behavior and creativity (George, 2007). Amabile et al. (2004) compared two R&D teams of which one was highly integrated by their leader into decision-making when setting priorities and goals while the other leader did not ask his team for participation in decision-making. According to that research the teams differed significantly in idea generation, innovative output and the perception of leader support (Amabile et al., 2004). It is assumed that this lack of evaluation of the employees’ expertise undermines motivation (Amabile et al., 2004).

2.2.3.2 Challenging Work Task and Intellectual Stimulation

Amabile and Hennessy (2010) found individuals to be most creative when they are motivated by the “interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself” (p. 590). A challenging work task serves therefore as a facilitator for creativity because “intrinsically motivating tasks serve as a trigger for creativity” (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 56). In order for a task assignment to influence the idea generation and to be perceived as challenging, it needs to match the employees’ skills, abilities and preferences (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). A study by Oldham and Cummings in 1996 found that work that was perceived as challenging and complex by manufacturing employees produced highly creative work (in De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007).

Employees who are intellectually stimulated by their leaders, need to make significant intellectual demands (in terms of solving complex problems) that encourages engagement, idea generation and innovative behavior (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Mumford et al., 2002). Shalley (1992) describes that providing goals can facilitate this engagement. Employees who are assigned to focus on a creativity goal show higher levels of idea generation (in De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Another way to facilitate

this engagement is to allow employees to choose their work tasks and to give them a task that is consistent with their personal interest and expertise (Mumford et al., 2002).

2.2.3.3 *Rewards & Recognition and Supervisory Encouragement*

Tierney (2008) states that the provision of information, resources, financial support and recognition reflects the “appreciation of employees’ creative efforts and results” (p. 105). Providing resources in terms of time and money is strongly related to innovative results (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Employees who are only able to work on innovations on a part time basis perceive this work as an additional task to their daily work resulting in extended development times (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Therefore, providing sufficient time and monetary resources is essential for innovation. Supervisory support in form of acknowledging and recognizing the employees’ work is conducive to creative productivity and innovative behavior (Amabile et al., 2004; Tierney, 2008). Recognition is referred to as the appreciation of innovative and creative performance of the employees by providing praise, awards and ceremonies to them (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Tierney, 2008). This recognition of the employees’ contribution was found to be conducive to idea generation and application behavior of employees (Amabile et al., 2004; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Leaders, who do not show employees their appreciation, and employees, who have to fight for the pursuit of their ideas, are destructive for any future generation of ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007).

Despite these findings it is important to emphasize that not every leader and supervisory behavior encourages creativity but it is also dependent on the nature of the job (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). George (2007) states that the supervisory support can promote creativity in non-creative jobs, but can be detrimental for jobs that involve creativity. Developmental feedback from a supervisor can constrain or block a designers creativity and might “lead to fixation along more conventional and well-trodden paths (Smith, 2003)” (in George, 2007).

The presented leader behaviors that were found to play a role for employees’ creativity and application behavior help to gain a deeper understanding of the role of leader behaviors for creativity. Nonetheless, it is to mention that to the author’s knowledge no research is known that investigated humble leader behavior and its role for the creativity or innovation of employees. This research will therefore contribute closing this gap and gain first insights in the role of such humble leader behavior for the employees’ creativity and innovation behavior in a creativity context.

2.2.3.4 *Different Leadership Styles and their Relevance to Employees' Creativity*

In addition to the outlined behaviors of leaders and their potential consequences, several researchers investigated the role of leadership styles, the behaviors related to these leadership styles and their impact on the creativity and innovation of employees.

Research on transformational leadership and its role for creativity lead to mixed research results. While some researchers found transformational leadership to be beneficial for creativity because those leaders “stimulate followers to view problems in new ways and help them to develop to their full potential” (George, 2007, p. 459), other researchers found little influence on followers’ creativity (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 45). Also the influence of transformational leadership on innovation was recently investigated. Rank, Nelsen, Allen and Xu (2009) provide evidence for a positive relationship of transformational leadership, innovation and task performance under the consideration of employees’ organization-based self-esteem. Transformational leadership was more strongly and positively related to innovation of employees with low organization-based self-esteem (Rank et al., 2009). Additionally research found that innovative behavior of employees is only positively related with transformational leadership when psychological empowerment is high (Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010).

Leader-Member-Exchange also plays a role for the innovative behavior of employees. Scott and Bruce (1994) found high-quality Leader-Member-Exchange to be positively related to innovative behavior but as being directly and indirectly influenced by the employees perception of the climate for innovation. These findings are supported by Yuan and Woodman (Yuan & Woodman, 2010) who found high-quality Leader-Member-Exchange to be positively related to innovative behavior which is mediated by positive performance expectations (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Such support for innovation creates an organization where employees feel psychological safe and influences, therefore, the individual innovation.

Participative leadership with participation in decision-making and operational autonomy in the execution of jobs task was identified as an antecedent of employees’ innovation that supports an innovative culture (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007).

Recent empirical findings suggest that authentic leadership² is positively related to the creativity of subordinates in terms of idea generation, which is mediated by hope and positive affect (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007).

Conclusively, research found several leadership styles that play a role for the creativity and innovation of employees. These findings suggest that humble leadership might play a role for the innovative behavior of employees because it leads to psychological freedom and signals the employee's support for innovation due to a reduced fear of evaluation.

Due to the novelty of humble leadership, to the author's knowledge no research is known that investigates the role of humble leadership for the creativity and innovative behavior of employees.

The next section the research will focus on the possible relevance of the humble leadership on creativity and innovation and develops the theoretical framework for the analysis.

2.3 Motivation for Humble Leadership and Creativity Research

Organizations that want to compete in a fast moving and changing environments characterized by technological innovation and shorter product life cycles, need to facilitate and take advantage of the creativity of their employees in order create innovations and lasting value for organizations (George, 2007).

As outlined in chapter 2.2.3, the essence of leadership in general is the ability to influence employees' willingness to engage in creative endeavors by creating a work context that is conducive or harmful for creativity (Anderson et al., 2004; George, 2007; Tierney, 2008; Yukl, 1989). A leader can express his immediate influence by directing and evaluating the employees' work and controlling their access to resources and information (Gupta & Singh, 2013). In order to use, direct and channel the creativity of employees and to create innovations it is of significant importance to understand the influencing mechanism of leader behavior and its outcomes. The increasing importance of creativity and innovation for the organizational success and the call for more humility in leadership in today's organizations create the need to understand humble leadership and its role for the creativity and innovation of employees. Consequently, the major purpose of this research is to explore the role of humble leaderships as defined by

² Authentic Leaders: "individuals who know who they are, what they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others values/moral perspective, knowledge and strengths" (Schermerhorn, Osborn, Uhl-Bien, & Hunt, 2011, p. 110).

Owens and Hekman (2012) in an organizational context and its relevance for employees creativity and innovative behavior.

The Componential Theory of Creativity by T. Amabile (see chapter 2.2.1) facilitates a deeper understanding of the construct of creativity and the main factors that are essential for creativity to occur. Besides a creative personality, employees need capabilities and expertise in their domain and intrinsic motivation in order to show creative performance. Taking a closer look at the contextual factors that influence creativity, the leader behavior plays a crucial role for the employee creativity and innovation via their intrinsic motivation. The behaviors of leaders as described in greater detail in chapter 2.2.3 give the impression that humble leadership might play a crucial role as a facilitator of employees' creativity.

Showing weakness, personal limits, faults and mistakes is one of three major behavioral categories of humble leadership. Leaders showing this behavior in a creativity context will most likely be perceived as a signal towards the employee that it is safe to perform creative behavior. Signals of safety encourage creativity by giving signals that it is safe to contribute creative ideas (George, 2007). Creativity in organizational context is often a risky endeavor for individual's because „it may entail some kind of challenge to the status quo“ (George, 2007, p. 454) and raises “levels of uncertainty and reducing predictability and control” (George, 2007, p. 454). A leader showing weakness and personal limits by admitting mistakes and verbalizing gaps in knowledge signals the employees that it is safe to show weakness and to fail. Such humble leader behavior was found to result in psychological freedom due to a reduced fear of evaluation and making mistakes. Employees' perception of psychological freedom was found to be related to creativity and innovation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010) and might therefore free cognitive resources and might stimulate creativity. Showing signals of safety in a creativity context is of significant importance because generating new ideas involves to come up with ideas “some of which end up not being new and some of which are not really useful” (George, 2007, p. 454) and do not contribute additional value to the organization. Spotlighting and acknowledging the strength of employees by expressing the appreciation of the employees contributions can be seen as a recognition and appreciation of the employees' knowledge and expertise. Leaders doing so in a creativity context mirror most likely the appreciation of employees' creative efforts. The acknowledgment and recognition the employees' work was found to be conducive to creative productivity and innovative behavior (Amabile et al., 2004;

Tierney, 2008). Leaders practicing humble leadership will therefore have most likely a similar relevance to employees' creativity and innovation.

The teachability component of humble leadership as described in chapter 2.1.3 involves the following leader behaviors: leaders showing openness towards learning, seeking feedback from employees, considering alternative views and listening to employees. This leader behavior is a demonstration towards the employee that their expertise is valued by their leader and signals a degree of participation and involvement. Leaders seeking feedback and advice from their employees and involving them in the decision-making process are an appreciation of the individuals' knowledge and expertise that confirms the employees' competence of their work. This external validation and support was found to be related to increasing intrinsic motivation and creative performance (Rego et al., 2012). Further research found that this form of consulting in terms of involving employees before "initiating changes that may affect them, incorporating their ideas and suggestions in decisions" (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 49) leads to idea generation and innovative output (Amabile et al., 2004; George, 2007; Tierney, 2008). Leaders practicing humble leadership by showing teachability to their employees might therefore allow the employees to get involved by demonstrating their expertise and knowledge resulting in the generation of ideas and innovative behavior.

Based on this consideration, the intention of this research is to combine the research streams of organizational creativity and innovation in order to investigate a holistic concept that creates potential value for an organization. The aim of this research is to investigate humble leadership as defined by Owens and Hekman (Owens & Hekman, 2012) in an organizational context and its relevance to employees' creativity and their innovative behavior. Accomplishing this research contributes to the current literature on humble leadership and will provide new insights into the construct of humble leadership, how it operates in organizations and the role of these leader behaviors for important work processes and outcomes- for the creativity and innovation of employees (Owens & Hekman, 2013).

Organizational effectiveness depends on the creativity of employees, and innovation is fundamental for "the effectiveness of organizations in highly demanding and competitive environments" (West & Richter, 2008). Understanding the role of humble leadership for employees creativity and innovation is of significant importance because only the implementation of ideas determines the value of creative ideas in practice (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Consequently, this research does not only take into account the creativity of employees' but also the implementation

of those ideas (innovations). By doing so, the currently existing research gap in the context of the role of humble leadership for employees' creativity and innovative behavior will be narrowed (West & Richter, 2008, p. 230). The overarching research question is formulated as follows with its four more detailed questions (see also chapter 2.4):

- *What is the relevance of humble leadership to employees' creativity and innovative behavior under the consideration of time pressure?*
 - *What is the role of humble leadership for the creativity (idea generation) and innovation (idea implementation) of employees from a manager's point of view?*
 - *What concrete humble behaviors do leaders report that are associated with creativity and innovation of employees?*

2.4 The Role of Time Pressure for Leader Behavior and Creativity

Owens & Hekman (2012) reported several contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of humble leader behavior in an organizational context such as time pressure and presence of extreme threat, adherence to hierarchy, and an organizational culture of learning. Extreme threat and time pressure were captured by Owens and Hekman (2012) through *potentially fatal consequences, issues of firm or personal survival, and every minute matters*. These factors were mentioned to influence the effectiveness of humble leadership. In situations of time pressure leaders reported humble leadership to be counterproductive and followers questioned their ability to lead (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Moreover, modeling teachability was perceived to be a time consuming process while also being less effective when time for actions was short (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

Time pressure as an aspect of the work environment and a contextual factor influencing creativity is one of the most investigated aspects in studying creativity (George, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). According to Amabile et al. (1996) time pressure can be expressed through having to much work in too little time. In general, time pressure was in past research perceived as being detrimental for creativity because it hinders exploration and "increases reliance on established ways of doing things" (George, 2007, p. 457). Previous research found mixed results about the influence of time pressure on creativity (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). The presence of different types of goals had a positive effect on creativity and when the time pressure was perceived as arising

from the problem itself (Amabile et al., 1996). West & Richter (2008) propose that time pressure is positively related to intrinsic motivation and creativity if it is associated with an important project that is considered to be challenging. Some researchers found high pressure from deadlines and tight production goals to be hindering to creativity and leading to reduced intrinsic motivation and low creativity (Shalley et al., 2004). In contrast, lower levels of time pressure produced lower levels of creativity either (Amabile et al., 1996). This contradiction leads to the argument that the relationship of time pressure and creativity is not a linear construct, but rather follows an inverted U-shaped pattern (Oldham & Baer, 2012). This implies that too much time pressure inhibits creativity and no time pressure at all is not beneficial for creativity (Oldham & Baer, 2012). It was found that with a stress level of medium intensity creativity is highest (Oldham & Baer, 2012).

Nonetheless, the personality traits of individuals play a role in how individuals in organizations respond to time pressure (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Madjar & Oldham (2006) found that individuals showed higher creativity when the task conditions correspond to their individual preference of how many tasks they preferred to be involved in at the same time (in Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). This relationship is mediated by time pressure. Individuals perceived lower levels of time pressure when the task conditions correspond to their individual preference (in Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).

In addition to the individual's preferences, the type of pressure appears to be important too. Amabile et al. (2002) found that when time pressure was high and individuals were protected from distraction and task fragmentation and believed in the importance of the problem to be solved their creativity increased (in Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).

Besides creativity time pressure plays a role for innovation too. When supervisor feedback and time pressure was high self reported idea implementation was higher. When being exposed to low levels of supervisor feedback time pressure did not have any influence on the innovative behavior of employees (Oldham & Baer, 2012).

The research by Owens and Hekman (2012) reveals that the organizational context (i.e. time pressure) influences humble leaders behavior and contributes to different follower outcomes. As mentioned before previous research found that time pressure has a significant influence on employees' creativity: time pressure was found being related to higher creativity when the time pressure was perceived as arising from the problem itself (Amabile et al., 1996). On the contrary, high pressure from deadlines and tight

production goals reduces intrinsic motivation and creates lower levels of creativity (Shalley et al., 2004).

Due to the daily relevance of time pressure in organizations and the increasing need for faster development times and technological change this research will incorporate time pressure as a contextual factor that plays a role for humble leadership. Exploring humble leadership by considering time pressure will contribute to gain deeper insights into the role for humble leadership and the relevance of the organizational context to the execution of such leader behavior and its role for employees' creativity and innovation. Moreover, this research responds to the call for more attention on the role of organizational context as factor influencing new leadership theories (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). The research question concerning time pressure are formulated as follows:

- What role does time pressure play in the relationship between humble leader behavior and the creativity and innovation of employees?
- Under which conditions in terms of high or low time pressure is it most beneficial to show humble behavior from the perspective of managers?

3 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews to answer the before mentioned research questions. Due to the novelty of the topic and the subsequent lack of research and literature, a qualitative research approach is preferred over a quantitative method since forming and testing a hypothesis is hardly possible. This research contributes to the current literature by gaining richer insights into humble leadership behaviors as reported by leaders: how and in which way do leaders in organizations report humble leadership to be relevant to the creativity and innovation of employees? The most common approach to assess employees' creativity in an organizational context is the use of supervisor ratings (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). These ratings will be used to assess the creativity of employees in the leaders' specific domain in form of detailed descriptions by the supervisor. As Amabile (2008) mentions, it is important to have a closer look at the role the work environment has for creativity. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to understand how, why and in which way the environment influences the leader behavior. This research will therefore investigate time pressure and its relevance to the leader behavior and the creativity and innovation of employees. By taking a realist epistemological position, this research treats the interviewees' descriptions as "providing insights into their psychological and organizational lives outside of the interview situation" (King, 2004, p. 12).

3.1 Participants

The research sample consists of 16 leaders from 16 different organizations from all over Germany. During the time of the interview, all of the participants were currently in a leading position; they either worked on innovative and/or creative projects or products or have a professional background in creativity and innovation. The participants did either work directly in product development or supporting fields such as consulting, or worked for organizations that offered innovative products that were new to the market. Three participants worked in more operational areas such as operations or distribution and were only partially involved in product development. Seven participants were founders of organizations created within the last three years. The number of employees that the leaders were directly responsible for ranged between 3 and 150 employees. The sample consists only of male participants ranging in age from 26 to 60 years. Although, after conducting approximately half of the interviews placing a stronger focus on acquiring female leaders for participation, it was not possible to include female

participants. Therefore, the research results concerning leader behavior are only applicable for male leaders. For detailed information see Table 1: List of Participants.

The sample was generated using three methods: snowball sampling, purposive sampling and self-selection sampling. Starting the sampling process, the researcher's current or former business contacts from various industries and organizations were approached. Those were either asked to participate in the research if they a) suited the profile of being in a leading position, b) were responsible for at least three employees and more, and c) had a job-relation with creativity and/or innovation. If they did not suit this description they were asked to think of someone who would suit the description and to forward the request and/or establish contact with that person. The participants acquired through these methods were requested to recommend further participants. Using this method, twelve participants could be reached.

In a second step, a detailed description of the research topic and the call for participation was publicized on the business network XING (comparable to LinkedIn, users from German-speaking countries). The call for participation was publicized in XING groups that fitted the category 'leadership', 'creativity/innovation' or both and it was publicized in groups representing different industries. With this method, one participant could be attained.

The last participants could be acquired by doing a well-directed search for suitable participants within the XING network. Individuals, who stated to be in a leading position, worked in a creativity- and/or innovation-related department (i.e. product development, marketing, innovation department) were contacted. Using this method, three participants could be attained.

It is to mention that - in addition to the described sample - three interviews were conducted but were excluded from the sample and analysis. These interviews were excluded because one participant did not suit the description of being in a leading position, another interviewee did not suit the needs for having a creativity-and/or innovation-related background. The third participant was not comfortable conveying details about his particular leader behavior and the outcomes regarding his employees. Therefore, those participants did not contribute to gain insights into the subject matter and were excluded from the analysis.

Despite the used sampling methods it is to note that this sample has the character of a convenient sample because most participants were recruited from the business contacts of the researcher. Therefore, the sampling strategies do not allow determining a response rate for the sample and a biased examination of the topic might exist.

Industry:	Job title:	Age	Basic activities:	No of employees responsible for:	Managerial responsibility in years:
Education	Project Manager	31	Developing a new way of delivering education via the internet	20	2
Information / Communication	CEO & Founder	32	Delivering content in a new and simplified way	20	3
Food	CEO & Founder	26	Developing and offering a new food product	20	2
Robotic	Head of Product Development	27	Robotics development for private and industrial use	10	1
Venture Capital	CEO & Founder	34	Developing and offering a new way of investment	20	5
Water Filtration	Head of Product Development	50	Continuously improving products, product development	4	10
Energy and Automation	Head of Operations	42	Supervising development and production of parts for electricity consumption	60	20
Personnel Service Provider & Consulting	CEO/ Founder	46	General management	30	26
Intralogistics Engineering	Head Product Management	47	Developing a product line for intralogistics	30	12
Engineering	Project Manager	26	Supervising development and production of an innovative product for shipyards	16	2
E-Commerce / DIY	CEO & Founder	41	General management, supervising product development, communication etc.	20	7
Software	Owner & Product Development	60	Director and product development for software to use in geophysics	30	25
Consulting	Senior Consultant	32	Innovation consulting and management, foresight, strategy development	3	4
Education and Entertainment	Head of Product Development	31	Supervising the product development for a new way of knowledge consumption	20	2
Mechanical Engineering	Sales Manager & Product Development	56	Distribution, Product development of machinery	150	23
Education	Project Manager	26	General management for educational mega events	12	2

Table 1: List of Participants

When participants were approached and asked for taking part in the research, they were informed that their participation in the research project is voluntary and that they can refuse answering questions or stop the interview at any time without indication of reasons. In return for participation, a summary report on the findings of the role of humble leadership for the creativity and innovation of employees was promised.

In order to guarantee the protection of the participants' data anonymity was ensured by granting the anonymization of any person or organization related issues such as own and organizational name or financial figures. Due to several requests from participants at later stages, it was also ensured that data and information would not be disclosed to third parties. After informing the participants about these efforts of data protection during the first contact and in the beginning of the interview, they agreed to participate by signing an informed consent (see Appendix: Informed Consent; (only available in German language). Any participant-related information was stored in a password-protected folder.

3.2 Interview Process

The data was collected during two face-to-face and 14 telephone interviews that lasted between 20 and 70 minutes. The interview was semi-structured by using a set of predetermined questions and themes, which were asked in a specific order. This allowed the researcher to respond to the needs of the participants and probe far beyond the given answers where more detail was necessary. The interview was based on the critical incident technique whereby participants were asked to recall and describe the most recent incident when they showed humble leader behavior. This method is advantageous because it involves "real situations and as a consequence can provide a genuine insight into actual behaviors that are either effective or ineffective" (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p. 269).

The interview consisted of three parts: first of all, after clarifying general issues like anonymization of data and recording of the interview the participants were introduced to the definition of humble leadership by providing them a detailed oral explanation (for the full interview introduction, see Appendix: Interview Introduction).

The first part of the interview covered some general questions regarding the organization the participants were working for, what they are doing in their day-to-day business and how creativity or innovative behaviors is needed in the employees' work. This part was intended to collect general information and to help the participants to get

comfortable with the interview situation to talk about their specific leader behavior.

The second part covered the main critical incidents: participants were asked to describe the most recent situation or project in which they showed humble leadership. The researcher's probing for elaboration determined the direction of the interview by encouraging them to describe everything that happened or related to that situation. Participants were then asked to describe the creativity and innovative behavior of their employees and the time pressure in that particular situation. The direction of the interview was determined by probing for elaboration about the creativity and innovation, for example participants were asked whether their employees did experience a moment of high or low creativity. This part of the interview was of particular interest as it revealed additional components that are associated with humble leadership in a creativity context.

When participants could not recall any incident when they exercised humble leadership behavior, a more detailed approach was prepared. In this case participants were asked to think of an incident when they expressed one specific behavior of humble leadership (i.e. if they admit personal weakness, faults or mistakes to their employees) and to explain that situation in greater detail. During this process, the participants were asked about all the behaviors considered to be part of humble leadership as defined by Owens & Hekman (2012). The direction of the interview was then again determined by probing for elaboration on creativity, innovation and time pressure. During the process of interviewing, having this optional course for the interview was useful since several participants could not think of any incident when they expressed humble leader behavior.

The third part and final part of the interview covered general question about humble leadership, e.g. how often they showed this behaviors and what role time pressure plays when showing humble leadership, again with probing for critical incidents. The last part did also leave space for some general thoughts about humble leadership from the participants' point of view that were not covered in the interview. For the whole interview guide see Appendix: Interview Guide.

After conducting the first interviews, few questions were reformulated or rephrased in order to clarify the meaning of these questions and one question was deleted since participants struggled in answering it. After approximately half of the interviews the interview process was characterized by a series of participants who could not think of any leader behavior they found to be relevant to the topic, who did not get into the topic of creativity, could not think of any critical incidents or proclaimed their general view

on things. In order to help these participants to dive into the topic, the researcher started to let them talk about their own leader behavior and determined from there on the direction by using the alternative and more detailed interview guide. Therefore, in later stages a question about the own leader behavior was added to the interview guide and asked to subsequent participants.

In general it can be stated that the quality and depth of the interview raises and falls with the researcher but also depends heavily on the mood and willingness of the participants. A series of un-informative interviews was partially due to illness or exhaustion of the participants. In order to cope with this, the new questions were tested and later implemented in the interview guide. This helped in creating a natural flow of words by the participants and sometimes turned to whole interview by conveying very useful insights about the topic.

Every interview was transcribed right after the interview was carried out. The interview was transcribed word-by-word and assisted by using the transcribing software F3.

3.3 Analyzing Technique

The coding process was conducted by using the template analysis by Nigel King (2004) to identify and explore themes, patterns and relationships. Template analysis combines an inductive and deductive approach to qualitative analysis “in the sense that codes can be predetermined and then amended or added to as data are collected and analysed” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009, p. 505). This procedure displays the codes in a hierarchical order that allows identifying the lower order themes and their relationship to the higher order themes more quickly. Template analysis was chosen because of its flexible approach of developing a priori codes and adding new ones during the process of analyzing. This allows focusing on the specific behaviors of humble leadership and-at the same time-being open for the themes and patterns that emerge out of the data.

The predetermined codes for the leader behaviors are derived from the concept of humble leadership as defined by Owens and Hekman (2012). The higher order code ‘humble leadership’ consists of the three lower level codes ‘showing weaknesses and mistakes’, ‘spotlight strength of employees’, ‘teachability’. The other predetermined codes arose from the research questions and are ‘creativity’, ‘innovation’ and ‘time pressure’.

The software Atlas.ti was used to systematically analyze and organize the interview data. Starting the analysis, all interview transcripts were read once to become familiar

with the interview data and then it was coded. Where possible, the a priori codes from Owens and Hekman (2012) were applied to the interview transcripts. If this was not feasible new codes were defined that emerged from the interview data.

After creating the initial template, the new higher order and lower level codes were grouped to improve the template. Using this template, the coding process was repeated several times to refine and improve the coding and final template. To see the final template see Table 2: Final Coding Template.

Finalizing the analyzing process axial coding was used to relate the codes to each other in order to identify which behavior leads to which outcome. To get first insight about the behaviors and the relevant outcomes and accounts of participants to the themes see Table 3: Overview Themes and Statements of Participants. The codes were then visualized to channel the outcomes of each behavior into a general overview of the findings.

Codes	Frequency		
<i>Codes pre-defined</i> / Codes that emerged from the data			
1. Humble leadership			
<u>1.1. Showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal...</u>	1	<u>1.3.1. Shows openness towards learning</u>	9
<u>1.1.1. Admits mistakes</u>	12	- Promotes knowledge sharing among employees	1
- Continuously admitting mistakes	1	- Learns from employees	3
- Communicates that making mistakes is ok	2		
<u>1.1.2. Verbalizes Gaps in knowledge or experience</u>	11	<u>1.3.2. Seeks Feedback</u>	0
<u>1.1.3. Takes responsibility for failure</u>	0	- Seeks feedback from employees	2
- Communicates that employees are not responsible for mistakes	1	- Seeks advice from his employees	1
- Takes responsibility for the teams failure	1	<u>1.3.3. Considers alternative views</u>	1
<u>1.2. Spotlighting strength of employees</u>	0	<u>1.3.4. Listens to employees</u>	3
<u>1.2.1. Expresses appreciation of contribution</u>	2	<u>2. General aspects of leader humility</u>	
- Puts employees in the foreground	3	<u>2.1. At equal level:</u>	0
- Positions employees in the spotlight	3	- Being at eye level with employees	5
<u>1.2.2. Acknowledges strengths of employees</u>	0	- In partnership with employees	5
- Matching follower strength with task	5	- Discuss with employees at eye level	4
- Involve employees because of their strength	5	<u>2.2. Freedom in the execution of the task:</u>	16
<u>1.2.3. Says 'we' when talking about successes</u>	0	<u>2.3. Empowerment:</u>	10
- Emphasizes to be successful as a team	1	<u>3. Time Pressure</u>	17
<u>1.2.4. Admits that others are better than him</u>	0	- Workload pressure	4
- Admits that employee knows his job better than him	2	- Time pressure: High	15
- Hires people who are better than him	1	- Time pressure: Low	1
- Allows more competent employees to take over his work	2	- Too much time pressure	4
- Person who can do better than him	1	- Time consuming process	1
<u>1.3. Teachability</u>	6	- Avoid time pressure	2
		- Time pressure now influence	3
		- Unpleasant Situations	2
		<u>4. Contingency</u>	
		<u>4.1. Personality of the employee</u>	13
		-Young, curious, active, entrepreneurial individuals that take a chance when they get one	2

- Employee uses freedom	1	7.1 Beneficial for motivation	
- Creative employee	1	- Motivation	8
- Individuals that want to create things self-determined and in freedom		- Motivation to search for new ideas and solutions	2
- Executing personality needs to be instructed to sth.	2	- Basis for motivation	3
- Non creative personality	1	- High motivation	7
- Believes that the leader is responsible for everything	1	- Leader motivates employees	1
- Believes that the leader is the best in everything	1	7.2 Detrimental for motivation	
- Does not know how to handle that leader admits mistakes	1	- Low motivation	2
- Dependable, independent, motivated employees	1	- No possibility to motivate employees	1
		- No change in motivation	1
5. Outcome: Creativity		8. Outcome: Independent working & engaged followers	
5.1 Beneficial for creativity		- Employees work more independent	5
- <i>Creativity</i>	13	- Work more independent NOT	1
- High motivation to be creative	1	- Follower Engagement	5
- Enables creativity	1	- Think & reflect	1
- Encourage creativity	1	- Employees/Team assume responsibility/or consequences	3
- Beneficial for creativity / more creative	4	- Commitment from employees	1
- Willingness to be creative	2	- Employees communicate mistakes early	2
- Best idea counts	3		
- Employees dare to be creative	1	10. Outcome: Error Rate	
- Employees experience space for creativity	1	- Lack in accuracy and usefulness of the work results	2
- <i>High creativity</i>	8	- Error rate	2
- Act more creatively	2		
- Employees propose new ideas and solutions	16	11. Time pressure related outcome	
- Leader expects creativity	1	11.1. Structure	
- Introduces better ideas	1	- Clear instructions	8
5.2 Detrimental for Creativity		- Follower acceptance of clear instructions	1
- <i>Low creativity</i>	6	- Higher Control	1
- Kill creativity & innovation	2	- Make a decision	4
- No change in creativity recognized	6	11.2. Pass time pressure on to followers	4
6. Outcome: <i>Innovation</i>	6		
- High innovation	1		
7. Outcome: <i>Motivation</i>			

Table 2: Final Coding Template

Construct:	Theme:	Example Quote:
Humble Behavior	Showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limitations	P_8: "I am always lost in the technical details [...]. I can't really discuss this as intensively as my experts and then I do not only admit it, instead I say very clearly "Guys, I will have to give up here, since I am not as deep into the details as you are."
Humble Behavior	Spotlighting strength of employees	P_12: "I believe that, every time one lets his employees shine in the limelight, one shows humble leadership. I try to push my employees very hard, so that they gain confidence, both internally and externally." P_5: "[...] because most people I have, and who work for me, are better in what they do than I am. They have more experience, more knowledge or both."
Humble Behavior	Teachability	P_12: "I believe that I generally find autodidactic behavior to be a requirement for my employees - I think I am a role model for this in my way of approaching things, for example by searching for solutions together with clients or colleagues when I can no longer proceed."
General Component of Humility	At equal level	P_16: "... I did take into account their take on the situation on an equal level without giving strict guidance by saying `we are going to do it like this or like that", but I completely incorporated them into the process."
General Component of Humility	Freedom in the execution of the task	P_8: "I let them do it their way. We agree on deadlines, on goals, budgets and quality. The framework is agreed upon, to a certain extent it is pre-given by me and then I let them run with it, they generate ideas and implement them and I steer from the background by not trying to tell them what to do every day."
General Component of Humility	Empowerment	P_6: "One prerequisite of humble leadership is to hand over the responsibility for a project to somebody."
Contingency	Time Pressure	P_14: "Time pressure always plays a role, because I don't have Muse under time pressure."
Contingency	Personality of the employee	P_14: "I believe that a style of leadership is always related to the employees."
Outcome	Positive for creativity	P_5: "But they always had different ideas."
Outcome	Detrimental for Creativity	P_14: "At this point, the phase of creativity in a meeting is over because nobody says anything anymore."
Outcome	Motivation	P_12: "It gave his motivation a true push."
Outcome	Independent working & engaged followers	P_6: "[...] that freedom and responsibility lead to employees, who work creatively and get things done on their own."
Outcome	Structure	P_2: "[...] also giving clear guidance."
Humble Behavior	Showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limitations	P_8: "I am always lost in the technical details [...]. I can't really discuss this as intensively as my experts and then I do not only admit it, instead I say very clearly "Guys, I will have to give up here, since I am not as deep into the details as you are."

Table 3: Overview Themes and Statements of Participants

4 Findings

The findings section is structured in three parts. The first part deals with the reported humble leader behaviors *showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limits, spotlighting strengths of employees* and *teachability* that correspond to the construct as defined by Owens & Hekman (2012). The second part presents a new component of humble leadership that emerged from the data in a creativity context. This new component is termed *general component of humility* and incorporates the behaviors at *equal level, freedom in the execution of the task* and *empowerment*. The last part of the findings section deals with the role of time pressure for the relationship between humble leadership and creativity. After each section the most reported outcome to the presented behavior will be explained in detail. Outcomes that were mentioned overall in a high frequency but did not seem to play a major role for the single behaviors such as *appreciation* or *identification with work* will not be explained in greater detail. To see a detailed overview of all mentioned outcomes see the coding template with all codes in the Appendix.

The findings section will only outline creativity as an outcome of humble leadership, innovation as an outcome will not be dealt with. This is due to a lack of data from respondents on this topic - were possible innovation, as a reported outcome will be mentioned. To see an overall overview of the higher order themes and corresponding codes that are relevant to the presentation of the findings see the final coding template in Table 2.

4.1 Humble Leadership

This section deals with the insights of humble leadership in a creativity context. As defined by Owens & Hekman (2012) humble leadership has the three general categories: *showing weakness, mistakes and personal limits, spotlighting strength of employees* and *teachability*. These higher order categories will be described in greater detail in the following section as well as the corresponding outcomes that were associated with those behaviors. To see the lower order behaviors that compose each higher order theme see Section 1 of the final coding template in Table 2. To get an overview of the reported outcomes that were found to play a major role for those behaviors see Figure 2 and 3. The reported insights do not allow drawing conclusions on whether the participants are humble leaders or not.

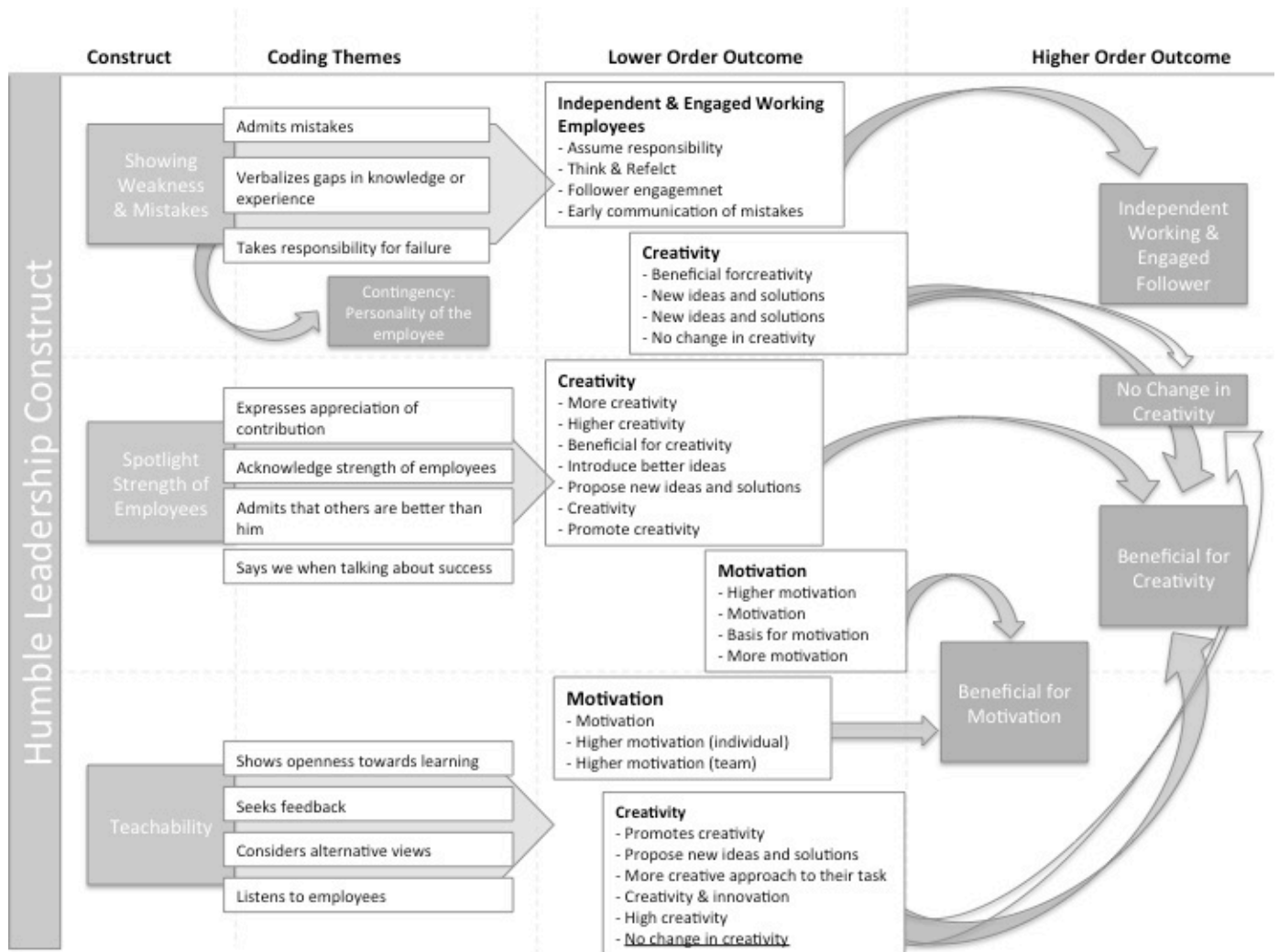


Figure 2: Visualization of findings of humble leadership

4.1.1 Showing Weakness, Mistakes and Personal Limits

Showing weaknesses, personal limits and mistakes is composed of *admitting mistakes, verbalizing gaps in knowledge or experience and taking responsibility for failure*. This higher order theme is about the leader showing that he is not perfect and showing that he does not know everything. Those higher order codes will be described in greater detail in the following section. To see the lower level themes that compose this higher order theme and the frequency of those codes see section 1.1 of the coding template in table 2.

4.1.1.1 Admit Mistakes

Leaders' admitting mistakes is described as behavior that occurs from making mistakes in their own work. It is a result of the leaders' failure in work because they did not fully think things through or due to misjudgment. Most of the time, the mistakes made by the

leader created a substantial higher workload for the leader and his team that sometimes even resulted in working during the night. As a consequence, leaders admit their mistakes or misjudgment to their team or single employee. For instance, one participant communicated this kind of failure to his team openly and apologized for it while also giving a reason:

*P_11: "Mistakes, for example when I didn't think something through, which happened sometimes, even when a single step has already been completed, I later reacted and said "listen, I didn't think this through thoroughly, this needs to be re-done and it's my fault, [...]" So I apologized and say "Sorry that you have to work more, just because I did not think it over" or because "I did not think it through all the way" and, therefore, I communicated it accordingly."*³⁴

Moreover, practicing a humble leadership was mentioned to be a leadership style where the leader continuously admits mistakes and that this behavior creates an environment where only small mistakes occur. Participant six described that in a collaborative work relationship in which a leader can admit his mistakes, mistakes are identified much earlier and that this early identification does not lead to huge mistakes.

P_6: "I believe, when one practices this certain leadership style, that not as many big mistakes happen and that not everyone come together saying "Oh, my God! Huge mistake, I am sorry, my mistake" [...] That's how it is, in this type of collaboration one finds mistakes much earlier and by doing so they don't explode in everyone's face and we try to solve them together."

Admitting mistakes in a highly uncertain environment disclosed distinct descriptions. One participant who is involved in developing a new product and works in a context that is highly uncertain due to the novelty of this branch, mentioned that he emphasized to his team that it is possible that the team works in the wrong direction and that it is not important to create work that is faultless. He emphasized that it is okay to make mistakes and also claims this for himself. Contrary to this is the insight of another participant, who also works in a highly uncertain environment because the organization he is working for offers a product new to the industry. This participant does not actively admit mistakes to his employee's and tries to avoid revealing weaknesses or mistakes. This participant believes that the work he is doing is in a highly uncertain environment

³ Please note that the interviews were conducted in German language. The provided quotes are translated for better understanding. So see an overview of the used quotes from participants in German and English languages see: Appendix.

⁴ Please note that the number of the participant for the quotes does not correspond to the list of the participants in Table 1.

and one needs to show that he knows what he is doing. He described admitting mistakes as being counterproductive in a highly uncertain environment.

P_4: “In front of employees – to be honest, I try to avoid it. I mean, I would say that I admit mistakes and I don’t try to mask it. On the other hand, one has to say that we are doing something with a huge measure of insecurity, which means that one has to be a role model and has to show that he has a grip on things and knows what he’s doing. Admitting mistakes and personal boundaries might be counter-productive in this case.”

Future research should investigate the role of the organizational context, whether the certain or uncertain organizational environment plays a role for practicing humble leadership.

4.1.1.2 Verbalizing Gaps in Knowledge or Experience

In a creativity context, *verbalizing gaps in knowledge* or experiences is openly communicated. In particular in technology-focused organization that are characterized by complex technologies leaders rely on the knowledge of their employees for technical expertise. The lack of knowledge is openly communicated despite the position of the leader and employees are asked to share their technical expertise or explain things to their leader. Leaders mentioned that they actively involve employees in projects to fill their gaps in knowledge. Lack in knowledge was - among others - openly communicated to employees in order to provide no point for other people to attack the leader.

P_8: „I am always lost in the technical components of people [...]. I can’t really discuss this as intensively as my experts and then I do not only admit it, instead I say very clearly “Guys, I will have to give up here, since I am not as deep into the details as you are”.

In a less technology intensive creativity context, gaps in knowledge are also openly communicated. Doing so, leaders rely on the knowledge of their employees by openly communicating their weaknesses in expertise and knowledge and asking them explicitly for explanations or support to improve the quality of work. Moreover, leaders emphasized that they do not have a problem with not knowing something.

In a creativity context, the best idea or solution counts and it is not about the leaders being right. Hence, employees know things better than the leader. When leaders

emphasized their lack of knowledge or experience they stepped back and empowered the employee to take over the work.

P_2: “[...] when I knew of employees that they are much fitter here, I openly communicated it and gave up some of my responsibility in these areas.”

Contrary to *verbalizing gaps in knowledge or experience* as a regular leader behavior participant four, who works for a young organization, *verbalizes gaps in knowledge or experiences* only in unpleasant situations. This is the case when he has to communicate displeasing news to his employees’, for example, when laying someone off. He justifies this by communicating that doing so is part of his misjudgment of the situation because he was lacking experience.

Participant one described that *verbalizing gaps in knowledge* is limited by his current position. He is new in his current job and is responsible for introducing new structures and standards to his organization that have not been existent before. He describes that this situation demands a rather dominant leadership style that does not allow verbalizing gaps in knowledge or experience. Due to the mentioned relevance of the organizational context for practicing humble leadership, future research should investigate the role of start-up organizations and organizational change for practicing humble leadership.

4.1.1.3 Takes Responsibility for Failure

Leaders perceived taking responsibility for failure as a premise for humble leadership. Participant seven described that admitting mistakes and taking responsibility for these failures as going hand in hand. He described, that when his team members make mistakes that are perceived externally, he takes the responsibility for these failures without placing the responsible employee in the spotlight. Taking the responsibility for the team’s failure creates trust to the leader. Participants described, that this trust allows the leaders to admit and communicate their mistakes to the team.

P_7: “On the one hand, I back up my team, when we as a team have made a mistake, then – as their supervisor – I am responsible [...] and then, I don’t embarrass an employee. Of course, this leads to a certain amount of trust among employees. This gives me the opportunity to admit mistakes in front of the team. If I make a mistake, then I stand by it and communicate it to the team [...].”

Moreover, the participant described that this behavior of taking responsibility leads his employees to trust that he will be accountable to the ‘outside world’ of his team.

4.1.1.4 Outcomes for Showing Weakness, Mistakes and Personal Limits

Showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limits was described as leading to more *independent working and engaged employees*. The statements from leaders regarding creativity suggest that this leader behavior is mainly perceived as being beneficial for the creativity of employees, although two participants could not perceive any change in the creativity of their employees. To see the visualized findings for *showing weakness, mistakes and personal limits* see Figure 2.

4.1.1.4.1 Independent Working & Engaged Employees

Leaders *showing weakness and admitting mistakes* to their employees are described as resulting in followers that are more engaged and work more independently.

Leaders who communicate mistakes to their employees described that they receive support from the team: jointly, the team takes the responsibility for the failure and the resulting consequences and they collaboratively search for solutions as a team. Furthermore, it was described that, when employees perceive the lack in knowledge of the leader, they independently assume responsibility. Participant two mentions that the leader takes less space in in these situations because he is lacking specific knowledge. As a consequence, employees independently assume responsibility to fill this gap by keeping on working on the solution and involve those co-workers they need. In particular, verbalizing gaps in knowledge and the employees independently assuming responsibility was described as being beneficial for the creative process.

P_12: “Of course, they have seen that there is a gap and that they have to take on more responsibilities. This means that I have taken up less space and they had to fill this gap and this had a positive impact on the creative process since they had to take on more responsibility.”

As a consequence from the leader *showing weakness and mistakes* to his employees, they tend to think for themselves and reflect what the leader is saying. Before the leader showed mistakes, employees were described as trusting the leader’s statements and they acted accordingly simply because he is the leader. After showing weaknesses and mistakes, participant sixteen described that the employees perceive that the leader is not always right. The employees thinking and reflecting what the leader is saying was described as a process that results in followers, who propose new ideas and solutions.

Participant six described that - as a consequence of communicating that employees are not responsible for mistakes - he perceived the employees to approach much more new work as the employee would normally do. Employees who know that they are not responsible for their mistakes communicated their mistakes early to their supervisors. As a result, mistakes could easily be corrected.

P_6: “[...] and the communication, that this mistake will not be theirs but that the responsibility is on all our shoulders. She noticed quickly when something didn’t work out or when there was a flaw [...], that she let everyone know right away and one was able to correct this very quickly as well.”

4.1.1.4.2 Beneficial for Creativity

Creativity was described by participants in terms that employees suggested new ideas directly to the supervisor or in meetings with the team. As partially described in the outcomes of *independent and engaged followers*, showing weaknesses to the employees was described as being *beneficial for creativity* via other factors such as *thinking and reflecting employees* or employees that *independently assume responsibility*. For instance, it was described that employees who act more independently and engaged – thinking about and reflecting the leader’s statements – propose new ideas and solutions how to do things more effectively.

P_16: “And later it was like this, that they brought up new ideas. So basically, this was a step in the development, when they said “But isn’t this better like this and like that?”. Maybe because I admitted my mistakes and they thought “mhh, maybe I should think this through again, what ... told me there” or maybe because they see potential for optimization in the process. Therefore, they thought about the whole process on their own and then developed new ideas [...].”

Leaders who show their weaknesses and verbalized that employees are not responsible for mistakes described themselves as taking less space in the team and, by doing so, creating more space for the employees. Having a less strong position was perceived to be conducive to the idea generation since followers used this new space to find new ideas and solutions. Hence, creativity was perceived higher than in other situations.

P_6: “And I would say that their creativity was at a very high level. So she found the solutions, she could name the solutions and I believe that this leadership style gives space and she was able to use that space to find solutions. Creativity was higher than in other situations [...]”

Contrary, to the positively described outcome for creativity, the statements of two participants describe that they did not perceive a change in the creativity and could not relate showing weaknesses with the creativity of their employees.

4.1.1.4.3 Contingency: Personality of the Employee

The participants described that the personality of each employee plays a crucial role whether or not the leader's behavior influences the employees' creativity. One participant described that whether he admits mistakes or verbalizes gaps in knowledge is seen as chance or not is dependent on the personality of the employee because some employees just do not know how to cope with this perceived vulnerability of the leader. Participant nine described that some employees cannot handle this openness because they learned that the supervisor is responsible for everything the team does or does not while being superior in knowledge and skills. They therefore, react with confusion to this leader behavior. However it was described that others, younger employees perceive this behavior as opening space for creativity, teamwork and mutual support.

P_9: “There are different types of employees. Some might not be able to handle this, when one admits weakness because they have always learned that the boss is responsible for everything, that he is the best at everything and that he gets the highest salary. And that's why they are a bit irritated and others, younger people, who see the value in this behavior, say that this opens room for creativity or for team efforts and the ability to support each other.”

4.1.2 Spotlight Strength of Employees

Spotlighting the strength of employees encompasses the following lower order themes: *expressing appreciation, acknowledge the strength of employees, leader says ‘we’ when talking about success and admit that others are better than him.* In order to see the lower order codes of these behaviors and the frequency of these codes see section 1.2 of the coding template in Table 2. This theme is about acknowledging and valuing publicly the strength and achievements of employees and admitting that others are better than oneself.

4.1.2.1 Express Appreciation of Contribution and Says ‘We’ when Talking about Success

Expressing the appreciation of the employees’ contribution involves providing feedback to the employee regarding their work and praising their work. However, when employees did a good job (e.g. developing a new product), it was described as being part of humble leadership to appreciate the employees’ work by positioning them in the spotlight and providing them a platform to present them and their work. Leaders emphasized that it is important for other people to know that a particular employee made this achievement happen and they communicate this publicly.

P_8: “[...] but I at least try to position the people in a way, that the success and the spots are directed towards those people. So that it becomes evident and that it is clearly communicated that this is their success and that they achieved it.”

Expressing the appreciation of employees’ contribution involves that leaders do not sell the employees work as their own.

Participants associated humble leadership with positioning employees’ in the spotlight. It was described that leaders try to push their employees to make them more visible internally as well as externally. Humble leadership was perceived by participant twelve to be not about seeking acknowledgment from customers’ appreciation. It was emphasized that it is important to be successful as a team and to put the employees’ skills and accomplishments first. Positioning employees in the spotlight involves that leaders hand the responsibility of important projects over to their employees. Leaders provide the means for the employees to finalize those projects, but avoided the center of attention during those projects.

4.1.2.2 Acknowledge of Strength of Employees

Means for *spotlighting the strength of the employees* was described as matching the employees’ task with their strength and involve employees because of their strength. Leaders described that they tried to involve the employees in projects in a way that it suited their qualifications and interests the most.

P_1: “I tried to make use of the employees in a way that is in line with their qualifications and personal interests.”

Several participants described examples of employees who were in a position in which they showed average or even bad performance. Due to an unusual situation or other

reasons, the individuals worked in another project in which they showed exceptional performance that stood out from their normal work performance. Leaders described that they recognized a special talent of this employee in this particular area. As a result, the leader offered the employee to change their position in order for them to work on what is more connected with their personal interest or assigned more responsibility to those employees.

In a creativity context, *spotlighting the strength of employees* involves to include employees in projects because of their particular strength and skills. Participant four described a situation in which he recognized that his employees are particularly good in what they are doing and that they have a very creative personality. As a result, he assigned them with the task to rethink parts of their product and only provided direction when necessary.

Identifying the strength of employees and putting them in a position that corresponds with their interest and qualification the most, was perceived by leaders as the main task of a leader.

P_9: "It is my main task to consider the strengths of my employees all the time and to make use of them accordingly."

4.1.2.3 Admits that others are better than him

A new category for *spotlighting the strengths of employees* emerged out of the data that was not existent in the construct of humble leadership by Owens & Hekman (2012). In a creativity context, *spotlighting the strength of employees* was associated with *admitting that others are better than oneself*. This was, in particular, emphasized for the domain the employee was working in and participant five described that:

P_5: "[...] because most people I have, and who work for me, are better in what they are doing than I am. They have more experience, more knowledge or both."

Participant five described that humble leadership also involves hiring employees that are better than oneself. He mentioned that he hired a developer that had far more experience than him. When this employee joined the organization the participant described that this person wanted to introduce major changes to the leader's work. Since the proposed changes were better as those from the leader, the leader allowed the employee to take over his work resulting in a major change of 20% to 30% of the leaders' previously implemented work.

Humble leadership was associated with a more humble approach to the own position:

P_5: „I believe, if someone better was found in our organization who could take my job, I would give it up voluntarily.”

It is to note that admitting that others are better than oneself was described only by younger leaders who are far less experienced than leaders with more work experience. Future research should therefore investigate if this is a new component that can be added to the humble leadership construct or if this is a component that is rather related to the age of the leader.

4.1.2.4 Outcomes of Spotlighting Strength of Employees

As reported outcomes by leaders in a creativity context, *spotlighting the strength of employees* is mentioned to be beneficial for the creativity and motivation of employees. The reported behaviors were described as being beneficial for the creativity - employees propose new ideas and solutions or are more creative. Moreover, leaders perceived the employees to be more motivated because the leaders' behavior was described as confirming the employees' strengths, skills and achievements.

4.1.2.4.1 Beneficial for Creativity

Expressing the appreciation of contribution is described as a behavior that puts the employee and his skills and accomplishments in the center of attention. This was described as being positively associated with creativity.

Leaders described employees who fulfill a job that corresponds with their qualifications and interests showed higher creativity. Those employees were described as being able to develop their full potential and as having a higher identification with their work resulting in more creativity and proposing much better ideas than before.

P_9: „[...] someone who is excited, who has an idea regarding his product, is automatically creative because goes through life with eyes wide open and finds ideas.”

Participant seven described that matching the strength of the employee with their interests also influenced the implementation of ideas since these were much more successful than the previously implemented ideas. He furthermore described that one employee changed the position after the leader recognized that the current position did

not correspond with the employee's interest and that she used her leisure time to write a successful blog. After changing the position, this employee was responsible for developing newsletters and Facebook posts for the organization. He described that the employee could develop her full potential and proposed better ideas:

P_8: „[...] this is when they develop their full potential and they propose better ideas.”

Other participants describe similar situations: recognizing the strength of employees and putting them in positions where they are able to unfold those strengths results in more creativity and in employees proposing new ideas and solutions. Nonetheless, leaders also describe that they perceived a fear of failure when employees came in positions of which the leader thought they corresponded with their qualifications the most. Another participant described that the employees hesitated to start the new job in terms that they did not dare to introduce new ideas. As a consequence, one leader described that he had to reduce fear of failure first, and another participant described that he provided freedom to the employee in terms that he allowed them to “just get on with it”. After doing so, the employees' showed creativity and contributed their ideas.

The outcome section for spotlighting the strength of the employees provides partially insights that the reported leader behavior is beneficial for the creativity of employees via some other factors. These insights suggest that when the leader's behavior allows the employee to engage in work that corresponds their qualifications and allows them to engage more deeply in their work it is beneficial for their idea generation.

4.1.2.4.2 Beneficial for Motivation

Spotlighting the strength of employees is described as playing a role for the *motivation* of employees. In particular, *expressing the appreciation of employees' contribution* by praising the employees' work was described as turning the employees to be more motivated and to become more independent in their way of working.

P_3: „Yes, more motivated. [...] of course If I say “good job!”, then one will see that they work much more independently and self-responsibly because they became more secure, because they know that what they are doing is the right thing for the organization.”

Expressing appreciation by *position employees in the spotlight* to emphasize that certain work results originated from them was described as a basis for motivation. It motivates

the employees because receiving this appreciation for their successful work outcomes confirms their way of working and they become more motivated to get involved and continue their work. When employees can get involved, it was described as being the basis for high motivation because everyone has the wish to create something and if employees can see their work results and state a work is from them it leads to higher motivation. Participant nine described that his motivation leads to creativity because someone who is motivated is automatically creative. Allowing other people to take over the leaders' work was described by participant five as being beneficial for the motivation of his employees. He described that being open for new solutions of the employees results in greater motivation.

P_5: "I do believe that my openness towards new solutions lead to a greater motivation."

Leader twelve described that pushing the employee and positioning them in the foreground is more a learning experience than anything else. He described a situation in which he put his employee in the spotlight of the customer: he let the employee pitch his ideas to the customer and he stayed out of the situation. This situation was described as not being beneficial for the organization since it did not result in an order from the customer. The leader perceived a high frustration of the employee, which created the need to undergo a learning experience with this individual by reflecting the experience together with him and the managing board.

P_12: „[...] especially failures and their reflection usually lead to deeper learning and insights."

He furthermore described that this joint reflection was a conscious confrontation with this experience that was based on honest criticism; strengths and weaknesses of the employee were addressed as well. Participant twelve described that this learning experience created higher self-confidence of the employee while handling interactions, but it also gave him a major motivational impulse.

4.1.3 Teachability

The construct of leaders showing *teachability* consists of the following lower order themes: *showing openness towards learning, seeking feedback, consider alternative views and listening to employees*. To see the lower order codes for this behaviors see

Section 1.3 of Table 2. This higher order theme represents leader behavior that shows the leader's ability to seek feedback, to learn and to take other's knowledge and opinions into account.

4.1.3.1 Show Openness Towards Learning

Leaders showing openness towards learning was described as showing interest in the employees' work and a willingness to learn from them. Doing so, leaders asked employees what they do and asked them for explanations when they had a lack of knowledge. A lack of knowledge also provokes the leaders to distribute tasks among employees to become more acquainted with a certain topic who in turn brief the leader about it. Leaders described that if one deals with individuals who have enormous expertise in their discipline, they show constantly teachability because then the whole day is a learning process. Participant five described a situation when he employed a new team member who worked with known methods but with a completely new approach. Recognizing this particular strength of the employee, participant five suggested him to document his way of working in order for everyone to profit from this new approach. He described that, by showing this openness towards learning and implementing the new knowledge in the entire organization he promoted knowledge-sharing among employees. Consequently, he and the whole organization learned a lot from this single employee.

It was furthermore described that learning takes place when leaders accept the opinion of their employees or acknowledge the employees' standpoint and adjust their own accordingly. Participant four described that his employees are so skilled that they have to explain him a lot and he therefore learns constantly from them. He expresses his openness and appreciation towards learning by constantly thanking the employees for their explanations.

Showing openness towards learning was also described as a fundamental behavior in organizations that practice a culture in which the best idea counts and in which the best idea will be enforced despite the wishes of the leaders. Therefore, showing teachability in a creativity context is associated with a leader who communicates that he does not know everything while *showing openness towards learning* when employees have better ideas.

P_2: “[...] if somebody has a better an idea on how to develop a storyboard, how to cut a film or how to use special effects or something like that, a supervisor should show teachability.”

4.1.3.2 *Seeks Feedback*

Seeking feedback and advice involves the leader asking for feedback from his employees. Leaders explicitly demand the employees’ opinions, their feedback and input if they believe the organization is taking the wrong direction. The leaders emphasize this explicitly at meetings with employees and reported that after doing so the employees approached the leaders with feedback. Additionally, leaders stated:

P_7: “It would be impudent to believe that I am not able to adapt or to learn, just because I am the boss – the contrary is the case.”

Leader seven described that his employees are far longer part of the organization and he shows teachability by stating that he can learn from them. Consequently, when he has a problem or he made a mistake he addresses them by seeking advice from his experienced employees.

4.1.3.3 *Considers Alternative Views*

When asking participants about the behaviors they associate with teachability in a creativity context, participant thirteen described a situation in which he and his team searched for a new team member who acts as an intermediary between him and his team of programmers. He selected several candidates to learn that his team did not share his opinion about their suitability. After long discussions on who to choose, he reported that they selected someone the programmers liked the most because their arguments did convince him in the end and led him to consider and accept their opinion.

4.1.3.4 *Listen to Employees*

Teachability is furthermore associated with listening to employees. It is described as paying attention to what the employees are saying in order to understand their problems, to support the employees and contributing to finding a solution. Participant five described that listening is the basis for his acting and that:

P_5: "I try to act when I believe I know better, but if that is not the case, and that happens quite often, I try to achieve the best for the company. That is only possible by listening."

4.1.3.5 Outcomes for Teachability

Teachability means to show the ability to learn and to take the opinion of others into account and was described as being beneficial for the creativity and motivation of employees. In particular, it was reported that higher motivation enhances the generation of ideas in terms that the employees are more creative and propose new ideas. To see the visualized results of humble leader behavior and the corresponding reported outcomes see Figure 2.

4.1.3.5.1 Beneficial for Motivation

Teachability is described to play a role for the motivation of employees. Participants described that leaders who show their ability to learn by accepting ideas proposed by the employee, is motivating them because the employees realize that the leader learns from them. This motivation was perceived as making the employees *more creative* and *innovative* and they *proposed new ideas and solutions*.

P_2: "[...] because they realize that, when they bring in changes, when they implement those changes and when they are being accepted and carried out, even by the boss, that this motivates people. Of course, the result is that they are more creative and innovative."

Participant five described that, in particular showing openness towards learning and promoting knowledge sharing among employees, motivated the employees who could share their knowledge. He described that letting the employees share their knowledge and implementing it in the whole organization is seen as recognition of their own skills and creates the feeling of achieving something within the organization. He furthermore described it to be beneficial for the overall motivation and creativity of the team because it creates a feeling in the individuals that they learned something and worked with the new approach much more productively.

4.1.3.5.2 Beneficial for Creativity

Participants described teachability to be beneficial for the creativity of their employees. As mentioned before, employees recognizing that getting involved and contributing

changes or ideas - facilitates their motivation. This motivation was perceived as making the employees more creative in terms that they proposed new ideas but also more innovative. Showing openness towards learning and the leader showing a willingness to learn reinforces the employees' confidence in the own skills and, as a consequence, employees were perceived to be more creative and contributed their own ideas.

P_4: "Well, when I show that I am willing to learn from them, it strengthens their self-confidence and their own abilities, which then makes them more creative and they introduce new ideas."

Showing teachability by being open for feedback and explicitly demanding it from the employees was described to facilitate the creativity of employees. As a consequence, employees approached the leader with new ideas how to optimize processes or how to improve products. Moreover, openness towards learning and delegating jobs the leader is not familiar with was perceived as creating freedom for the employees. This higher freedom was described as being essential for approaching their task with more creativity.

The presented findings contribute to receive an understanding of humble leadership and its role for the creativity of employees. The findings suggest, that the role of humble leadership as defined by Owens & Hekman (2012) is mainly perceived to be beneficial for the creativity, in particular for the generation of new ideas and solutions. Moreover, it is also perceived to play a role for the motivation of the employees and facilitates an independent working and engaged employee.

4.2 General Component of Humility

Asking the participants to describe incidents when they practiced humble leader behavior disclosed three new behavior categories of humble leadership that have not been included in the construct of humble leadership as it is defined by Owens & Hekman (2012) yet. The new behaviors that are associated with humble leadership: *at equal level*, *freedom in the execution of the task* and *empowerment* and compose the 'General Component of Humility' of the humble leadership construct. Those behaviors will be explained in greater detail in the following part, together with their corresponding outcomes. To see an overview of the visualized findings see Table 3.

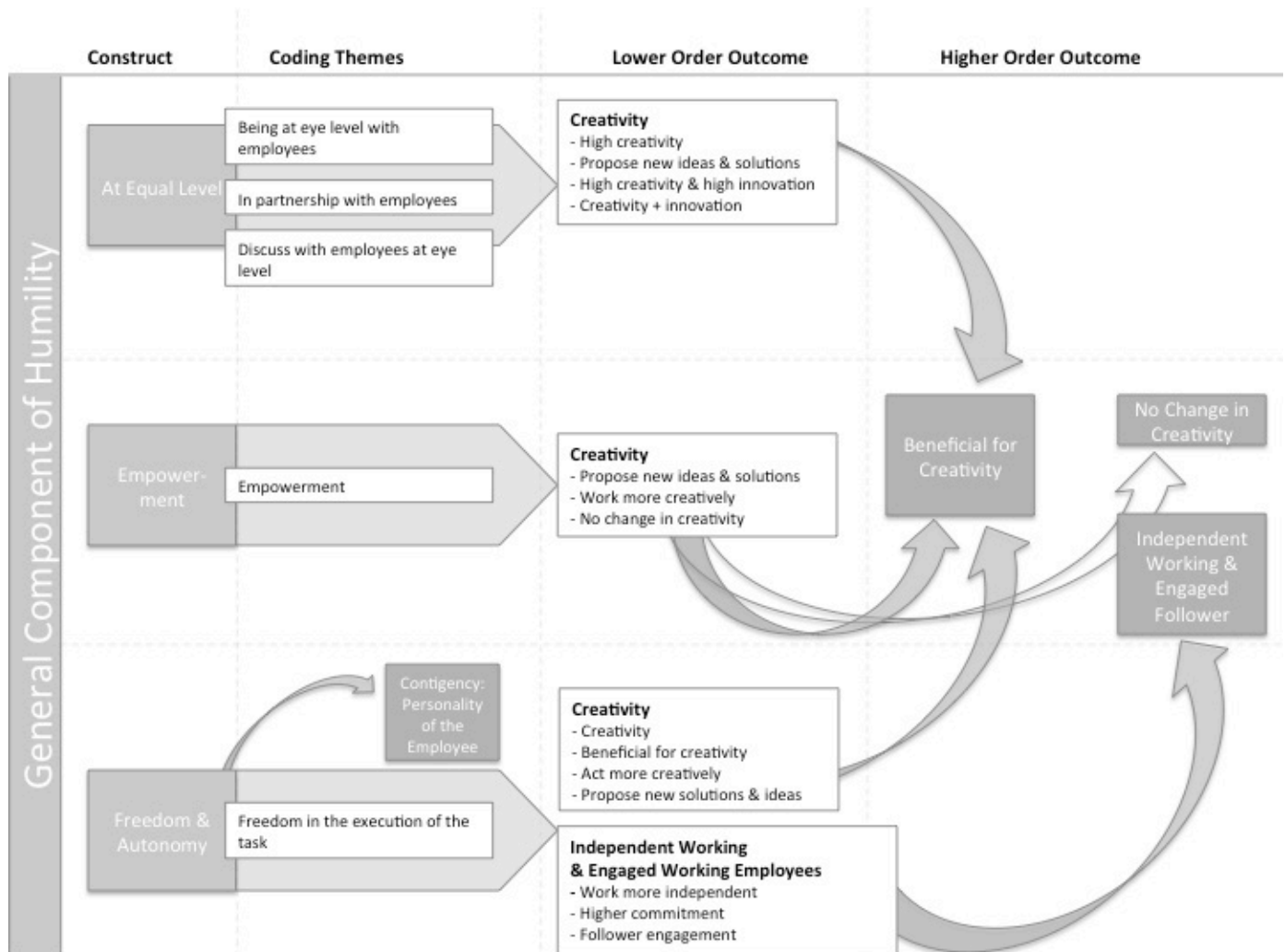


Figure 3: Visualization of the Findings of the General Component of Humility.

4.2.1 At Equal Level

At equal level is a higher order theme that is about the leader-employee interaction on an eye level and seeing the employee as partners instead emphasizing the role of the leader. This theme consists of the following lower level codes: *at eye level*, *in partnership with employees* and *discuss with employees at eye level*.

4.2.1.1 Being at Eye Level

Being at eye level with employees is about seeing the employees as equals and being with them at eye level. This involves that leaders and employees work in a relationship that is characterized by mutual exchange while also questioning the other party's statement. Leader four described that he believes that he is not ahead of his employees and sees them therefore as an equal.

4.2.1.2 In Partnership with Employees

In partnership with employees is about *being on equal level* with the employees and considering them as partners. It is described that the viewpoint of the employees is considered on equal terms but also that the employees are fully integrated into the creative process. Leader twelve described that he prefers to interact with his team - they jointly develop aims and objectives that will be pursued as a team.

Leader seven described that he has a team, which he can lead on an equal level that allowing him to integrate himself into the team. He intervenes in this equal relationship only when it is necessary, for instance when this team goes in circles with their ideas and decisions are necessary to move forward. Moreover, in such situations it is also necessary to direct the creativity by channeling the ideas with creativity methods.

P_7: "I have a relatively homogenous team regarding experience, so I can lead them on one level. I try to integrate myself into the team while only intervening when I feel that a decision is needed in order to make progress."

He furthermore described that it is about finding solutions together as a team and this cooperative solution development requires him to integrate himself into the team in order to meet them on an equal level

4.2.1.3 Discuss with Employees at eye level

Leaders associated humble leadership in a creativity context with discussing with employees on an eye level. In particular, in situations when creativity is needed, employees and leaders discuss and exchange their thoughts and ideas on an equal level.

4.2.1.4 Outcomes for at Equal Level

Being on equal level by seeing the employees as equals and working in partnership with them was perceived to be *beneficial for the creativity* of employees in terms of perceived *higher creativity* and employees *proposing new ideas and solutions*. To see the visualized results of the general component of humility of humble leadership and the corresponding reported outcomes see Table 3.

4.2.1.4.1 Beneficial for Creativity

Being at eye level with employees and working in partnership with them is perceived by the participants as being beneficial for the creativity of their employees. In particular,

discussing with employees at eye level and developing solutions jointly with the employees facilitates the exchange about ideas and the generation of new ideas - improving the quality of work. Leaders described that they involve the employees in the whole creative process - discussing how to do things and considering their contributions on equal terms. Employees were perceived as being more creative and contributing their own ideas. Participant seven described that in particular being at eye level with the employees unfolds the creativity and innovative capacity the most.

P_7: “[...] creativity and innovation unfold best, if one approaches employees on an eye-level and if one works in a team.”

He furthermore described that he perceived a particular high creativity and innovation capacity when he worked with his team on a partnership - basis resulting in higher identification with their work.

4.2.1.4.2 Other Outcome

Leader sixteen described an exceptional case in which he mentioned that being at eye level with employees is not always beneficial for the work results. He described that - as a result of being at eye level - he perceived his employees to approach their work with less elaborateness and vigor, which increased the lack in usefulness and accuracy of the work. He perceived a higher error rate in their work as well. He described that he perceived it as if the employees believe that because they are at eye level with the leader, it is less harmful for them if they work with less rigor.

4.2.2 Freedom in the Execution of the Task

Humble leadership is associated with providing freedom to the employees:

P_8: “To me, humility means giving employees the greatest possible space.”

This involves providing the employees the greatest possible freedom and just letting them get on with their work without intervening. Freedom in the execution of the task is about providing the greatest possible space to the employees in the execution of their tasks. As a first step, the leader or the leader and the employees jointly define priorities, aims and the framework of the work. How this work is then executed in terms of

defining targets, division of time and way of working lies solely in the employees' responsibility.

P_16: "[...] for the composition of any kind of text, I granted her complete freedom. I stated some criteria, which had to be met, but she was very self-responsible for the final results [...]. Therefore, I gave her very, very much space."

The leaders tend to hold themselves back in these situations and do not intervene in the employees' freedom in the execution of the task. As a consequence, employees have greater freedom to act and they only approach the leader on their own will if they need an opinion or a decision for further direction.

4.2.2.1 Outcome of Freedom in the Execution of the Task

Providing freedom to the employees, in general in the execution of their task, and not constraining them by the leader's behavior is essential for employees approaching their work more independently and more creatively.

4.2.2.1.1 Beneficial for Creativity

Freedom in the execution of the task was explained as giving more freedom and space to the employees. In particular, the fewer employees are controlled by the leaders behavior, the more creative the employees become and the more creatively they work. This space leads to employees who are less restricted or limited by requirements and could therefore act more creatively and incorporate their own ideas.

P_16: "[...] thus, she was able to react more creative, and she was able to bring in her own ideas."

Leader seven described that employees also become partially more innovative.

Providing freedom in the execution of the task creates less hierarchy between the leader and the employee and the employee can therefore unfold its full creative potential that causes better end results.

4.2.2.1.2 Independent & Engaged Followers

Besides positive accounts for creativity it was stated that the space in their work allows employees to develop and handle their work more independently:

P_6: “[...] freedom leads to employees who can work more creative and they create work more independent.”

The freedom to act allows employees to freely decide how and in which way they fulfill their work and are therefore described as working more independently. Due to this high autonomy, leaders described that the work contains more of the employees' personality and they show higher commitment and they show greater ownership of their work. Having this space means that mistakes stronger reflect upon the employee and the employees were described as showing higher engagement, they try to avoid mistakes, they work more hours as necessary in order to try new things or they have fun to do so. In particular the higher engagement of the employees was described as contributing to their creativity and innovation.

4.2.2.1.3 Contingency: Personality of the Employee

Whether or not freedom in the execution of the task plays a role for the creativity and innovation of employees is partially described as being dependent on the personality of the employee. Participant fifteen described that providing freedom to the employees in the execution of their tasks as being dependent on the personality of the employees because:

P_15: “Freedom can be granted, if one is sure that things are going in the right direction [...].”

He described that employees who are creative receive much more freedom, can execute tasks on their own and receive what they need to fulfill their work. Individuals, who are less creative and who are described as being “less able”, and need much more support and control from the leader and receive therefore, less freedom. Participant sixteen described that the personality should be suitable for the leadership style. He described two examples where showing humble leadership by providing freedom in the execution was used in one case in a beneficial way while it resulted in the other case in the termination of a project. He explained that in the first case the employee used the provided freedom as a chance because the personality of this employee is curious and entrepreneurial. In the latter case, he described that he showed the same leader behavior with an employee, who had far more working and leadership experience but he had to terminate the project because the employee could not handle the provided space. He

described that, in a final meeting, they found out that the employee could not cope with the freedom in the execution of the task. He furthermore described the employee as a non-creative personality and as a more executing person that needs to be instructed to do things.

4.2.3 Empowerment

Humble leadership is associated with the empowerment of employees. Empowerment is about assigning (more) responsibility to employees. This also involves transferring employees more and new areas of activity in order to give them an opportunity, but also to challenge the employees to keep on looking outside their disciplines.

P_6: "One prerequisite of humble leadership is to hand over the responsibility for a project to somebody [...]."

Participant six described a project in which he empowered an employee to finalize a whole project. He described that he empowered the employee to execute the whole project but made clear that the responsibility in case of failure is always the one of the leader.

P_6: "[...] enabling them to take the lead in a certain project, in which they take responsibility while letting them know that, if mistakes are made, it won't be their mistake but the mistake of the supervisor."

He perceived that in particular the combination of both - the empowerment of the employee and the clarification that the employees are not be held responsible for their doing but instead the leader is responsible by the end of the day – led the employee to tackle far more themes as he would have done it in a more regular situation.

4.2.3.1 Outcome of Empowerment

The reported outcomes of empowerment are rather scattered. Creativity was mentioned three times of which two were positively associated and one was negatively associated. Therefore, the outcome section of empowerment will shortly explain the reported creativity-related outcomes.

4.2.3.1.1 Creativity

Due to empowerment, leaders perceived rather high creativity but it was also reported to be leading to higher innovation. Participant six described it as follows:

P_6: "She was able to find the solutions and she was able to call them out. I believe that this form of leadership gives space and that she was able to use it in order to find solutions. Both creativity and innovation were minted in those situations."

Participant two reported that his employees were already very creative before he empowered them and he could not recognize a change in their creativity in this particular example.

It can be summarized that freedom in the execution of the task provides employee's space to accomplish things without being restricted or limited by the leader. The findings present that employees approach their work more independently and with more engagement, allowing them to act more creatively while also incorporating their own ideas. Additionally, leaders interacting with employees on equal level entail seeing the employees as partners instead of the leaders demonstrating their superiority. Employees, who are perceived as an equal, unfold their creativity and innovative capacity - facilitating the generation of new ideas. Nonetheless, whether this leadership style is conducive to employees' creativity depends on their personality.

4.3 The Role of Time Pressure for the Relationship of Humble Leadership and Creativity

Although time pressure was discussed with many participants, the reported insights regarding humble leadership and time pressure are inconclusive. Leaders either reported that they showed humble leadership because they had time pressure while others mentioned that they did not show humble leader behavior due to time pressure. While some reported that showing humble leader behavior even creates time pressure since it is a time consuming process. The insights regarding time pressure and humble leadership and their role for creativity are therefore not conclusive. The insights concerning time pressure, which will be reported in the following section will concern leader behavior in general and the outcomes that were reported the most-*structure and intervening behavior*. The findings regarding *time pressure* and *high time pressure* will be combined because the coding difference in time pressure and high time pressure is only based on the statements of the participants (e.g. we had high time pressure/ we had

time pressure). The statements of the participants do not allow gaining insights and drawing conclusions on what they really mean with high time pressure or time pressure. Therefore, the findings on those insights will be combined. The following Figure 4 visualizes the findings for time pressure in detail.

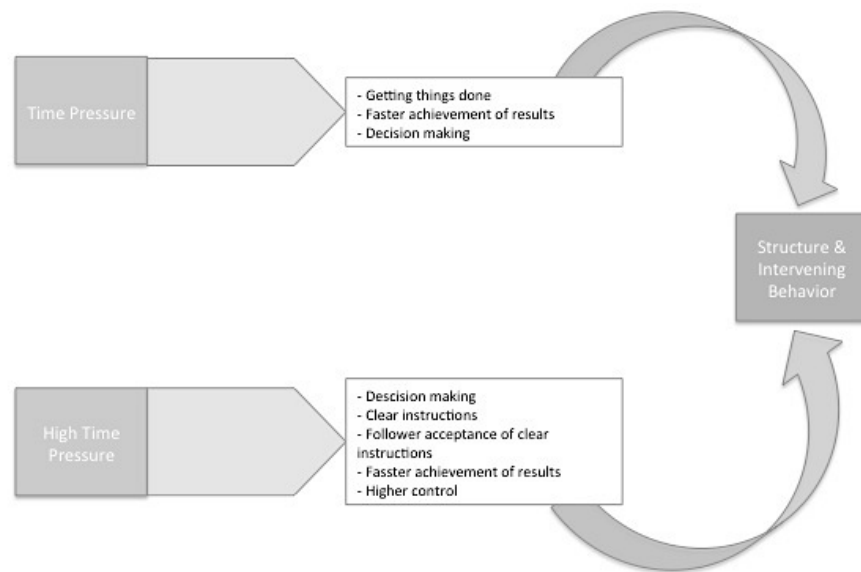


Figure 4: Visualized Findings of Time Pressure

4.3.1 Time Pressure and High Time Pressure Leads to Structure and Intervening Behavior

Humble leader behavior is not always possible in times of time pressure. Participant four described that time pressure creates a feeling of pressure and:

P_4: "I am under the impression that, when time pressure is very high, the style of humble leaderships usually comes to an end."

Time pressure leads to a desire to control the employees in a way that leaders want to know what the employees are doing. In situations characterized by time pressure leaders tend to micro-manage their employees and provide clear instructions on what they want to see as a result, what the employees should do and what they expect from them. Participant six summarized this behavior like this:

P_6: "The higher the time pressure, the more concrete are the instructions."

Furthermore, participants responded, that due to the time pressure, they want to see and achieve results faster.

Participants responded that time pressure influences leader behavior significantly, because it creates situations in which decision needs to be made and this demands a different leadership style. Leaders described that time pressure creates the need for getting things done and the need for decision-making. In particular when leaders experience time pressure they tend to intervene in the creative process much earlier, they make decisions on a direction earlier in order to let the employees concentrate on new ideas. It was furthermore described that, the closer a deadline is approaching and the more the time pressure is perceived, the more a leader needs to intervene and make decisions on the final product. Although, these statements do not provide insights on how this impacts the employees' creativity, one participant believes that time pressure helped them to find new ideas they would not have found without time pressure.

Leader six summarizes the role of time pressure for humble leadership in the following words:

P_6: "I believe that humble leadership works fine for the first 80 per cent of a product. When it comes to the final 20 per cent, someone has to make decisions."

The findings on time pressure and humble leadership do not allow drawing conclusions about the relevance of time pressure to the creativity of employees. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that time pressure plays a role for leaders behavior in general in terms that time pressure creates the need for a more controlling leadership style.

5 Discussion: Humble Leadership is Beneficial for Employees' Creativity

5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

This research explored the role of humble leadership for employees' creativity. Additionally to the three behavioral categories of humble leadership defined by Owens & Hekman (2012), three new behaviors emerged from the data. These are *at equal level*, *freedom in the execution of the task* and *empowerment*. This research found that humble leadership is perceived by leaders to be beneficial for employees' creativity.

In order to answer the research questions, the findings will be shortly summarized. The insights generated by this study reveal that showing weaknesses and mistakes by *admitting mistakes, verbalizing gaps in knowledge and taking responsibility* for those failures is overall described as leaders displaying weakness and vulnerability to the employees and standing by it. This behavior was perceived as stimulating employees to *work more independently and engaged*. Employees *independently assume responsibilities* to fill the knowledge gap of the leader. The employees start to think and reflect what the leader is saying - facilitating the idea generation. Communicating failures and gaps in knowledge creates an atmosphere in which the employees jointly take the responsibility for the leaders' failures as well as for the resulting consequences and they search collaboratively for solutions.

Spotlighting the strengths of followers by *expressing appreciation of contribution, acknowledging the strength of employees, leader saying 'we' when talking about success and admitting that others are better than oneself* is a recognition, acknowledgment and public appreciation the employees' strength and achievements. *Expressing the appreciation of the employees' contribution* puts the employee, his skills and accomplishment in the center of attention. Moreover, employee's having a fulfilling job that corresponds with their qualifications and personal interests is perceived to be beneficial for their creativity. The insights suggest that employees, who work in a context in which they can unfold their strengths and qualifications allows them to engage more deeply in their work- resulting in more creativity and employee's proposing new ideas and solutions. Furthermore, *spotlighting the strength of employees* was found to motivate the employees because it confirms their way of working. Appreciating publicly the work achievements of the employees and pushing them in the spotlight, results in higher motivation.

Leaders showing teachability in a creativity context is defined by the leader's ability to show that he learns and takes others' opinions and knowledge into account. Showing teachability confirms the employees' knowledge and a leader relying on the knowledge of his employees motivates them. Moreover, teachability is perceived to be beneficial for the creativity of employees - facilitating the generation of new ideas and solutions.

Being at equal level is part of the "The General Component of Humility" and is about the leader interacting with employees at eye level and seeing the employees as partners. Being at eye level with the employees was found to unfold their creativity the most. In particular, discussing with employees at eye level facilitates the generation of new ideas, improving the quality of work.

Freedom in the execution of the task is about the leader providing the greatest possible space in the execution of employees' work. Leaders tend to hold themselves back when doing so without intervening. This leader behavior was found to be essential for employees approaching their work more independently and more creatively. The space allows employees to be less restricted or limited by requirements and they can therefore act more creatively and incorporate their own ideas. Freedom and space allows employees to work more independently: they can freely decide how and in which way they fulfill their work and approach their work with more engagement.

Empowerment of employees is about assigning responsibilities to the employees. Outcomes for this behavior are very scattered and do not allow drawing conclusion of the possible role of this behavior for employees' creativity. Nonetheless, the reported outcomes provide a first impression of its role for the creativity of employees that was perceived to be higher. Future research should investigate this component of humble leadership and its role for the employees' creativity in greater detail.

Furthermore, the findings uncover that the personality characteristics of the employees appear to be of fundamental importance whether the leader behavior plays a role for the employees' creativity or not. This applies in particular for the leader behavior showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limits and freedom in the execution of the task. The findings reveal that some employees see this leader behavior as opening space for creativity while others cannot cope with this leadership style.

The presented findings concerning time pressure suggest that time pressure creates the need in leaders to intervene in the creative process much earlier. Time pressure generates situations in which decision need to be made, creating the desire in leaders to seek more structure by giving clear instructions and intervene much earlier in the creative process.

The presented research findings contribute to a deeper understanding of humble leadership in a creativity context and reasoning which role this leadership style plays for the creativity of employees. The findings allow answering partially the first research question. This research found that the role of humble leadership as defined by Owens & Hekman (2012), together with the general component of humility, is mainly perceived as being beneficial for employees' creativity, in particular for the generation of new ideas and solutions. Additionally, the research found that humble leadership helps followers to approach their work more independently and with more motivation and engagement. To a certain extent the findings leave the impression that employees, who experience autonomy and more motivation, propose and suggest new ideas and solutions. The findings do not provide insights on the role for humble leadership for employees' innovation due to a lack of responses concerning this topic.

To answer the second research question the findings suggest that all of the reported behaviors play a role for employees' creativity- some more and some less. The behaviors that were found to be a part of humble leadership and that were perceived to play a role for the creativity of employees are *showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal limits, spotlighting the strength of employees, teachability* and *at eye level, freedom in the execution of the task*, of which the former appears to be of less relevance to employee's creativity. This behavior rather stimulates an *independent working and engaged employee* - employees that think and reflect what the leader is saying and independently assuming responsibility. The findings for *empowerment* do not allow drawing conclusion on the role of this behavior for employees' creativity although it is perceived as being a part of humble leadership. As mentioned before, the findings do not allow drawing conclusions of the role of the leader behavior for the innovative behavior of employees due to a lack of responses concerning this topic.

The findings concerning time pressure only partially allow answering the third and fourth research question because the accounts are only applicable for leader behavior in general and do not allow drawing conclusions for humble leadership employees' creativity.

Nonetheless, this research responds to the call for more attention on the role of organizational context as a factor influencing new leadership theories (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). These research findings are in line with the findings by Owens and Hekman (2012) who found that, when time pressure is high, humble leadership is perceived to be counterproductive and less effective. Moreover, George (2007) provides insights that time pressure "increases reliance on established ways of doing things" (p.

457), suggesting that leaders rely on more structure and control when exposed to time pressure.

The findings provide one additional insight concerning the role of time pressure for the creativity of employees: one employee suggested that time pressure helped in finding new ideas they would not have found without time pressure. These insights indicate that the relationship of time pressure and creativity follows an inverted U-shaped pattern - meaning that too much time pressure is detrimental for creativity while no time pressure is not conducive to creativity (Oldham & Baer, 2012). Research found that with a stress level of medium intensity creativity is highest (Oldham & Baer, 2012), strengthening the argument made by one participant that humble leadership is best for the first 80% of a product. The findings are nonetheless only a first hint for the possible relevance of time pressure to humble leadership and creativity and create the need for future research to thoroughly investigate the role time pressure plays for employees' creativity when exposed to a humble leadership style.

The following Figure 5 provides a general overview of the presented findings and visualizes the old and new components of which humble leadership exists and the outcomes for this leadership style. The figure shows that humble leadership consists of the old component as defined by Owens & Hekman (2012) and the new *General Component of Humility*. This research found that the humble leadership construct is beneficial for the creativity and motivation of employees and facilitates an independent and engaged follower whereas the *General Component of Humility* is only conducive to the creativity and facilitates an independent and engaged follower. The data did not reveal any interrelations between the reported outcomes and provides only first hints on possible interrelations of those. Future research should examine if and how the outcomes are related to each other. The same applies for the presented behaviours, as they only provide first hints but not sufficient patterns. Additionally, the figure shows that humble leadership in particular showing weaknesses, freedom and autonomy and its relevance for creativity is dependent on the personality of the employees.

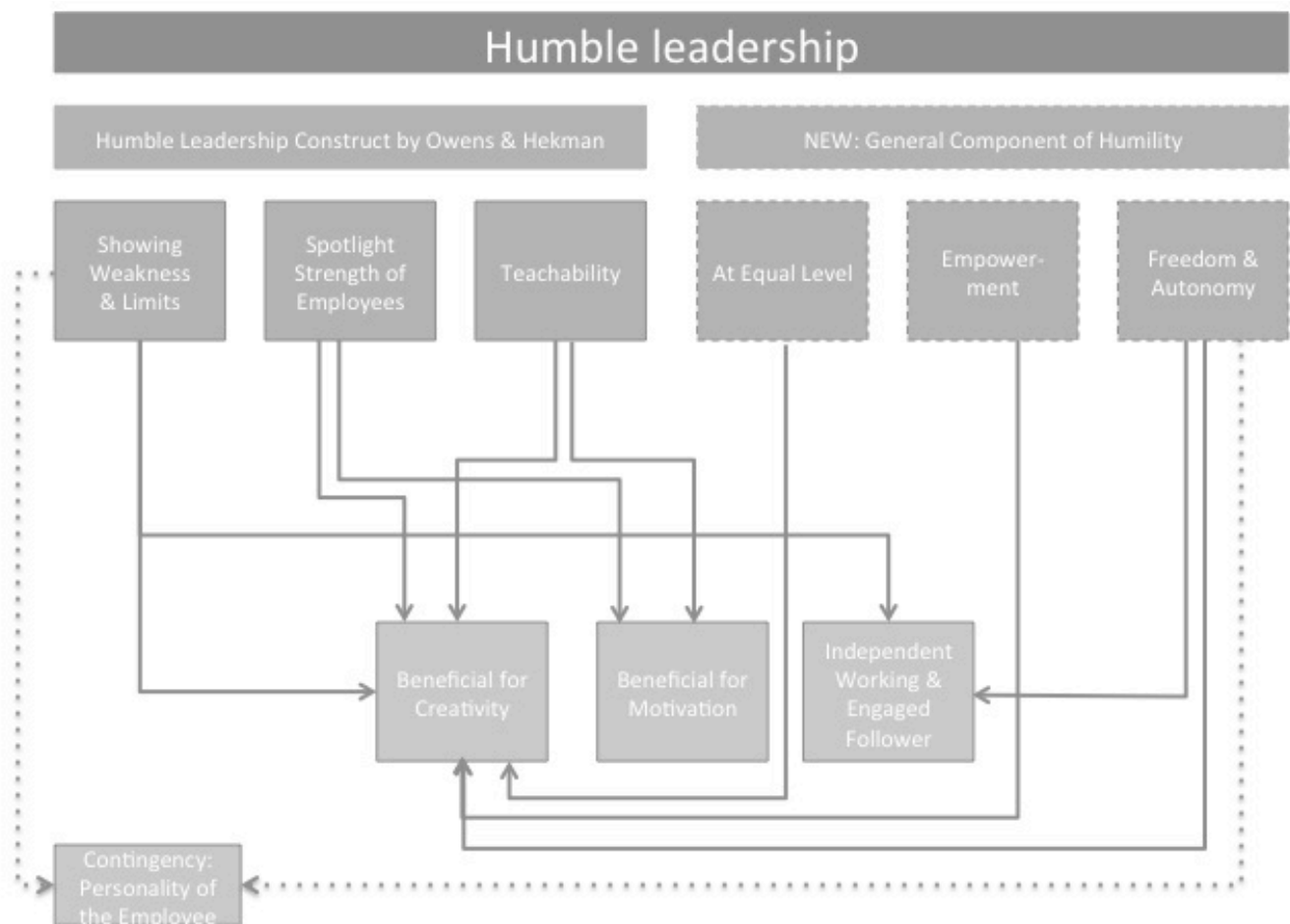


Figure 5: New Model of Humble Leadership and its Relevance to Creativity, Motivation and Independent and Engaged Followers.

5.2 Discussion of the Research Findings

The major purpose of this research was to investigate the role of humble leaderships as defined by Owens and Hekman (Owens & Hekman, 2012) for employees' creativity and innovative behavior. Doing so, this research contributed to the current literature of humble leadership and organizational creativity by gaining a deeper understanding of humble leadership in a creativity context and its role for employees' creativity. No insights were generated for the role of this leadership style for employees' innovative behavior.

The presented research findings are supported by current research on humble leadership and creativity research. For instance, *spotlighting the strength of employee's* in a creativity context is a behavior that is rather enhancing others than oneself and is therefore in line with the findings of Falk and Blaylock (2012) and Owens and Hekman (2012). The latter described this behavior as pushing the employees into the spotlight and actively engaging "in behaviors to make these strengths known and salient to others" (p. 797). This study found *spotlighting the strength of employees* to be

beneficial for employees' motivation and creativity. Expressing the appreciation of employees' contribution was found by previous research to be a recognition and appreciation of employees' creative efforts and was found to be conducive to creativity (Amabile et al., 2004; Tierney, 2008). This seems to be similar to the findings of Amabile and Hennessy (2010), who found individuals to be most creative when they are motivated by a challenging work that matches the employees' skills, abilities and preferences (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). An "intrinsically motivating tasks serve as a trigger for creativity" (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 56). The componential theory by Amabile (1997) states that the creativity of the employees is enhanced via their intrinsic motivation and that the leader behavior serves as a main contextual factor, which is said to influence the creativity of employees via their intrinsic motivation. The presented research findings do not allow to draw such conclusions but they provide a first hint that the creativity of employees might indeed be enhanced via their higher motivation. Future research should investigate such interrelations of the outcomes of humble leadership and if the reported higher motivation and creativity enhances the creativity via the motivation of employees.

This research furthermore discovered that leaders showing teachability in a creativity context is the leaders' ability to show that he learns and takes others opinions and knowledge into account. In this study, such leader behavior was found to be the appreciation of the individual's knowledge and expertise that confirms the employees' competence of their work, resulting in more motivation and creativity. Such external validation or support was found by pervious research to be related to increasing intrinsic motivation and creative performance (Rego et al., 2012).

This research found three new behavioral categories that were associated with humble leadership in a creativity context, which are not supported by humble leadership research yet, but were found to play a major role in enhancing employees' creativity. These behaviors unfold employees' creative capacity and facilitating an independent working and engaged employee but no interrelations of those outcomes were found. Its role for the creativity of employees is supported by previous research. Allowing the employees a degree of participation and involvement, as it is described for being at eye level, was found to be beneficial for employees' idea generation (Tierney, 2008). Having freedom in and control over the execution of the task were found to be positively associated with self-reported creativity (Ohly et al., 2006), but were described as influencing the creativity of employees via their intrinsic motivation (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). This research did not contribute to relevant outcomes about leaders

empowering the employee. Nevertheless, the previous research gives the impression that empowerment and freedom in the execution of the task are tightly interrelated behaviors and are both relevant to employees' motivation and creativity. Future research should examine the relationship of freedom in the execution of the task and empowerment and outcomes for such humble leader behavior.

The research findings concerning the personality of the employees are in line with previous research findings. The componential theory by T. Amabile supports these findings since this theory states that, for creativity to occur, three components are necessary: expertise in the employees' domain, creativity-relevant process and intrinsic motivation (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). The creativity-relevant processes involve the employees' cognitive style and personality characteristics. The ability of being risk taking, to approach work from a different perspective together with skills in generating new ideas and a disciplined work style allows the generation of creative ideas and solutions (Amabile, 1997; Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Soriano de Alencar, 2012; Zhou & Ren, 2012). Nonetheless, this research does not provide insights what factors determine whether humble leadership perceived as opening space for creativity and what the personality traits of employees are that allow the employees to generate new ideas with a leader practicing a humble leadership style. Future research should investigate the personality characteristics of employees that determined the value of humble leadership for employees' creativity.

5.3 Practical Implications

The presented research findings have practical implications for organizations. If organizations want to be effective in creating innovations they need to understand the influencing mechanisms that employees are exposed to and that affect their creativity. Humble leadership is one of them. Knowing the positive role of humble leadership for employees' creativity and motivation is particularly interesting for leaders working in a creativity context as it is one way to facilitate employees' creativity. These findings also have implications for the human resources development department and training of executives in order to sensitize leaders that a humble approach to leadership is beneficial for employees' motivation, creativity and a more independent working style. The findings suggest that the leadership style is not beneficial for every employee. Leaders, who want to facilitate creativity, should therefore use a leadership style that suits the employees' personality the best - not preferably a humble leadership style.

Another implication of this research is that humble leadership might appear to be more effective in a context that is less exposed to time pressure since time pressure was found to increase the leaders desire for structure and control.

5.4 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The current study has some limitations, which should be considered for future research together with the mentioned suggestions for future research in the discussion. As this study used a qualitative approach to answer the research questions, a large-scale follow-up survey would be useful to identify which of the leader behaviors do indeed have the proposed association with employees' idea generation, motivation and an independent and engaged working employee.

The newly identified leader behaviors equal level, freedom in the execution of the task and empowerment are generally leader behaviors that were found by research to play a major role for the creativity and motivation of employees. Future research should therefore take a closer look at these behaviors and elaborate if they are indeed a part of humble leadership. Generally, leaders being on equal level with their employees provokes that employees approach their work with less elaborateness and vigor increasing the lack in usefulness and accuracy of the work. Future research is needed to investigate whether being at eye level produces positive or negative outcomes and which contextual factors influence the outcome.

Another limitation is the sample that has the character of a convenient sample and might represent only the insights of individuals that are interested in humble leadership in general and have a similar mindset. Future research should take into consideration to examine a more diversified sample. Another limitation of the sample is the exclusive focus on male leaders. Future research should therefore take the perception of female leaders of humble leadership into account. Doing so will probably benefit a deeper understanding of humble leadership in particular in a creativity context and how this behavior is differently executed by female leaders.

This study explored the relevance of humble leadership to employees' creativity from a managers' point of view. The research contributed gaining first insights on how leaders perceive the role of humble leader behavior for employees' creativity. Future research should explore the role of humble leadership for employees' creativity by taking into account the employees' perception. Such research could, for instance, capture the

employees' perception of supervisors practicing humble leader behaviors and taking supervisory ratings into account in order to capture employees' creativity.

Although the focus of this study was to explore employees' creativity and innovative behavior, the data did not allow gaining insights into the application behavior of employees. Differentiating between creativity and innovation was perceived by the researcher to be difficult for the participants. Future research should therefore pick this topic up and explore the role of humble leadership for the innovative behavior of employees.

This research investigated leaders from various organizations, seven of whom worked in start-ups with young leaders (under 32 years old). Some of the a leader behaviors were only mentioned by young leaders. This brings on the assumption that the age of the leaders might play a role for humble leadership because younger leaders might show other leader behaviors than older leaders do. Moreover, a highly uncertain organizational environment was said to play a role whether leaders show weaknesses and mistakes or not. Not showing this behavior seems to be in particular a matter for leaders in younger organizations, which offer products new to the market. Future research should elaborate the role of the organizational environment and whether the uncertainty of the organizational environment plays a role for practicing humble leadership.

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Appendix

▪ Informed Consent

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Teilnahme an einem Interview für die Masterarbeit von Stella Strüfing zum Thema:

Humble leadership: relevance to employees' creativity and innovation under the consideration of time pressure.

Lieber Teilnehmer,

vielen Dank für Ihr Interesse an meinem Forschungsprojekt und ihrer Teilnahme an einem Interview. Bitte bestätigen Sie mit ihrer Unterschrift, dass Sie an dem Interview teilgenommen haben und dass Sie über die folgenden Punkte informiert wurden.

Einverständniserklärung

Ich wurde darüber informiert, dass meine Teilnahme an dem Interview freiwillig ist und ich das Interview jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen beenden kann. Ich kann Antworten verweigern. Ich habe zur Kenntnis genommen, dass meine Antworten vertraulich behandelt werden. Mein Name und der Name meines Unternehmens werden im Forschungsbericht anonymisiert. Der Zugang, zu dem original Datenmaterial wird nur Stella Strüfing, und ihren beiden Betreuern Dr. Johannes Rank (Technische Universität Berlin) und Dr. Michel Ehrenhard (University Twente, Niederlande) ermöglicht. Ich habe zur Kenntnis genommen, dass das Interview aufgezeichnet und transkribiert wird, um dies entsprechend zu analysieren.

Nach Beendigung der Forschungsarbeit erhalte ich eine Zusammenfassung der Untersuchungsergebnisse.

(Datum / Unterschrift)

▪ Interview Introduction

Dear participants.

I am a master student in the field of Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship at Berlin Institute of Technology (TU Berlin) and University Twente, The Netherlands. In my master thesis I am doing research on humble leadership and its role for the creativity and innovation of employees. The research project considers creativity and innovative behaviour of employees because these are factors that can have a significant influence on the success of an organisation but can significantly influence by the work context. One factor of these influences is among others the leader behaviour.

In order to receive insights about the role of humble leader behaviour for the creativity and innovation of employees, I am conducting interview with leaders who work on innovative and /or creative projects or products or have a professional background in creativity and innovation. Please note, that it is not necessary for participation to know this leadership style or act accordingly. I am interested in your experience and behaviour as a leader in the context of innovative/ creative products or projects.

What is your benefit?

After finalizing the research project, I will provide you with a summary of my research results. This means that you will receive insights on humble leadership and its role for the creativity and innovation of employees.

Information about time and effort:

- Please note that your participation is voluntary.
- The interview will last between 30 and 60 minutes and can be conducted in persona
or via Skype or telephone.
- During the interview you are allowed to refuse answering any questions or to stop
the interview at any point without indication of reasons.
- Your personal name and company name will be made anonymous for privacy reason.
- Only my supervisors Dr. Johannes Rank (Berlin Institute of Technology) and Dr.

Michel Ehrenhard (University Twente, Netherlands) and me will be able to access

your original interview data.

- Your data and information will not be disclosed to third parties.
- Please be aware that the interview will be recorded and transcribed so that it can be properly analysed.

In the context of this research creativity refers to the creation of new and useful ideas or solutions regarding products, services or processes, and innovation is about the successful implementation of such ideas. The factor time pressure will also be a part of my research since projects have to be finalized sometimes under high time pressure. Therefore, I investigate how and in what way time pressure influences your leader behaviour.

To give you an impression what humble leadership is, I provide you with the following explanation:

Humble leadership refers to a leadership approach that considers followers as equal and valuable partners. Humble leader recognized the own strength without feeling superior or inferior to others. Their realistic view of themselves and others allows them to recognize the strength of their employees, to facilitate and support those. They show their own limitations in front of their employees and acknowledge own mistakes. Humble leader are willing and able to learn.

▪ Interview Guide

Participant:

Gender:

Age:

1. What is your current job?
 - 1.1. What company do you work for?
 - 1.2. What is your current position and how long have you held this position?
 - 1.3. For how many years have you had managerial responsibility and for how many employees have you been responsible at top?
 - 1.4. What is your main task and what are you exactly doing in your current job?
 - 1.5. What are the concrete tasks of your employees?
 - 1.5.1. What kind of creative or innovative work do you demand from your team?

Interposed question at any point during the interview: How would you describe your own leadership style?

2. Please tell me about a project or situation where you showed humble behaviour. You may choose any situation from your managerial career. If you have several examples, please choose the most recent one. Please take your time to choose and describe one example.

Possible prompts and follow-up questions:

- What happened in this project or situation? What was it about?
- Which specific humble behaviours did you show in this example? How did you show them exactly?
- Can you please describe in greater detail what you did or said exactly?
- Why did you show these humble behaviours?
- Which other leadership behaviours did you show in addition to humble behaviours in this example?

- 2.1. Please describe the creativity and innovation of your employees during this

project or situation.

- Did your employees successfully develop and/or implement new and useful ideas and if so, how?
- Did you experience that the creativity or innovation of your employees somehow triggered by your behaviour as a leader?
- Did you experience a moment of particular high or low creativity and/or innovation?
 - Can you describe your leader behaviour before and during this moment of high or low creativity and innovation?
- Can you tell me about a situation where you did not show humble behaviours (or considerably less than usual)? What was the creativity and innovation of your employees like?

Prompts or follow up questions:

- What happened in this project or situation? What was it about?
- Which specific behaviours did you show in this example?
- Can you please describe in greater detail what you did or said exactly?
- Why did you show these behaviours?
- What was the situation like?

2.2. How did you experience time pressure in this situation in which you showed humble behaviour? (e.g. competitor company was developing similar product)

- Did you adjust how leader behaviour because of the high or low time pressure or threat and if so, how did you do that?
- Did you show more or less certain humble behaviours in response to these circumstances and which specific behaviours did you show more or less because of them?

PART 2: Part 2 will only be asked if question 2 was not covered in detail.

3. Can you think of another situation or project from your career when you admitted faults, weaknesses or personal limits, if any, to your employees? If yes, how did you do that exactly?

3.1. Please describe the creativity and innovation of your employees after you

showed these behaviours.

- Did your employees successfully develop and/or implement new and useful ideas?
- Did you experience a moment of particular high or low creativity and /or innovation?
 - Can you explain how you were behaving as a leader before your employees showed creative or innovative output?

3.2. How did you experience time pressure and extreme threat, if any, in this situation?

4. Can you think of a situation where you identified strengths or contributions of your employees, if any? Please tell me about this situation.

4.1. Please describe the creativity and innovation of your employees after you showed these behaviours.

- Did your employees successfully develop and/or implement new and useful ideas?
- Did you experience a moment of particular high or low creativity and /or innovation?
 - Can you explain how you were behaving as a leader before your employees showed creative or innovative output?
- Do you show this behaviour on a regular basis?

4.2. How did you experience time pressure and extreme threat in this situation?

5. Have you ever showed openness towards learning? How did you do that exactly?

5.1. Please describe the creativity and innovation of your employees after you showed these behaviours.

- Did your employees successfully develop and/or implement new and useful ideas?
- Did you experience a moment of particular high or low creativity and /or innovation?
 - Can you explain how you behave as a leader before your employees showed creative or innovative output?

5.2. How did you experience time pressure and extreme threat in this situation?

3. Final Part

6. Independent from the previous project example: How often do you show humble behaviours?
 - Do you show them on a regular basis or occasionally?
 - Do you show usually any humble behaviours and if so what behaviours?
7. What role does time pressure play when you show humble behaviour in innovative and/or creative projects? Please describe this using an example of a project or situation.
 - What was the situation like? What happened?
 - Why did time pressure have low/high relevance?
 - Which specific behaviours did you show when time pressure was low/high?
8. Do you have any additional insights concerning this topic, which have not been covered in this interview yet?

Thank you for the interview and taking part in this research.

▪ Coding Template All Codes

Codes	Frequency
<i>Codes pre-defined / Codes that emerged from the data</i>	
1. Humble leadership	
<u>1.1. Showing weaknesses, mistakes and personal...</u>	1
<u>1.1.1. Admits mistakes</u>	12
- Admit Mistakes NOT	1
- Continuously admitting mistakes	1
- Communicates that making mistakes is ok	2
<u>1.1.2. Verbalizes Gaps in knowledge or experience</u>	11
<u>1.1.3. Takes responsibility for failure</u>	0
- Communicates that employees are not responsible for mistakes	3
- Takes responsibility for the teams failure	1
<u>1.2. Spotlighting strength of employees</u>	0
<u>1.2.1. Express appreciation of contribution</u>	2
- Puts employees in the foreground	3
- Positions employees in the spotlight	3
<u>1.2.2. Acknowledges strengths of employees</u>	0
- Matching follower strength with task	5
- Involve employees because of their strength	5
<u>1.2.3. Says we when talking about successes</u>	0
- Emphasise to be successful as a team	1
<u>1.2.4. Admits that others are better than him</u>	0
- Admits that employee knows his job better than him	2
- Hires people who are better than him	1
- Allows more competent employees to take over his work	2
- Person who can do better than him	1
<u>1.3. Teachability</u>	6
<u>1.3.1. Shows openness towards learning</u>	9
- Promotes knowledge sharing among employees	1
- Learns from employees	3
<u>1.3.2. Seeks Feedback</u>	0
- Seeks feedback from employees	2
- Seeks advice from his employees	1
<u>1.3.3. Considers alternative views</u>	1

1.3.4. Listens to employees	3
2. General aspects of leader humility	
2.1. At equal level:	0
- Being at eye level with employees	5
- In partnership with employees	5
- Discuss with employees at eye level	4
2.2. Freedom in the execution of the task:	16
2.3. Empowerment:	10
3. Time Pressure (short list noch nicht final)	17
- Workload pressure (having to much work in to little time)	4
- Time pressure: High	15
- Time pressure: Low	1
- Too much time pressure	4
- Time consuming process	1
- Avoid Time pressure	2
- Time pressure now influence	3
- Unpleasant Situations	2
4. Contingency	
4.1. Personality of the employee	13
- Young, curious, active, entrepreneurial individuals that take the chance when they get one	2
- Employee uses freedom	1
- Creative employee	1
- Individuals that want to create things self-determined and in freedom	1
- Executing personality needs to be instructed to sth.	2
- Non creative personality	1
- Believes that the leader is responsible for everything	1
- Believes that the leader is the best in everything	1
- Does not know how to handle that leader admits mistakes	1
- Dependable, independent, motivated employees	1
5. Outcome: Creativity	
5.1 Beneficial for creativity	
- Creativity	13
- High motivation to <u>be creative</u>	1
- Enables creativity	1
- Encourage creativity	1
- Beneficial for creativity / <u>more creative</u>	4
- Willingness to be <u>creative</u>	2
- Best idea <u>counts</u>	3
- Employees dare to be creative	1
- Employees experience space for creativity	1
- <i>High creativity</i>	8

- Act more creatively	2
- Employees propose new ideas and <u>solutions</u>	16
- Leader expects creativity	1
- Introduces better ideas	1
5.2 Detrimental for Creativity	
- <i>Low creativity</i>	6
- Kill creativity & <u>innovation</u>	2
- No change in creativity recognized	6
6. Outcome: <i>Innovation</i>	6
- High innovation	1
7. Outcome: <i>Motivation</i>	
7.1 Beneficial for motivation	
- <i>Motivation</i>	8
- Motivation to search for new ideas and solutions	2
- Basis for motivation	3
- High motivation	7
- Leader motivates employees	1
7.2 Negative for motivation	
- Low motivation	2
- No possibility to motivate employees	1
- No change in motivation	1
8. Outcome: Independent Working & Engaged Followers	
- Employees work more independent	5
- Work more independent NOT	1
- Follower Engagement	5
- Think & reflect	1
- Employees/Team assume responsibility/or consequences	3
- Commitment from employees	1
- Employees communicate mistakes early	2
10. Outcome: Error Rate	
- Lack in accuracy and usefulness of the work results	2
- Error rate	2
11. Time pressure related outcome	
11.1. Structure	
- Clear instructions	8
- Follower acceptance of clear instructions	1
- Higher Control	1
- Make a decision	4
11.2. Pass time pressure on to followers	4
OTHERS	
Appreciation	
- Employees feel appreciated	8

- Employees feel that they are taken seriously	1
Aggressive leadership style	1
Avoid the centre of attention:	4
Employee is able to evolve	3
Feeling of making a Contribution	1
Freedom	2
Leader establishes identification with work	2
Level of interaction	1
Individual <u>Situation</u>	3
Acts when he knows better	1
Calm, relaxed leadership style	1
Consistent Quality	1
Counterproductive	1
Create distance between leader and employee	1
Create room for creativity	1
Create understanding for leader behaviour	1
Creativity Context	5
Delegates things he does not know (outcome)	1
Demonstrate that he is the boss	1
Difficult decisions	1
Discouraged employees	2
Discussions	1
Do what's best for the organisation	1
Dominant leadership style	4
Employees dare to admit mistakes	1
Employees become secure in this context	1
Employee has more time to concentrate on the task	1
Employees that are highly motivated to be creative	1
Empowerment (outcome)	1
Equal level (Outcome)	1
Getting things done	1
Guidance:	
- Provide direction	10
- Provide targets & priorities	1
- Suggestions what to do	1
Higher level of maturity	1
Humility	2
Ideas are already there	1
Identify mistakes early on	1
Identification with work	7
Lead employees with respect	1
Leader behaviour	11
Leader integrates himself in the team	2
Leader doesn't take himself too seriously	1
Leader needs to be strong	1
Leader needs to reduce fear	1
Leader stays out of employees work	1
Level of interaction	1

Mood of the leader	2
Negative feedback	3
Negative overall project situation	1
No huge mistakes	1
No negative feedback	1
No positive attitude possible	1
Not listening	1
No willingness to do a good job	1
Open Communication	2
Openness of the employee	1
Opposite of spotlighting follower strength	1
Position of the leader	1
Positive and constructive feedback	1
Providing feedback	1
Quality of the work	5
Relies on knowledge of employees	1
Resign	1
Set boundaries in order to maintain focus	1
Showing humble leadership behaviour	6
Showing humble leadership behaviour NOT	2
Strategic context	1
Strong project interference of the leader	1
Support from employees	1
Uncertainty	2
Trust (Outcome)	10
Trust (Cause)	3
Reduced hierarchy	2
Main task of a leader	3
Learning experience	4
Self-confidence of <u>employees</u>	2
Closer team work	1
Unified team voice	1
Team works more effectively	1
Loyalty	1

Total Codes: 183

▪ **Used Quotes from Participants (German/ English)**

German	English
<i>P_11: Fehler, wenn ich z.B. etwas nicht richtig durchdacht habe, was wohl man vorgekommen ist, auch wenn in dem Schritt die Arbeit schon gemacht wurde, habe ich später darauf reagiert und gesagt "pass auf, ich habe das nicht richtig durchdacht, das muss noch mal neu gemacht werden, das ist mein Fehler, (...)" Also ich Entschuldige mich dafür und sagt, Sorry das ich dir jetzt unnötige Mehrarbeit mache, einfach bloß weil ich nicht richtig drüber nachgedacht habe oder nicht zu ende gedacht habe und dementsprechend habe ich es kommuniziert.</i>	P_11: "Mistakes, for example when I didn't think something through, which happened sometimes, even when a single step has already been completed, I later reacted and said "listen, I didn't think this through thoroughly, this needs to be re-done and it's my fault, [...]". So I apologized and say sorry that you have to work more, just because I did not think it over or because I did not think it through all the way and, therefore, I communicated it accordingly."
<i>„P_6: Ich glaube, das wenn man so einen Führungsstil praktiziert, das gar nicht so große Fehler passieren das alle zusammen kommen oh gott oh gott ganz riesen Fehler, tut mir leid, habe ich falsch gemacht. [...] es ist halt in so einer Zusammenarbeit, merkt man Fehler auch schon viel früher und dadurch schaukeln sie sich auch nicht zu weit hoch und wir versuchen sie gemeinsam zu beheben.</i>	P_6: "I believe, when one practices this certain style of leadership, that not as many big mistakes happen and that not everyone come together saying "Oh, my God! Huge mistake, I am sorry, my mistake" [...] That's how it is, in this type of collaboration one finds mistakes much earlier and by doing so they don't explode in everyone's face and we try to solve them together."
<i>P_4: „Gegenüber Mitarbeitern-ich versuche es ehrlich gesagt zu vermeiden. Also ich würde schon sagen, das ich Fehler eingestehen und versuche das nicht zu verschleiern. Allerdings muss man auch sagen, das wir halt was machen, das mit einem großen Maß an Unsicherheit zu tun hat, d.H. einer muss ein bisschen Vorleben, das er es im Griff hat und weiß was er tut. Als jetzt ständig nur eigenen Fehler und Grenzen zugeben wäre vielleicht auch in dem Fall sogar kontraproduktiv.“</i>	P_4: "In front of employees – to be honest, I try to avoid it. I mean, I would say that I admit mistakes and I don't try to mask it. On the other hand, one has to say that we are doing something with a huge measure of insecurity, which means that somebody has to be a role model and has show that he has a grip on things and knows what he's doing. Admitting mistakes and personal boundaries might be counter-productive in this case."
<i>P_8: „Wo ich immer Aussteige ist die technische Komponente der Leute [...]. Da kann ich nicht so intensiv mitreden oder mitdiskutieren, wie meine experten und da gebe ich dann das ein oder andere mal nicht nur zu, sondern sage auch ganz deutlich Leute, da muss ich jetzt Aussteigen, da ich technisch dafür nicht tief genug drin bin wie ihr das seit.“</i>	P_8: „I am always lost in the technical components of people [...]. I can't really discuss this as intensively as my experts and then I do not only admit it, instead I say very clearly "Guys, I will have to give up here, since I am not as deep into the details as you are".
<i>P_2: „[...] wo ich von Mitarbeitern wusste, dass sie da wesentlich fitter sind, das ich das ganz offen kommuniziert habe und daher dann auch Verantwortung in</i>	P_2: "[...] when I knew of employees that they are much fitter here, I openly communicated it and gave up some of my responsibility in these areas."

<i>den Bereichen abgegeben habe.</i>	
<i>P_7: "Zum einen stelle ich mich natürlich vor das Team, wenn wir als Team nach außen einen Fehler gemacht haben, dann bin ich als Führungskraft natürlich dafür verantwortlich [...] und stelle da dann nicht irgendeinen Mitarbeiter bloß. Das führt natürlich dann auch zu einem gewissen Vertrauen bei den Mitarbeitern. Das gibt mir dann natürlich auch die Möglichkeit Fehler dem Team gegenüber einzugestehen. Wenn ich einen Fehler mache, dann stehe ich auch dazu und kommuniziere das auch ins Team [...]."</i>	P_7: "On the one hand, I of course back up my team, when we as a team have made a mistake, then – as their supervisor – I am responsible [...] and then, I don't embarrass an employee. Of course, this leads to a certain amount of trust among employees. This gives me the opportunity to admit mistakes in front of the team. If I make a mistake, then I stand by it and communicate it to the team [...]."
<i>P_12: „Die haben natürlich gesehen, das da natürlich eine Lücke ist und das sie stärker in Eigenverantwortung treten müssen. D.H. also das ich etwas weniger Raum eingenommen habe und sie diese Lücke füllen mussten und das hat sich natürlich auch positiv auf den kreativen Prozess ausgewirkt, da sie einfach mehr Verantwortung übernehmen mussten.“</i>	P_12: "Of course, they have seen that there is a gap and that they have to take on more responsibilities. This means that I have taken up less space and they had to fill this gap and this had a positive impact on the creative process since they had to take on more responsibility."
<i>P_6: „[...] auch die Kommunikation, das der Fehler nicht ihrer sein wird sondern die Verantwortung bei uns liegt. War das sie sehr schnell wenn sie gemerkt hat, das was nicht funktioniert hat oder es einen Fehler gab [...], das sie das auch sofort mitgeteilt hat und man das auch sehr schnell gerade ziehen konnte.“</i>	P_6: "[...] and the communication, that this mistake will not be theirs but that the responsibility is on all our shoulders. She noticed quickly when something didn't work out or when there was a flaw [...], so that she let everyone know right away and one was able to correct this very quickly as well."
<i>P_16: „Und später dann war es so, das von denen Ideen noch mit eingebracht wurden. Also quasi war das auch so ein Entwicklungsschritt, dass sie gesagt haben "Aber ist das nicht so und so besser" Vielleicht zum einen weil ich meine Fehler zugegeben habe und sie gedacht haben „mhh vielleicht sollte ich noch mal drüber nachdenken, was ... mir da gesagt hat“ oder zum anderen weil sie gesehen haben, das es da noch Optimierungspotenzial im Prozess gibt. Also insofern haben sie über den gesamten Prozess dann eigenständig nachgedacht um neue Ideen hervorzubringen [...].“</i>	P_16: "And later it was like this, that they brought up new ideas. So basically, this was a step in the development, when they said "But isn't this better like this and like that?". Maybe because I admitted my mistakes and they thought "mhh, maybe I should think this through again, what ... told me there" or maybe because they see potential for optimization in the process. Therefore, they thought about the whole process on their own and then developed new ideas[...]. "
<i>P_6: „Und ich würde sagen ihre Kreativität war sehr hoch. Also sie hat die Lösungen gefunden, konnte die Lösungen nennen und ich glaube das diese Form der Führung, schafft Spielraum und den hat sie genutzt um Lösungen zu finden. Also</i>	P_6: "And I would say that their creativity was at a very high level. So she found the solutions, she could name the solutions and I believe that this style of leadership gives space and she was able to use that space to find solutions. Creativity was

Kreativität höher als in anderen Situationen [...].“	higher than in other situations [...].”
P_9: „Es gibt unterschiedliche Mitarbeiter. Die einen können damit vielleicht gar nicht so gut umgehen, wenn man Schwäche zugibt weil sie meinen von je her seit 30 Jahren gelernt zu haben, dass der Chef für alles verantwortlich ist, in allem der beste ist und für alles ganz viel Geld bekommt. Und deswegen eigentlich ein bisschen irritiert sind und andere, jüngere Menschen die plötzlich diese Verhalten als Wert erkenne zu sagen, das öffnet Raum für Kreativität oder für Gemeinschaftsleistung, Teamwork für die Fähigkeit sich gegenseitig zu Unterstützen.“	P_9: “There are different types of employees. Some might not be able to handle this as well, when one admits weakness because they have always learnt that the boss is responsible for everything, that he is the best at everything and that he gets the highest salary. And that’s why many are a bit irritated and other, more younger people, who see the value in this behavior, say that this opens room for creativity or for team efforts. Team work for the ability to support each other.”
P_8: „[...]aber ich versuche mindestens die Leute so zu positionieren, das der Erfolg, das Rampenlicht auch auf die Leute gerichtet ist. Das, dass auch deutlich wird und deutlich kommuniziert wird, das der Erfolg von denen ist und sie diesen Erfolg verbucht haben.“	P_8: “[...] but I at least try to position the people in a way, that the success and the spots are directed towards those people. So that it becomes evident and that it is clearly communicated that this is their success and that they achieved it.”
P_1: “Die Mitarbeiter die ich hatte habe ich versucht so einzusetzen, dass das im Rahmen ihrer Qualifikationen und Interessen stattfindet.“	P_1: “I tried to make use of the employees I had in a way that was in line with their qualifications and personal interests.”
P_9: Meine Hauptaufgabe ist es natürlich mich die ganze Zeit damit zu beschäftigen, welche Mitarbeiter welche Stärken haben und muss sie ihren Stärken entsprechend einsetzen.	P_9: “Of course, it is my main task to consider the strengths of my employees all the time and to make use of them accordingly.”
P_5: „[...] weil die meisten Leute die ich habe und die für mich Arbeiten sind in den Sachen die sie machen, besser unterwegs als ich. Sie haben entweder mehr Erfahrung, mehr Wissen oder beides.“	P_5: “[...]because most people I have, and who work for me, are better in what they do than I would be. They have more experience, more knowledge or both.”
P_5: „Ich glaube, wenn sich ein besserer heute im Unternehmen finden würde der meinen Posten übernehmen könnte dann würde ich ihn auch freiwillig abgeben“.	P_5: „I believe, if someone better was found in the enterprise and if he could take my job, I would give it up voluntarily.”
P_9: „[...] jemand der Begeisterung hat, der eine Idee hat mit seinem Produkt, ist auch automatisch kreativ und weil er einfach mit offenen Augen durch die Welt läuft und Ideen findet.	P_9: „[...] someone who is excited, who has an idea regarding his product, is creative automatically because he will keep his eyes open and find ideas.”
P_8: „... da entfaltet sie sich natürlich viel, viel stärker und bringt doch auch bessere Ideen. „	P_8: „[...]this is when lots of things unfold much, much more and this leads to better ideas.”
P_3: „Ja, noch motivierter. [...] natürlich sagt das hast du gut gemacht, das da dann	P_3: „Yes, more motivated. [...] of course says “good job!”, then one will see that

zu sehen ist, das die viel selbständiger Arbeiten und eigenverantwortlicher werden, weil sie sicherer werden, weil sie dann ja auch wissen sie machen das richtige für das Unternehmen.	they work much more independently and self-responsibly because they became more secure, because then they know that they are doing the right thing for the enterprise.
P_5: <i>“Aber ich glaube das es lediglich zu einer stärkeren Motivation geführt hat, das ich eben offen war für seine Lösungen [...].”</i>	P_5: “I do believe that my openness towards new solutions lead to a greater motivation [...].”
P_12: <i>“(...) weil gerade Misserfolge und die richtige Reflektion von Misserfolgen führen meistens zu dem größten Lerneffekt“</i>	P_12: „[...] especially failures and their reflection usually lead to deeper learning and insights”.
P_2: <i>„[...]wenn jemand einen bessere Idee hat wie man ein Storyboard aufbauen sollte oder wie man ein Film schneidet oder mit Special Effekts arbeitet oder ähnliches, dass man als Führungskraft Lernbereitschaft zeigt.</i>	P_2: [...] if somebody has a better an idea on how to develop a storyboard, how to cut a film or how to use special effects or something like that, a supervisor should show teachability.
P_7: <i>„Ja, es wäre vermessen zu glauben das ich nicht lernfähig bin, nur weil ich der Chef bin, sondern ganz im Gegenteil.</i>	P_7: It would be impudent to believe that I am not able to adapt or to learn, just because I am the boss – the contrary is the case.
P_5: <i>„Ich versuche dann zu wirken wenn ich denke und glaube das ich es besser weiß, aber wenn das nicht der Fall ist und das ist oft so, dann versuche ich eben für mich und unser Unternehmen den größten Profit zu verdienen und das ist nur möglich wenn ich eben zuhöre.“</i>	P_5: “I try to act when I believe I know better, but if that is not the case, and that happens quite often, I try to achieve the best for the company. That is only possible by listening.”
P_2 <i>„[...] weil sie erkennen, dass sie wenn sie Änderungen einbringen, und einpflegen und die auch angenommen werden auch vom Chef, dass das natürlich die Leute auch motiviert. Und daher sind die dann tatsächlich kreativer und innovativer unterwegs.“</i>	P_2: “[...] because they realize that, when they bring in changes, when they implement those changes and when they are being accepted and carried out, even by the boss, that this motivates people. Of course, the result is that they are more creative and innovative.”
P_4: <i>“Naja, also wenn ich zeige, das ich willig bin von ihnen lerne, dann stärkt das das Selbstvertrauen in die eigenen Fähigkeiten und dadurch sind sie ja auch kreativer und bringen eigene Ideen mit ein.“</i>	P_4: “Well, when I show that I am willing to learn from them, it strengthens their self-confidence and their own abilities, which then makes them more creative and they introduce new ideas.”
P_7: <i>„Ich habe ein relativ homogenes Team, was so die Erfahrung betrifft so das ich die einzelnen Mitarbeiter fast auf einer Ebene führen kann und schon immer versuche ich mich als Führungskraft sehr stark in das Team zu integrieren und nur dann einzugreifen wenn ich sehe das es hier eben notwendig ist Entscheidungen zu treffen um</i>	P_7: “I have a relatively homogenous team regarding experience, so I can lead them on one level. I try to integrate myself into the team while only intervening when I feel that a decision is needed in order to make progress.”

<i>weiterzukommen.“</i>	
<i>P_7: „[...] wenn man den Mitarbeitern auf Augenhöhe begegnet und im Team zusammenarbeitet entfaltet sich die Kreativität am besten und damit auch die Innovationskraft.“</i>	P_7: “[...] creativity and innovation unfold best, if one approaches employees on an eye-level and if one works in a team.”
<i>P_8: „Bescheidenheit ist für mich größtmöglichen Freiraum den Mitarbeitern geben.“</i>	P_8: “To me, humility means giving employees the greatest possible space.”
<i>P_16: „[...] Für das Erstellen jeglicher Texte habe ich ihr kompletten Freiraum gelassen. Also ich habe ihr Eckpunkte genannt die auf jedenfalls mit auftauchen sollen, aber bei dem was letztendlich produziert werden soll war sie sehr eigenverantwortlich (...). Dementsprechend habe ich ihr da sehr, sehr viel Freiraum gelassen.“</i>	P_16: “[...] For the composition of any kind of text, I granted her complete freedom. I stated some criteria, which had to be met, but she was very self-responsible for the final results [...]. Therefore, I gave her very, very much space.”
<i>P_16: „[...] dadurch kreativer reagieren konnte und ihre eigenen Ideen mit Einfließen lassen konnte.“</i>	P_16: “[...] thus, she was able to react more creative, and she was able to bring in her own ideas.”
<i>P_6: “ [...] das eben die Freiräume (...) dazu führen das Mitarbeiter eben kreativ arbeiten und auch selbständig Dinge erstellen und bearbeiten.“</i>	P_6: “[...] freedom leads to employees who can work more creative and they create work more independent.”
<i>P_15: “Weil Freiheit kann man dann gewähren, wenn man sich sicher ist, das Dinge in die richtige Richtung laufen [...].”</i>	P_15: “Freedom can be granted, if one is sure that things are going in the right direction [...].“
<i>P_6: „Eine Voraussetzung für Humble Leadership ist erst mal die Übergabe von einem Projekt, von Verantwortung an jemanden [...].“</i>	P_6: “One prerequisite of humble leadership is to hand over the responsibility for a project to somebody [...].”
<i>P_6: „[...] also zu befähigen, das Projekt auch durchzuführen in dem sie Verantwortung haben aber sie genau so auch wissen, wenn es Fehler gibt, das es nicht ihrer sein wird, sondern immer der des Chefs.“</i>	P_6: “[...] enabling them to take the lead in a certain project, in which they take responsibility while letting them know that, if mistakes are made, it won't be their mistake but the mistake of the supervisor.”
<i>P_6: „Also sie hat die Lösungen gefunden, konnte die Lösungen nennen und ich glaube das diese Form der Führung, schafft Spielraum und den hat sie genutzt um Lösungen zu finden. Also Kreativität höher als in anderen Situationen oder auch Innovation höher.“</i>	P_6: “She was able to find the solutions and she was able to call them out. I believe that this form of leadership gives space and that she was able to use it in order to find solutions. Both creativity and innovation were minted in those situations.”
<i>P_4: “Ich habe schon so ein bisschen den Eindruck, wenn mein Zeitdruck sehr hoch ist, dann hört der bescheidene Führungsstil auf.“</i>	P_4: “I am under the impression that, when time pressure is very high, the style of humble leaderships usually comes to an end.”
<i>P6: „Je höher der Zeitdruck, um so konkreter werden die Anweisungen.“</i>	P_6: “The higher the time pressure, the more concrete are the instructions.”

P_6: <i>"Ich glaube das bescheidenen Führungsverhalten funktioniert sehr gut in den ersten 80% eines fertigen Produkts und die letzten 20% zustande zu kriegen, muss dann am Ende des Tages einer entscheiden."</i>	P_6: "I believe that humble leadership works fine for the first 80 per cent of a product. When it comes to the final 20 per cent, someone has to make decisions."
Example Quotes	
P_12: <i>"Ich glaube jedes mal wenn man seine Mitarbeiter in den Vordergrund stellt zeigt man bescheidene Führungsverhalten. Ich versuche schon meine Mitarbeiter sehr stark zu pushen, dass sie Sichtbarkeit erlangen-intern wie auch extern."</i> P_5: <i>"...die meisten Leute die ich habe und die für mich Arbeiten sind in den Sachen die sie machen, besser unterwegs als ich. Sie haben entweder mehr Erfahrung, mehr Wissen oder beides."</i>	P_12: <i>"I believe that, every time one lets his employees shine in the limelight, one shows humble leadership. I try to push my employees very hard, so that they gain confidence, both internally and externally."</i> P_5: <i>"[...] because most people I have, and who work for me, are better in what they do than I am. They have more experience, more knowledge or both."</i>
P_12: <i>"Ich glaube, dass ich autodidaktisches Verhalten generell als Anforderung bei meinen Mitarbeitern platziere. Ich glaube dadurch, dass ich das vorlebe in der Art und Weise wie ich an Dinge heran gehe. Das ich an Punkten wo ich nicht weiter komme mich mit Kollege oder Kunden auseinandersetze und wir gemeinsam eine Lösung suchen...."</i>	P_12: <i>"I believe that I generally find autodidactic behavior to be a requirement for my employees - I think I am a role model for this in my way of approaching things, for example by searching for solutions together with clients or colleagues when I can no longer proceed."</i>
P_16: <i>"...dabei habe ich sowohl ihre Sichtweise gleichberechtigt mit aufgenommen und nicht gesagt "Nein, und wir machen das jetzt anders und wir schreiben das so und so" sondern ich habe sie komplett in den Prozess mit eingebunden"</i>	P_16: <i>"... I did take into account their take on the situation on an equal level without giving strict guidance by saying 'we are going to do it like this or like that', but I completely incorporated them into the process."</i>
P_8: <i>Ich lasse die Leute machen. Also wir vereinbaren Termine, wir vereinbaren Ziele, Budget, Abgabetermine, Qualität, die Rahmenbedingungen werden vereinbart. Also ein Stück weit von mir auch vorgegeben und dann lasse ich die Leute größtenteils auch selber machen, selber Ideen generieren, selber Umsetzen und ich steuere das dann vom Hintergrund und halte mich zurück und gebe denen nicht jeden Tag alles vor was zu tun ist.</i>	P_8: <i>"I let them do it their way. We agree on deadlines, on goals, budgets and quality. The framework is agreed upon, to a certain extent it is pre-given by me and then I let them run with it, they generate ideas and implement them and I steer from the background by not trying to tell them what to do every day."</i>
P_6: <i>"Eine Voraussetzung für humble leadership ist erst mal die Übergabe von einem Projekt, von Verantwortung an jemanden..."</i>	P_6: <i>"One prerequisite of humble leadership is to hand over the responsibility for a project to somebody."</i>
P_14: <i>"Zeitdruck spielt immer eine Rolle, weil ich habe ja während eines Zeitdrucks keine Muse."</i>	P_14: <i>"Time pressure always plays a role, because I don't have Muse under time pressure."</i>

<i>P_5: "Aber sie hatten immer wieder verschiedene Ideen."</i>	<i>P_5: "But they always had different ideas."</i>
<i>P_14: "An der Stelle ist die Kreativephase innerhalb dieser Projektbesprechung erledigt, weil dann auch keiner mehr was sagt."</i>	<i>P_14: "At this point, the phase of creativity in a meeting is over because nobody says anything anymore."</i>
<i>P_12: "Es hat ihm einen Motivationsschub gegeben..."</i>	<i>P_12: "It gave his motivation a true push."</i>
<i>P_6: "...das eben die Freiräume und die Verantwortung dazu führen das Mitarbeiter eben Kreativ arbeiten und auch selbständig Dinge erstellen und bearbeiten."</i>	<i>P_6: "... that freedom and responsibility leads to employees, who work more creatively and get things done on their own."</i>
<i>P_2: "...auch eher eine klare Ansage machen"</i>	<i>P_2: "... also giving clear instructions."</i>