Creative Leadership: A Critical and Comprehensive Review

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study systematically reviews current research on creative leadership within organisational settings. While its importance is increasingly recognised, existing studies remain dispersed across disciplines, limiting a clear understanding of its scope and impact. The purpose of this review is to synthesise existing knowledge and organise it into coherent themes. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) approach, a comprehensive search of Scopus and Web of Science was conducted with the keyword "creative leadership." From this process, 69 relevant articles were selected, reviewed by experts, and categorised into four main themes: (1) roles of creative leadership, (2) dimensions and contexts, (3) impact on organisational performance, and (4) dynamic mechanisms. The findings reveal that creative leadership fosters innovation, collaboration, and intrapreneurship, while strengthening organisational adaptability and culture. It significantly enhances performance by improving flexibility and supporting employee creativity. Furthermore, creative leadership enables organisations to navigate complex challenges such as digital transformation and crisis management through proactive behaviours and interdisciplinary collaboration. In conclusion, creative leadership is shown to be a critical driver of sustained organisational success, and future research is recommended to examine its applications across diverse industries and global contexts.

1. Introduction

In recent years, creative leadership has become increasingly important in organisational studies as businesses and institutions adapt to the complexities of the modern world. The demand for innovation and adaptability in a rapidly changing global environment calls for a fresh look at traditional leadership models. Creative leadership, with its focus on fostering innovation, collaboration, and adaptability, is crucial in addressing these challenges [1,2].

Creative leadership is defined by its ability to go beyond conventional boundaries, allowing leaders to bring together diverse perspectives and drive organisational change [3]. It is not just about generating new ideas but also about creating an environment where creativity can thrive. This involves facilitating team dynamics, promoting a culture of innovation, and tackling complex problems with creative solutions [4,5].

The influence of creative leadership extends beyond individual creativity, impacting organisational performance and culture. It has been shown to enhance organisational flexibility, employee creativity, and overall performance by creating an environment that supports innovation and collaboration [6,7]. Furthermore, creative leadership is particularly effective in navigating complex environments, such as those involving digital transformation and crisis management [8].

Despite its significance, the literature on creative leadership is fragmented, with various studies exploring different aspects and applications across diverse contexts [9]. This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to bring together existing research on creative leadership, organising it into clear themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of its roles, dimensions, impacts, and mechanisms within organisational settings. By using the PRISMA approach, this study consolidates findings from Scopus and Web of Science, offering insights into the multifaceted nature of creative leadership and its importance in achieving sustained organisational success [10,11].

In summary, this review highlights the vital role of creative leadership in promoting innovation and adaptability within organisations. It emphasises the need for further research to explore its various applications across emerging industries and global contexts, contributing to the development of effective leadership strategies for the future [12,13].

2. Literature Review

Creative leadership in organisations is explored through various dimensions and applications, highlighting its role in promoting innovation and adaptability across different settings. Creative leadership is characterised by its ability to transcend conventional boundaries, enabling leaders to synthesise diverse perspectives and drive organisational change. Sternberg *et al.,* [3] introduced a propulsion model of creative leadership, categorising it into types that either accept, challenge, or synthesise existing ways of doing things. This model provides a framework for understanding how creative leadership can manifest in different organisational settings.

Research has shown that creative leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing organisational performance and culture. It fosters an environment conducive to innovation and collaboration, as evidenced by studies that link creative leadership to improved team dynamics and problem solving capabilities [4,7]. In educational settings, creative leadership has been associated with higher teaching performance and motivation among faculty members [14].

The application of creative leadership varies across different contexts and is influenced by various factors. For instance, Schieffer [1] discusses co-creative leadership as a transformational approach that allows organisations to adapt to their environments. In the context of SMEs, creative leadership supports organisational ambidexterity, balancing exploitative and explorative activities to improve performance [15].

Despite its benefits, creative leadership faces challenges in implementation, particularly in rigid or bureaucratic environments. Loewenberger *et al.,* [16] highlight the effectiveness of creative leadership in public sector organisations, where it can overcome cognitive blocks and organisational barriers to foster innovation. Furthermore, the integration of creative leadership with digital and technological advancements presents new opportunities for enhancing organisational adaptability [17].

The literature indicates a need for further exploration of creative leadership's diverse applications across emerging industries and global contexts. Studies suggest that developing creative leadership capabilities requires a focus on interdisciplinary thinking and the integration of creative processes into organisational practices [9,18]. Future research should continue to investigate the contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of creative leadership in various organisational settings.

3. Methodology

3.1 Identification

The review's selection process comprised three primary stages within the systematic review framework. First, key terms were determined by consulting resources such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, thesauruses, and prior research. Subsequently, search strings were crafted for the Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases, as illustrated in Table 1. This preliminary search resulted in a total of 577 papers being retrieved from both databases.

Table 1
The search strings

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("creative leadership") AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2014) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2015) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2016) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2017) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2018) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2019) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))
Web of Science (WoS)	"creative leadership" (All Fields) and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 (Publication Years) and Article (Document Types) and English (Languages)

3.2 Screening

During the screening phase, the focus was on examining potentially relevant research materials to ensure alignment with the SLR's objectives. Initially, 400 publications were excluded based on content-related criteria, such as language and publication type. Duplicate papers were also removed, resulting in 177 articles for further evaluation. The inclusion criteria focused on English-language journal articles published between 2014 and 2024, excluding reviews, books, and conference proceedings. The summary of selection criterion is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
The selection criterion

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2014 – 2024	< 2014
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Review, Book, Conference,
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

3.3 Screening Eligibility

In the eligibility phase, 122 articles were reviewed to determine their suitability. Titles and abstracts were carefully assessed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and aligned with the study's objectives. As a result, 53 articles were excluded for being out of scope or having irrelevant titles and abstracts. Ultimately, 69 articles were deemed suitable for qualitative analysis.

3.4 Data Abstraction and Analysis

Data abstraction involved simplifying the dataset to focus on relevant articles. The final selection of 69 articles was reviewed for eligibility, ensuring alignment with the study's aims. Two management specialists conducted the evaluations to maintain the integrity of the findings. Feedback from experts was incorporated to refine the analysis, ensuring clarity and relevance in each sub-theme. Modifications were made at the author's discretion, taking into account feedback and comments from the experts.
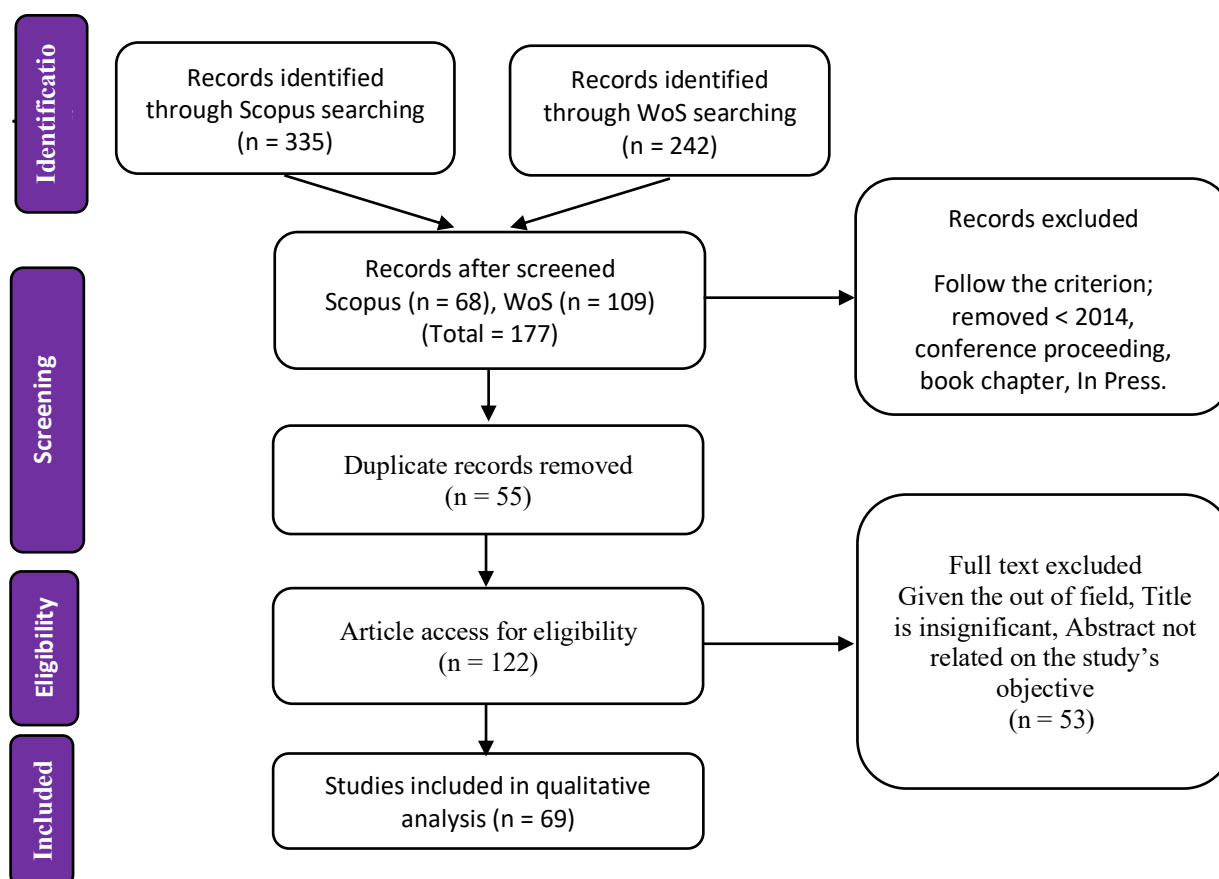
Fig. 1. Flow diagram with regard to the proposed search study [19]

4. Results

A comprehensive search technique led to the extraction and analysis of 69 articles, focusing on creative leadership. The process of identifying themes involved an in-depth examination of these articles, which were meticulously read and coded to uncover patterns and concepts related to the subject. This analysis revealed four main themes, which were not predetermined but emerged

organically from the data, ensuring an accurate reflection of the content within the studies. The themes were identified through a repeated process of coding, categorisation, and development, involving multiple readings of the articles and continuous refinement of the theme labels. All articles were classified according to these four main themes: Roles of Creative Leadership (30 articles), Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership (15 articles), Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance (23 articles), and Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership (8 articles). Some articles addressed multiple themes and were coded accordingly. A summary of these themes is presented in Table 3.

4.1 Roles of Creative Leadership

The theme "Roles of Creative Leadership" in organisations is explored through a comprehensive review of 30 studies, each providing unique insights into how creative leadership impacts various organisational contexts. This extensive body of research underscores the importance of creative leadership in driving innovation, enhancing collaboration, and improving organisational effectiveness.

Creative leadership in educational settings is crucial for fostering inclusive environments and improving administrative practices. Al-Khateeb *et al.,* [20] highlight the low level of creative leadership among principals in Jordan, with significant gender differences, suggesting a need for strategies to enhance inclusivity. Similarly, Abdel-Al [23] demonstrates a positive correlation between administrative flexibility and creative leadership in Saudi Arabian universities, indicating that flexible administrative practices can enhance creative leadership. Thawinkarn *et al.,* [60] show that creative leadership significantly contributes to classroom quality in Thailand, emphasising the importance of vision, initiation, and management. Keetanjaly *et al.,* [57] reveal that creative leadership in Malaysian schools increases parental involvement, mediated by collaborative school practices and school climate.

In industry-academia collaboration, creative leadership plays a significant role. Rashidi and Zaki [21] emphasise its role in overcoming collaboration barriers in Pakistan, while Chamakiotis and Panteli [53] highlight the need for complementary leadership skills in virtual project teams. Supartha and Ratih [24] discuss the importance of creative leadership in enhancing absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing in Bali's small crafts industry.

Creative leadership's influence on employee creativity is evident in several studies. Zhou *et al.,* [12] and Liu *et al.,* [38] show that creative leadership positively affects employee creativity in China through mechanisms such as proactive behaviour and self-regulatory focus. Nguyen *et al.,* [50] found that creative leadership had the most potent effect on online knowledge sharing and employee creativity in Vietnam. Li and Yue [78] demonstrate a positive relationship between leader creativity and team creativity in China, moderated by task complexity and leader empowerment.

The integration of arts into business education is another area where creative leadership is vital. Purg and Walravens [26] at the IEDC-Bled School of Management demonstrates how this integration creates a creative environment that prepares leaders to tackle complex challenges. Sandberg [25] shows how artists in interdisciplinary settings can act as process leaders, enhancing creativity and innovation. Leonard *et al.,* [51] introduce the MICCS framework for creative leadership in K–12 dance education, merging creative arts and educational pursuits.

In the public sector, creative leadership enhances innovation and effectiveness. Loewenberger *et al.,* [16] describe how creative leadership interventions in the British Transport Police led to numerous innovative ideas. Bolden and O'Regan [48] discuss Lord Michael Bichard's advocacy for inclusive leadership in public services. Creative leadership is also crucial in crisis management and

resilience. Darawsheh *et al.,* [70] found that faculty members at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University practice creative leadership and crisis management to a high degree. Altshuler and Schmidt [76] suggest that creative leadership is essential for enhancing resilience in the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in response to challenges like COVID-19.

Additional studies explore various aspects of creative leadership. Dovey *et al.,* [34] examine leadership practices in media production, highlighting the contingent and improvisational nature of these practices. Vidart-Delgado [42] discusses the transformative potential of play in urban settings. Kerby *et al.,* [46] explore the development of a Doctor of Creative Arts program, focusing on leadership in arts education. Cullen-Lester *et al.,* [47] review network-enhancing leadership development approaches. Qin *et al.,* [54] investigate the relationship between leaders' creative mindset and abusive supervision, revealing complexities in leader-follower dynamics. Burton and McDonald [55] examine creative leadership in community-engaged theatre projects in regional Australia.

In conclusion, the roles of creative leadership are varied and impactful, spanning educational, industrial, public sector, and crisis management contexts. Creative leadership not only drives innovation but also enhances collaboration and organisational success by creating environments that support and nurture creativity at all levels. The studies collectively highlight the importance of creative leadership in shaping organisational culture and encouraging sustainable innovation (Fig.2). Future studies should further investigate the various contexts and mechanisms by which creative leadership can be effectively utilised to accomplish organisational objectives.
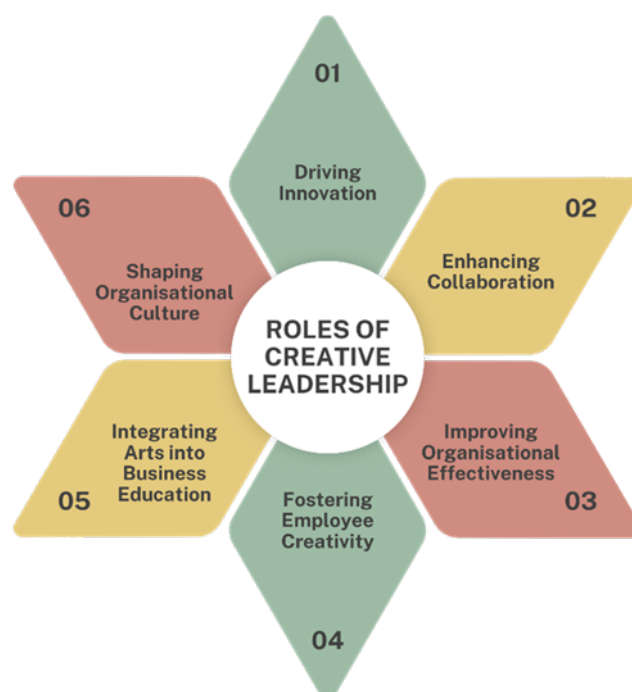
Fig. 2. Roles of creative leadership

4.2 Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership

The systematic literature review on creative leadership within organisations, focusing on the theme "Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership," provides a detailed examination of how creative leadership manifests across various sectors. The 15 articles reviewed offer insights into the

different dimensions and contexts in which creative leadership operates, emphasising its role in fostering innovation and driving change.

Creative leadership is often seen as a driver of innovation, especially in complex environments. According to Hapha and Somprach [17] essential elements of creative leadership that impact innovation in Thai higher education include visionary thinking and adaptability. In healthcare, Messick *et al.* [30] present a model of creative leadership that encourages a culture of continuous innovation, essential for teams to adapt to ongoing changes.

In the context of social change, creative leadership plays a transformative role. Jogdand and Sinha [28] explore how leaders can use negative experiences like humiliation to drive social transformation. Svejenova and Christiansen [35] examine creative leadership in architecture, where it drives social impact through innovative housing models.

Education also benefits from creative leadership. Zhang *et al.,* [36] develop strategies for school principals to enhance teachers' creativity, fostering a culture of innovation. Peterson [18] supports this by advocating for interdisciplinary thinking in higher education, where creative leadership facilitates programme reform and prepares students for diverse professional landscapes. Smith and Vass [75] propose creative transformational leadership as an effective approach for educational leaders facing global challenges.

In the corporate sector, creative leadership shapes organisational culture and drives intrapreneurship. Hashem and Alhumeisat [43] demonstrate how creative leadership in marketing departments enhances performance and innovation. Gorzelany *et al.,* [44] emphasise the role of organisational culture in fostering innovation at universities, suggesting that creative leadership is crucial for creating an innovation-friendly environment.

Creative leadership also redefines industry standards. Sepe and Anzivino [45] explore how Gucci's leadership transformed the brand into a cultural icon through innovative strategies that blend fashion with art.

Additional studies provide further insights into creative leadership's impact. Ye *et al.,* [13] examine how organisational climate and creative leadership influence employees' innovative behaviour. Liu *et al.,* [74] explore the role of boundary-spanning leadership in promoting innovation. Lawton [71] highlights community-based art education as a model for developing creative leaders. Maraouch [58] investigates managerial competencies in the Lebanese hospitality industry, linking creative leadership to improved performance.

Dodge *et al.,* [73] analyse the relationship between organisational culture and innovation effectiveness, providing insights into how creative leadership can enhance innovation. The study by Liu *et al.,* [74] on top management team boundary-spanning leadership highlights its role in promoting innovative behaviour.

The exploration of creative leadership across different sectors reveals its significant impact on fostering innovation and driving change. The diverse contexts and applications of creative leadership highlight its adaptability and importance in addressing contemporary challenges. The dimensions and contexts of creative leadership studied include visionary leadership, transformational leadership, boundary-spanning leadership, and community-based leadership (Table 4).

Table 4
Dimensions and contexts of creative leadership

Dimension/Context	Description
Visionary Leadership	Emphasising visionary thinking and adaptability to inspire innovation
Transformational Leadership	Focusing on transformational change, particularly in educational settings
Boundary-Spanning Leadership	Encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration and innovation
Community-Based Leadership	Leveraging community engagement for social impact

These forms of leadership demonstrate the transformative potential of creative leadership in various organisational contexts. Future research should continue to explore creative leadership's dynamics, particularly in emerging industries and global contexts, to further understand its potential in shaping the future of organisations.

4.3 Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance

The systematic literature review on creative leadership and its impact on organisational performance draws from 23 articles, each offering distinct insights into how creative leadership shapes various organisational outcomes. This review combines these findings, presenting a detailed examination of the role that creative leadership plays in enhancing organisational performance.

Creative leadership is widely recognised as a driving force for innovation across diverse sectors. Hapha and Somprach [17] highlight its importance in fostering innovation within Thai higher education, pinpointing elements such as creative thinking and vision as essential for nurturing an innovative culture. Rashidi and Zaki [21] discuss the role of creative leadership in facilitating collaboration between academia and industry in Pakistan, crucial for innovation and commercialisation. Lim *et al.,* [22] propose a curriculum framework that incorporates creative leadership to cultivate creativity in engineering education, highlighting its significance in developing creative skills.

The impact of creative leadership extends to employee well-being and organisational culture. Heyns *et al.,* [32] show that creative leadership, alongside supervisor support, reduces employee burnout in South African agricultural organisations. In Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Restuputri *et al.,* [15] find that creative leadership significantly enhances organisational ambidexterity, improving performance by balancing explorative and exploitative activities. Alnuaimi and Abdulhabib [69] demonstrate that creative leadership positively influences the relationship between service innovation and police performance in Ajman, UAE.

Navigating complex and uncertain environments is another area where creative leadership proves vital. Mitra and O'Regan [37] illustrate how creative leadership in the cyber asset market builds trust and collaboration, essential for managing digital risks. Kholis and Arifin [8] describe how creative leadership in Indonesian villages empowered individuals with disabilities through entrepreneurship, boosting economic resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Friis [29] discusses diversity in creative leadership, showing its potential to transform team dynamics and lead to innovative outcomes.

The role of creative leadership in fostering a supportive and innovative organisational culture is evident in various studies. Alsalem [41] highlights its significance in emerging universities, promoting positive change and educational improvement. Tigre *et al.,* [39] identify leadership profiles that

enable creative problem-solving, integrating academic and practical perspectives. In haute cuisine, Feuls *et al.,* [56] present creative leadership practices that inspire creativity among chefs.

Creative leadership also plays a crucial role in transforming organisational identities and strategies. Sepe and Anzivino [45] explore how Gucci's creative leadership has revolutionised its business model, merging fashion and art to redefine luxury. Samdanis and Lee [67] examine the emergence of creative leaders in the art world, illustrating how creative leadership can shape organisational identity and influence.

In educational settings, creative leadership positively impacts student motivation and engagement. Kavak and Akyürek [68] find that preschool teachers' creative leadership qualities enhance children's motivation, indicating broader educational benefits. Inhulsen and Reeve [27] discuss how creative leadership strategies have transformed art education, promoting equitable access and fostering strong communities of practice.

Creative leadership is also significant in social change and community development. Svejenova and Christiansen [35] explore its role in social housing projects, illustrating its impact on social change. Simon [62] highlights the challenges and dynamics of creative leadership in the performing arts, specifically at Cirque du Soleil, where it involves balancing multiple expertise. Furthermore, the literature underscores the importance of creative leadership in sports management. Ali and Rageh [66] investigate its role in Iraqi sports clubs, emphasising its contribution to enhancing managerial capabilities and organisational efficiency. Kilic [59] discusses the development of creative leadership skills through arts-based interventions, which improve leaders' resilience and social sensitivity.

Mainemelis *et al.,* [9] provide a comprehensive review of creative leadership, synthesising it under a global construct and identifying distinct collaborative contexts. This framework addresses issues of definitional clarity and contextual sensitivity in the literature. Sandell and Henry [64] discuss the NAEA's SummerVision DC programme, illustrating how creative leadership fosters professional learning communities in art education. Finally, Strobel *et al.,* [72] develop a scale for measuring creative leadership manifestations, revealing how different manifestations affect creativity and innovation in research units. This study highlights the importance of understanding and measuring creative leadership to optimise organisational outcomes.

In conclusion, this review demonstrates that creative leadership significantly impacts organisational performance by driving innovation, enhancing employee well-being, and managing uncertainty. The articles reviewed show that creative leadership is adaptable and can be tailored to meet specific organisational needs, making it essential for achieving sustained success as shown in Table 5. Future research should continue to explore the various expressions of creative leadership across different sectors and cultural settings to further understand its potential in advancing organisational excellence.

Table 5
Impact of creative leadership on organisational performance

Impact	Key Points	Studies
Innovation and Creativity	Creative leadership fosters innovation and creativity across various sectors, including education and industry collaborations.	Hapha and Somprach [17]; Rashidi and Zaki [21]; Lim *et al.*, [22]; Feuls *et al.*, [56]; Mainemelis *et al.*, [9]
Employee Well-being and Culture	Creative leadership enhances employee well-being, reduces burnout, and fosters a supportive organisational culture.	Heyns *et al.*, [32]; Alsalem [41]; Inhulsen and Reeve [27]
Navigating Uncertainty	Creative leadership is crucial in managing complex and uncertain environments, such as digital markets and economic crises.	Mitra and O'Regan [37]; Kholis and Arifin [8]; Restuputri *et al.*, [15]
Social Change and Community Development	Creative leadership drives social impact and empowers communities, particularly in challenging contexts.	Svejenova and Christiansen [35]; Simon (2015); Kholis and Arifin [8]
Educational Impact	Creative leadership in educational settings enhances student motivation and engagement, transforming educational practices.	Kavak and Akyürek [68]; Sandell and Henry [64]; Lim *et al.*, [22]
Organisational Identity and Strategy	Creative leadership transforms organisational identities and strategies, particularly in creative industries like fashion and art.	Sepe and Anzivino [45]; Samdanis and Lee [67]

4.4 Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership

The theme "Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership" examines how creative leadership interacts with various mediating factors to influence organisational outcomes. This exploration is crucial for understanding how leadership can effectively foster innovation and performance in diverse contexts.

Zhou *et al.,* [12] explore the role of proactive behaviour and conformity values in enhancing creativity within an organisation. Their research highlights the importance of aligning personal values with organisational goals to maximise creativity. Furthermore, the study suggests that proactive behaviour can significantly influence the impact of creative leadership, especially in environments with high conformity values.

Similarly, Abdel-Al Ibrahim [23] focuses on administrative flexibility as a catalyst for creative leadership in academic settings. The findings reveal a strong correlation between flexibility and leadership, indicating that adaptable structures are vital for nurturing creativity. This insight supports the idea that dynamic environments are essential for effective leadership. Moreover, Sandberg [25] introduces "Art Hacking," where artists engage in business processes to drive innovation. This approach demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary collaboration, showing how diverse perspectives can lead to novel solutions. The presence of artists in idea-generation processes acts as a catalyst for change, promoting awareness and new ways of thinking.

Wang and Wang [40] further explore the impact of media use on creative leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their Cognitive Model of Media Use Strategy illustrates the importance of matching media configurations with psychological distance to enhance communication and

creativity. This study offers practical insights into the effective use of digital tools in leadership. In addition, Sullivan [52] discusses arts-based research in leadership to foster institutional change. By creating alternative discourses, leaders can drive innovation and gain institutional agency. This reflects the dynamic nature of creative leadership in adapting to and shaping organisational cultures.

Al-Zoubi *et al.,* [14] examine the relationship between creative leadership and teaching performance in Jordanian universities. The study supports the positive impact of creative leadership on educational outcomes, reinforcing the theme's focus on dynamic interactions between leadership and performance. Mandiyasa *et al.,* [6] analyse the effects of creative leadership and job satisfaction on organisational citizenship behaviour and employee performance. The study highlights the mediating role of organisational citizenship behaviour, suggesting that fostering a culture of mutual exchange can enhance performance. Finally, Bonet and Rykkja [77] examine plural leadership models in cultural organisations, emphasising the integration of multiple leadership styles. Their research illustrates how collaborative leadership can enhance resilience and sustainability, aligning with the theme's focus on dynamic and adaptive leadership strategies.

In conclusion, the studies within the "Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership" theme collectively illustrate the complex interactions between creative leadership and various mediating factors. These interactions highlight the importance of adaptability, proactive behaviour, and innovative practices in enhancing leadership effectiveness (Fig. 2). By understanding these dynamics, organisations can better harness the potential of creative leadership to drive innovation, adaptability, and performance in diverse contexts. The insights gained from these studies provide valuable guidance for leaders seeking to navigate the challenges of modern organisational environments.

Fig. 2. Dynamic mechanisms in creative leadership

4.5 Cross-Theme Synthesis and Implications

This review offers a comprehensive synthesis of research on creative leadership, highlighting its critical role across diverse organisational contexts. The findings demonstrate that creative leadership enhances innovation, fosters collaboration, and supports organisational adaptability. In particular, it

proves vital in navigating complex environments such as technological disruption, crisis response, and cultural transformation.

The categorisation of studies into four themes of roles, dimensions and contexts, organisational impact, and dynamic mechanisms provides a clearer structure for understanding how creative leadership functions. The theme of "Roles of Creative Leadership" shows that leaders who adopt creative approaches positively influence team dynamics, decision-making, and problem-solving. Studies from the public sector, education, and business consistently show that creative leadership contributes to improved outcomes by encouraging inclusive and forward-thinking practices.

The "Dimensions and Contexts" theme illustrates that creative leadership does not operate uniformly; instead, it is shaped by sector-specific challenges and cultural settings. The leadership styles and mechanisms vary, suggesting that adaptability is a core characteristic of creative leaders. This supports previous theoretical work that positions creative leadership as a context-sensitive construct.

In examining the "Impact on Organisational Performance," the review found that creative leadership significantly improves organisational resilience, employee motivation, and knowledge sharing. These benefits are particularly relevant in high-change or high-pressure environments such as SMEs, digital industries, and educational institutions.

The "Dynamic Mechanisms" theme further shows that factors such as proactive behaviour, interdisciplinary collaboration, and flexible structures play a mediating role in the success of creative leadership. These mechanisms highlight the complexity of creative leadership and point to the importance of creating environments that support creative processes at both individual and team levels.

Overall, this review builds on existing literature by offering a more structured understanding of creative leadership and its practical relevance across different contexts. It also identifies areas where further exploration is needed, especially in relation to cultural and sectoral variations and the long-term effects of creative leadership strategies.

5. Conclusions

This systematic review highlights the growing importance of creative leadership in enhancing innovation, adaptability, and performance across diverse organisational settings. The analysis of 69 studies revealed four key themes: roles, dimensions and contexts, impact on organisational performance, and dynamic mechanisms. These findings demonstrate that creative leadership is not only essential for fostering a culture of innovation but also for responding effectively to complex challenges such as digital transformation and crisis situations.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of a more structured understanding of creative leadership by categorising existing research into meaningful themes. Empirically, it offers a consolidated view of how creative leadership functions across different sectors, providing researchers and practitioners with clearer direction. Economically, the findings underscore the value of creative leadership in driving organisational effectiveness and innovation, which are crucial for long-term competitiveness and resilience.

However, the study has certain limitations. The review focused solely on articles published in English from 2014 to 2024 in Scopus and Web of Science, which may exclude relevant studies published in other languages or indexed in other databases. In addition, the reliance on published articles may result in publication bias, where studies with positive or significant results are more likely to be included. These limitations may affect the generalisability of the findings and should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of analysis by including non-English sources and grey literature to capture a broader perspective. There is also a need for empirical studies that explore the mechanisms of creative leadership in under-researched industries and cultural contexts. Moreover, longitudinal and mixed-method approaches could offer deeper insights into how creative leadership evolves over time and influences organisational outcomes.

In conclusion, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of creative leadership and its relevance in today's organisational landscape. Addressing the limitations noted and pursuing the suggested areas for future research will strengthen the field and contribute to more effective leadership practices globally.

Acknowledgement

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Table 3
The research article findings are based on the proposed search criterion

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
1.	Al-Khateeb *et al.*, [20]	Journal of Higher Education Theory	A Proposed Model for Developing Creative Leadership Practices for Managers of Inclusive Educational Institutions in Jordan [20]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
2.	Hapha and Somprach [17]	Journal of Critical Reviews	A study of digital leadership and creative leadership that affect innovation in Thai higher education [17]		/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership • Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
3.	Rashidi and Zaki [21]	Mehran University Research Journal of Engineering and Technology	A SWOT Analysis of Collaborative Strategies between Engineering Universities and Industry in Pakistan [21]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership • Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
4.	Lim et al. (2014)	Asia Pacific Education Review	A theoretical framework for integrating creativity development into curriculum: the case of a Korean engineering school [22]		/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
5.	Zhou *et al.*, [12]	Behavioral Sciences	Action Speaks Louder: The Role of Proactive Behavior between Creative Leadership and Employees' Creativity [12]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership • Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
6.	Abdel-Al Ibrahim [23]	Synesis	Administrative Flexibility And Its Relationship With The Creative Thinking Of University Leaders Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University As A Model [23]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership • Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
7.	Supartha and Ratih [24]	Journal of Business and Retail Management Research	Antecedents of absorptive capacity: A proof of proposition [24]			• Roles of Creative Leadership
8.	Sandberg [25]	Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity	Art hacking for business innovation: An exploratory case study on applied artistic strategies [25]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership • Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
9.	Purg and Walravens [26]	Journal of Leadership Studies	Arts And Leadership: Vision And Practice At The IEDC-Bled School Of Management [26]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
10.	Inhulsen and Reeve [27]	Visual Inquiry-Learning & Teaching Art	By members for members: How the National Art Education Association is using creative leadership to mobilize a professional community and advocate for art education [27]	/		• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
11.	Jogdand and Sinha [28]	Journal of Leadership Studies	Can Leaders Transform Humiliation Into A Creative Force? [28]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
12.	Friis [29]	International Journal of Design Creativity and Innovation	Conflict as a driver for transformation in creative teamwork [29]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
13.	Messick *et al.*, [30]	Nurse Leader	Creating a Culture of Continuous Innovation [30]	/	/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
14.	Beghetto [31]	Journal of Leadership Studies	Creative Leaders Define Themselves in the Micromoments of Leadership [31]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
15.	Heyns *et al.,* [32]	Journal Of Psychology in Africa	Creative leadership and employee work wellness: Supervisor support as a mediator [32]	/		• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
16.	Alshammri and Alenezi [33]	International Journal of Education and Practice	Creative leadership and its relationship to thinking styles among Saudi University leaders [33]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
17.	Dovey *et al.,* [34]	Management Learning	Creative leadership as a collective achievement: An Australian case [34]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
18.	Peterson [18]	International Journal of Educational Organization and Leadership	Creative leadership for interdisciplinary education [18]		/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
19.	Svejenova and Christiansen [35]	Frontiers of Creative Industries	Creative Leadership For Social Impact [35]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership • Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
20.	Kholis and Arifin [8]	Tem Journal-Technology Education Management Informatics	Creative Leadership in Entrepreneuring People With Special Abilities [8]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
21.	Zhang *et al.*, [36]	Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences	Creative leadership strategies for primary school principals to promote teachers' creativity in Guangxi, China [36]		/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
22.	Mitra and O'Regan [37]	Journal of Management Inquiry	Creative Leadership Within the Cyber asset Market: An Interview With Dame Inga Beale [37]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
23.	Liu *et al.*, [38]	Current Psychology	Creative leadership, creative mindset and creativity: a self-regulatory focus perspective [38]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
24.	Ye *et al.*, [13]	European Journal of Innovation Management	Creative leadership, innovation climate and innovation behaviour: the moderating role of knowledge sharing in management [13]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
25.	Mainemelis *et al.*, [9]	Academy of Management Annals	Creative Leadership: A Multi-Context Conceptualization [9]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
26.	Tigre *et al.*, [39]	Journal of Leadership Studies	Creativity for Problem Solving in the Digital Era: Configurations of Leadership Profiles [39]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
27.	Loewenberger *et al.*, [16]	International Journal of Public Sector Management	Developing creative leadership in a public sector organisation [16]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
28.	Wang and Wang [40]	Sustainability	Developing Creative Leadership in the Use of Digital Communication Tools: A Psychological Perspective [40]	/		• Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
29.	Alsalem [41]	Review Of Economics and Finance	Developing the Performance of Academic Leaders in Emerging Universities in the Light of Innovative Leadership [41]		/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
30.	Vidart-Delgado [42]	Social Science Information Sur Les Sciences Sociales	Emerging in play: Collectives, ownership, and everyday rules in a low-income neighborhood in Boston [42]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
31.	Hashem and Alhumeisat [43]	Journal of System and Management Sciences	Examining the Moderating Role of e-marketing: Creative Leadership as a Source of Intrapreneurship within Marketing Department [43]		/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
32.	Gorzelany et al., [44]	Plos One	Finding links between organisation's culture and innovation. The impact of organisational culture on university innovativeness [44]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
33.	Sepe and Anzivino [45]	Artification of Luxury Fashion Brands	Guccification: Redefining Luxury Through Art- The Gucci Revolution [45]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership • Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
34.	Kerby *et al.*, [46]	Arts And Humanities in Higher Education	Implementing a new doctor of creative arts program in the Chinese year of the fire monkey [46]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
35.	Cullen-Lester *et al.*, [47]	Leadership Quarterly	Incorporating social networks into leadership development: A conceptual model and evaluation of research and practice [47]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
36.	Bolden and O'Regan [48]	Journal of Management Inquiry	Leadership and Creativity in Public Services: An Interview With Lord Michael Bichard, Chair of the National Audit Office [48]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
37.	Bhattacharyya [49]	Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities	Leadership Competencies and Leadership Style in Aspiring Cluster Schools of Excellence [49]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
38.	Nguyen *et al.*, [50]	Journal of Knowledge Management	Leadership styles and employee creativity: the interactive impact of online knowledge sharing and organizational innovation [50]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
39.	Leonard *et al.*, [51]	Journal of Dance Education	Leading by Design: A Collaborative and Creative Leadership Framework for Dance Integration in P–12 Schools [51]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
40.	Sullivan [52]	Visual Inquiry-Learning & Teaching Art	Leading from behind to see ahead: The poverty and promise of institutional change [52]	/		• Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
41.	Chamakiotis and Panteli [53]	New Technology, Work and Employment	Leading the creative process: the case of virtual product design [53]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
42.	Qin *et al.*, [54]	Journal of Business and Psychology	Negative Creativity in Leader-Follower Relations: a Daily Investigation of Leaders' Creative Mindset, Moral Disengagement, and Abusive Supervision [54]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
43.	Burton and McDonald [55]	Theatre, Dance and Performance Training	Performance 'Training' in the Dirt: facilitating belonging in a regional community musical theatre event [55]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
44.	Feuls *et al.*, [56]	Creativity and Innovation Management	Practices of creative leadership: A qualitative meta-analysis in haute cuisine [56]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
45.	Keetanjaly *et al.*, [57]	Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities	Predictors of Parental Involvement in Malaysian Secondary Schools [57]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
46.	Maraouch [58]	Journal Of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism	Professional profile and management competencies in the lodging industry [58]		/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
47.	Kilic [59]	Evaluation and Program Planning	Program development for leaders in the post-truth era: Arts-based creative leadership communication program [59]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
48.	Thawinkarn *et al.*, [60]	Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences	Relationship between perceived directors' leadership and classroom quality of primary schools in Thailand [60]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
49.	Lasley [61]	Journal of Leadership Studies	Role-Playing Games as a New Adventure for Leadership-As-Practice: Forming a Leadership Framework Around Collective Creativity and Development [61]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
50.	Simon [62]	Technology Innovation Management Review	Setting the Stage for Collaborative Creative Leadership at Cirque du Soleil [62]	/		• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
51.	Alsuwaidi and Omar [63]	International Journal of Sustainable Construction Engineering and Technology	Structural Model of Principals' Innovative Leadership Attributes on Managerial Creativity [63]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
52.	Sandell and Henry [64]	Visual Inquiry-Learning & Teaching Art	SummerVision DC: An evolving Professional Learning Community (PLC) explores art museums and nurtures the nurturer [64]	/		• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
53.	Mohammed *et al.*, [65]	Journal of Global Pharma Technology	The brain management of time and it's correlative to the creative leadership of the heads of scientific departments in the faculties of physical education and sports Sciences in Iraq [65]		/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
54.	Ali and Rageh [66]	Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development	The creative leadership of the heads of sports clubs in the middle Euphrates from the point of view of its members [66]		/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance

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55.	Al-Zoubi *et al.*, [14]	Education Sciences	The Degree of Practicing Creative Leadership by Academic Leaders at Jordanian Universities and Its Relationship to the Level of Teaching Performance [14]	/	/	• Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
56.	Samdanis and Lee [67]	Frontiers In Psychology	The Emergence of Creative Leaders Within Social Networks: The Case of Andy Warhol in the Art World of New York [67]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
57.	Kavak and Akyürek [68]	Early Child Development and Care	The impact of the creative leadership qualities of preschool teachers on children's motivation [68]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
58.	Alnuaimi and Abdulhabib [69]	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management	The influence of service innovation on police performance: an empirical investigation [69]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
59.	Mandiyasa *et al.*, [6]	Quality-Access to Success	The Nexus between Creative Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, and Employee Performance Moderation through Transparency [6]	/	/	• Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
60.	Darawsheh *et al.*, [70]	Effect of Information Technology on Business and Marketing Intelligence Systems	The Relation Between Creative Leadership and Crisis Management Among Faculty Members at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Light of the Corona Pandemic from the Perspective of Department Heads [70]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership
61.	Lawton [71]	Visual Inquiry-Learning & Teaching Art	The role of art education in cultivating community and leadership through creative collaboration [71]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
62.	Strobel *et al.*, [72]	Creativity Research Journal	The Role of Creative Leadership Manifestations in Creativity and Innovation [72]	/		• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
63.	Restuputri *et al.*, [15]	IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management	The Role of Creative Leadership to Improve Organizational Performance Through Organizational Ambidexterity in Creative-Based SMEs [15]	/	/	• Impact of Creative Leadership on Organisational Performance
64.	Dodge *et al.*, [73]	Research-Technology Management	The Role of Leadership in Innovation: A quantitative analysis of a large data set examines the relationship between organizational culture, leadership behaviors, and innovativeness. [73]	/	/	• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
65.	X. M. Liu *et al.*, [38]	Frontiers In Psychology	Top management team boundary-spanning leadership: Measurement development and its impact on innovative behavior [74]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership

No.	Authors	Journal	Title	WoS	Scopus	Remarks
66.	Smith and Vass [75]	Zbornik Instituta Za Pedagoska Istrazivanja	Towards Creative Transformational Leadership In Higher Education: Challenges And Opportunities [75]	/		• Dimensions and Contexts of Creative Leadership
67.	Altshuler and Schmidt [76]	Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	Does and how resilience matter? Global implications for the tourism industry in the context of COVID-19 [76]	/	/	• Roles of Creative Leadership
68.	Bonet and Rykkja [77]	European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy	Why is managerial shared leadership in creative organizations a more resilient, transparent, open, and generous constellation? A case analysis approach [77]	/		• Dynamic Mechanisms in Creative Leadership
69.	Li and Yue [78]	Social Behavior and Personality	Working with creative leaders: An examination of the relationship between leader and team creativity [78]	/		• Roles of Creative Leadership