Understanding Creativity: Leadership Practices That Encourage Creative Process

Engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's Worship Team

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Abstract

Creativity is a skill that is often overlooked or discouraged in churches; however, it is a gift that can be used by the Holy Spirit to revitalize the church, contextualize its message, and bring fresh life to Sunday services. If creativity is pastored well, it can greatly change the culture of the church. ***Research Question:*** The question driving this research is: what leadership practices encourage creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team? ***Objective:*** The purpose of this research was to explore what leadership practices are encouraging creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team. For a small church, there is a great variety of diverse creative activities integrated into services and events that are not as present in typical churches of this size. ***Methods:*** A qualitative case study consisting of observational research and three focus group interviews was conducted. ***Results:*** Six themes emerged: Openness to Diverse Activities, Acceptance, Inclusion, Adaptability, Support, and Contextual Action. ***Conclusion:*** This research is significant because it provided tangible themes for leaders and pastors to gain insight from and consider when it comes to encouraging creative engagement in team members at their churches in their contexts. The overall results added to the discussion of the emerging relationships between leadership practices and team creativity.

Keywords: worship, creative process engagement, leadership practices, adaptive leadership, transformational leadership

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Creativity is a skill used by organizations worldwide. Without creativity, today's world, as we know it, would look a lot different. Creativity is a necessary component for organizations to thrive, for innovative ideas to take off, and for the world to change. Without creativity, the world would not have seen some of the most life-changing, now essential, innovations like modern medicine and smartphones. Without creativity, the difficulty of adapting to and communicating in different contexts and cultures increases. This is true of cultures abroad, and it is true of the ever-changing local culture. Creativity is essential for any organization to move forward and continue to grow, especially the church.

It is one thing for pastors and leaders in the church to lead their local congregation into musical worship, but they can easily forget to pastor and lead the people on their team who have other creative gifts. Many worship teams are full of musicians, artists, and technicians who have problem-solving capacities and enjoy creative activities such as songwriting, dancing, writing poetry, creating artwork, and photography. Unfortunately, many times, these talents and abilities are often overlooked in the church environment. In extreme cases, they can be frowned upon and discouraged by the church. However, creative activities like these can be pastored, and they can be used in worship as well. The creative capacity of team members can serve more than the worship team alone; they can serve the church and its leaders by helping communicate the gospel in creative, contextual, and relevant ways. Because the human race was made in God's image, and believers are being made into the image of Christ, creativity can be a gift given, guided, and used by the Holy Spirit.

As creativity makes a difference in companies and businesses worldwide, it has the power to change lives and culture, especially in the church. The purpose of this study is to discover what leadership practices encourage worship team members to engage in these types of creative activities for the benefit of the team and the church.

Background and Context

Creativity is defined as a process that produces "novel and useful ideas to solve a problem or capture an opportunity" (Ivancevich et al., 2014, p. 418). In the church, creativity is necessary to continue communicating and understanding the gospel. When it came to describing the Kingdom of God to the disciples, Jesus used parables that gave an illustrated example of what the Kingdom was like. In the same way, people will not be able to understand the gospel without some reference point, whether it is a personal experience with God, an analogy, or something similar. Pastors and leaders can help lead, encourage, and develop this creativity in their team members so the church can communicate the Word of God in a variety of relevant ways (Ivancevich et al., 2014, p. 79). In the present wake of the Covid-19 virus, churches not only have needed to present the gospel in new ways; they have needed to reinvent what a Sunday morning looks like and determine new ways of having church services via technology in the midst of stay-at-home orders and indoor capacity limitations.

Despite these unforeseen and unprecedented cultural shifts, pastors and church leaders do not have to solve every problem and create every solution. Instead, they can encourage their teams to be creative and support their ideas to continue to endure and flourish (Suifan et al., 2018, p. 113). Leaders have significant influence on their teams and individual team members and on how much those team members believe they can have useful creative ideas, and it can prove useful (Jiang & Gu, 2017; Huang et al., 2016).

Local Church Context

The context of this study will be based in Coquille Foursquare Church in Coquille, Oregon. It is one of 18 churches in the city, and it dates back to 1926. Creativity is laced throughout the entire history of the church as it has undergone changes in lead pastors, location, and transitions. The church also has a history of being known to worship and praise the Lord. In the late '50s, it was dubbed as "the church with the singing heart," and in the late '80s, the church was renamed "Praise Center" (Settle, 2006, p. 23, 33). The church has always been creative in its musical and theatrical expression, and this is still true today. The current worship team consists of 22 members that have created artwork and written songs, poetry, and spoken word that have been incorporated into the Sunday services. Some members of the team also have an eye for stage and interior design, and they have helped to update the look of the stage and the sanctuary by creating and arranging décor regularly. They also enjoy planning different types of creative events, from church-wide worship nights to livestreams that pit the music team and the tech team against each other in silly games and competitions.

Coquille is the county seat of Coos County on the southern Oregon coast. Though Coquille is a city, it can be described as rural and quiet, with a population of almost 4,000. Coquille is positioned as a place where residents live and commute to surrounding areas for work; however, since the Covid-19 pandemic, many residents are working from home. The main creative attraction in the town is the Sawdust Theatre. It opened in the late 1960s and drew people from all over to experience old-fashioned melodramas. In addition to the theatre, the Coquille Valley Art Association offers another venue for the arts. It began in 1950 as a space for people to paint and has grown to include pottery, wood carving, quilting, and more.

Foursquare Church Context

The Foursquare Church, as a denomination, is rooted in a rich history of creativity. Founder of the denomination, Aimee Semple McPherson, was known to use creative ways of communicating the gospel; she used theatrics, story-telling, elaborate object lessons, dramatizations, and stage performance to contextualize the message (Ambrose, 2017). Besides the message, McPherson was musically gifted. She was a composer of many types of songs, and her services often had musical productions for worship and as accompaniment for her stage performances (Stewart, 2006). Outside the context of in-person services, McPherson also used the modern technology of her day: radio. She preached on the radio, and she eventually started her own radio station; "The first week of programming included Bible stories for children, Sunday School lessons, special music, readings for homebound "shut-ins," broadcasts from Angelus Temple services, and a variety of guests" (p. 181). McPherson paved the way for the Foursquare Church to embrace a culture of creativity and contextualization of the gospel.

Statement of the Problem

Whether it be in the midst of Covid-19 or some other external event, churches will need to pastor creativity well in order to adapt. Moreover, churches will always need to be creative when it comes to keeping up with technology, trends, and events in society to use them in helping to communicate the gospel; the purpose is not to compete with society, but what is happening in the world affects people in the church as well. While pastors and leaders in the church are not in control of when sparks of inspiration hit or others' creative processes in general, they can play a large role in making a safe environment for these creative processes to play out when they do occur and help support the team in their creative endeavors. In a culture that continues to flourish in creativity and innovation, the church continues to fall behind.

Creativity can be the key for churches to present the gospel in the current culture and disciple those in the church to live authentic lives that are not different at church and in the world.

Research Questions

The question encouraging this research is: *How do you pastor creativity?* To begin to answer this question, a case study will be conducted with the following question in mind: *What leadership practices encourage creative engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team?* The desired outcome of this research is to discover patterns and common attitudes between the leadership of the church, the worship team members, and the people who attend the church regularly. These patterns and attitudes should define common practices that the leadership engages in at this church that allows the team to be so creative.

Project Researcher Identification

My name is Kaylee Hanks, and I am a student of the Life Pacific University Adult and Graduate Studies. This research project is a requirement for graduation in the Master of Arts in Strategic Leadership program. I am currently the worship pastor at Coquille Foursquare Church, and I also consider myself a creative person. I am seeking to understand how to better lead the other creative people on the worship team and in the church.

This is the first church that I have personally been part of that has allowed myself and others to integrate our various creative gifts into the ministry on a regular basis to serve the church. Coquille Foursquare is a small church in a small town; attendance on average Sundays can be anywhere between 20 and 70 people. The worship team consists of 20 active members, and from what I have observed, this is unusual for a church this size in this area. While much of this can and should be attributed to the work of the Lord and His plan and timing for this church, there are leadership practices in play at this church that the Lord is using as well. The goal of this

research is to explore what leadership practices are contributing to this unusual, but fun and Spirit-filled, context. I hope to share these findings with other small churches, not to use them as a formula for success, but as suggested recommendations for growth.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Coquille Foursquare Church is small, so many of the leaders work very closely together on many things. Many leaders and team members carry many different responsibilities in different areas. Because of this, the worship team is involved with creative ideas for various ministries and areas of the church. The delimitations of this research study were focused on the creativity of the worship team for activities and events regarding Sunday services and worship team-led events and activities. This excludes activities and events for kids, youth, young adults, and small group ministries.

A held assumption of this research is that creativity is a skill that can be developed, and it also can be a gift of the Holy Spirit. While some practices of leaders may revolve around the development and encouragement of creativity, it is expected that leaders in this church may also share practices that develop and encourage members spiritually to hear the voice of God and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in creative activities.

A limitation of this study will be the spiritual and emotional health of each of the church members at the time of the study. It is assumed that creativity can be a gift of the Holy Spirit, so spiritual health is a crucial factor. Furthermore, the timing of this study will be taking place during a busy season for the church members and leaders. It is anticipated that the schedules of many members will be fuller than normal, and the recent personal events in the lives of key members may affect emotional health as well as the ability to participate.

Literature Review

Creativity is an ability that is valuable in many different contexts. While it is most often associated with the arts, it is also a crucial skill to have in organizational environments as well. Creativity in these environments is described as unique and useful ideation generated by an individual or group of individuals regarding products, processes, and services (Amabile, 1983; Sun et al., 2012). Creativity can be the difference in a competitive market, the race for cutting-edge technology, and innovative service. It can lead to new ways of solving problems, and if it is led well, it can change culture, companies, and lives. The recent literature has revealed five key themes regarding how leaders can lead and encourage creativity in individuals and teams: Empowering Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Knowledge Sharing, Psychological Safety, and Creative Adaptability.

Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership exists when leaders engage in certain behaviors that share power with employees for the purpose of increasing employee autonomy; these behaviors include helping the employee understand why his or her role is significant, providing the opportunity for decision-making, and encouraging the employee in their abilities (Arnold et al., 2000; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Zhang and Bartol (2010) further explained that empowering leadership has the potential to allow the employees to feel and believe that they have more control and freedom over the work that they are responsible for as well as a boost to their confidence in the impact of their work. The literature identifies two common links between empowering leadership and employee creativity: creative efficacy and learning behavior (Zhang & Kwan, 2019).

Empowering leadership allows employees greater autonomy to take risks to problem solve to create new and useful ideas, positively affecting employee creativity (Hon & Chan,

2014; Zhang & Kwan, 2019; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). It can also allow members the space to partake in receiving, merging, improving, and applying knowledge and skills to their relevant tasks; practically, this includes exercises like asking questions, seeking evaluation, and exploring new matters (Li & Zhang, 2016; Zhang & Kwan, 2019).

Most literature agrees that empowering leadership is positively related to employee and team creativity. However, the results of a study done by Chow (2016) do not agree. She states that empowering leadership is not enough to affect creativity because it depends on employees' level of openness to experience; therefore, "emotional encouragement and support from leaders have a stronger relation to creativity for highly open employees than for less open employees" (p. 212-213). Empowerment from leadership only has a significant effect on employees who are open to it.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership promotes a united sense of mission and collective goals by inspiring, challenging, and developing members of the organization (Bai et al., 2016; Bass & Riggio, 2016). Dong et al. (2017) separated Transformational Leadership into individual-focused and team-focused. They described that individual-focused transformational leadership pays more attention to the needs and personal development of each individual as the leader communicates high expectations and challenges the individual. Team-focused transformational leadership revolves more around finding shared values and working towards collective goals together (p. 441).

Research has shown that Transformational Leadership has a positive relationship with creativity in employees individually and in teams; transformational leaders constantly seek to inspire and develop their members to innovate and challenge the status quo, and they support

them in it (Azim et al., 2019; Dong et al., 2017; Suifan et al., 2018). Allen (2007) went further to say that Transformational Leadership does not only have a positive relationship with employee creativity; Transformational Leadership is one of the leadership models that value creativity the most (p. 53). A study by Eisenbeiβ and Boerner (2013) showed that one of the downfalls of Transformational Leadership is that employees tend to depend too much on the leader (p. 62-63). Kollmann et al. (2013) confirmed this, and they focused their study on testing for what can decrease this dependency. They found that combining transformational leadership behaviors and leadership empowerment can reduce dependency on the leader and boost employee creativity (p. 12).

There are many traits and behaviors that influence the relationship between Transformational Leadership and the creativity of employees and teams. Creative efficacy is one of these. Mittal and Dhar (2014) found that creative efficacy is a mediator of the impact of Transformational Leadership on employee creativity (p. 905). But Azim et al. (2019) found that creative efficacy only partially mediates this relationship because the motivational nature of transformational leadership helps to improve it (p. 849). For the same reason, Mahmood et al. (2019) found that intrinsic motivation is a mediator in this relationship as well; transformational leaders help to coach and guide their members to engage in creative processes (p. 756). Other mediators found in the literature include promotion focus, knowledge sharing, and psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2013; Dong et al., 2017; Henker et al., 2015).

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as the trading of information, ideas, knowledge, and suggestions that are relevant to the task between members (Bai et al., 2016; Dong et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2018). Knowledge sharing with employees and teams has been found to have a positive

effect on employee creative problem-solving capacity and performance (Carmeli et al. 2013; Kremer et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2018).

Consistent with literature findings, it is a mediator relating positively to employee creativity. Some of the literature used knowledge sharing as a mediator, specifically in the relationship between transformational leadership and creative process engagement. In research conducted by Hu et al. (2018), the mediating effect of knowledge sharing in the relationship between leader humility and team creativity was studied. They found that "displaying a modest self-view and showing appreciation and openness to others' ideas, humble leaders enhanced information exchange in the team to promote team creativity" (p. 319.)

On the flip side, Peng et al. (2019) studied the effects of self-serving leadership on team creativity, and they used team knowledge hiding as a mediator. Unlike knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding is the attempt to withhold knowledge from the team (p. 423). Their research found that self-serving leadership had a positive relationship with team knowledge hiding, and team knowledge hiding had a negative relationship with team creativity (p. 427).

Psychological Capital and Safety

Psychological Capital is defined as such:

An individual's positive psychological state of development is characterized by (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success. (Luthans et al., 2015, p. 2)

Psychological Capital is concerned with the self and the capability of moving forward toward success. The literature uses Psychological Capital in the context of teams and individuals (Guo et al., 2018; Wu & Chen, 2018). A study by Guo et al. (2018) tested Psychological Capital as a moderator in the serially mediated relationship between authoritarian leadership and employee creativity, fear, and employee defensive silence being in the middle of this relationship. They found that employees that have lower Psychological Capital are more likely to have a fearful response from authoritative leadership (p. 227). The Psychological Capital of the individual is helpful in moving forward despite different types of leadership styles; however, leaders can play a role in making the organization an environment that is more psychologically safe for employee Psychological Capital to grow and develop.

Psychological safety refers to an individual's or team's perception of how safe it is to be themselves and take risks in the work environment (Carmeli et al., 2010; Carmeli et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2019). If employees feel safe at work and with their leaders, it is likely that they will be more able to build their Psychological Capital and feel more free to creatively problem-solve and offer ideas. Literature shows that psychological safety plays a mediating role in the positive relationship between employee and team creativity and different leadership styles: transformational leadership, inclusive leadership, and leaders who are humble (Carmeli et al., 2010; Carmeli et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2017). Additionally, in a study by Peng et al. (2019), it was found that self-serving leadership reduced psychological safety in teams, and that negatively affected team creativity. Leadership style can play a large role in psychological safety: "To encourage innovation and creativity, the psychological environment must be right: in other words your behavior as a leader" (Cook, 2016, p. 80).

Creative Adaptability

A new theme beginning to emerge in current literature is how adaptability relates to creativity. This relationship is coming into view in light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Orkibi (2021) coins the term "Creative Adaptability" in his research and defines it as "the personal ability to generate new and effective cognitive-behavioral-emotional responses to stressful situations" (p. 1). Under this new framework, the study finds that creative self-efficacy may mediate the relationship between creative adaptability and well-being. Building on this research, Orkibi et al. (2021) test the relationship between creative adaptability and emotional well-being in four different countries during the Covid-19 pandemic: Israel, the United States, China, and Italy. The results of this study find that resilient coping was the strongest mediator in all countries except for the United States; their strongest mediator was creative self-efficacy. Regardless, the results suggest that creative adaptability can help manage stress (p. 9).

Gaps in Literature

One of the main gaps in the literature occurs in the relationship between creativity and adaptive leadership. While current studies spurred on by the Covid-19 pandemic focus on personal well-being, the literature fails to provide research for how leaders or employees who have adaptive capacities affect employee and team creativity in organizations and in the workplace.

Additionally, all of the reviewed literature finds its research context in secular organizations, and none of it takes place in the context of the church as an organization. While the reviewed literature can help shed light on leadership and creativity in churches, research done in the church can contribute to the literature by providing a unique perspective.

Biblical Basis for Research

Using creative talents and skills to glorify God is not unheard of in the Bible. In Exodus 35, Moses gathered the Israelites to help contribute to work on the tabernacle and mentioned are two men, Bezalel and Oholiab, who can work artistically with many types of materials. Bezalel was chosen by God and was filled "with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills" (35:31). These men used their knowledge, skill, and wisdom to teach others (35:34). God gave them both skills to use ways to use them for His glory.

In the New Testament, believers are called to "discover creative ways to encourage others and to motivate them toward acts of compassion, doing beautiful works as expressions of love" (The Passion Translation, 2020, Hebrews 10:24). All believers, including pastors and worship leaders, are called to find ways to encourage one another to act with compassion and do things that are fueled by love; these can be creative activities. Like Bezalel and Oholiab, believers with creative abilities can use their skills as an expression of love to God, the church, and others.

Relevant Leadership Theories

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership is a theory that supports this research. Bass and Riggio (2016) describe Transformational Leadership as leaders "inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support" (p. 77). The transformational leader leads the way toward goals with a vision and empowers followers to be creative in helping achieve those goals while helping them to grow along the way.

Bass and Riggio (2016) outline four main descriptions of Transformational Leadership: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration (p. 78). A leader who is an idealized influence acts as a role model for their followers in a way that is respected and trusted so much that followers seek to reproduce their behaviors. A leader who is inspirationally motivating provides meaning and purpose to work and involvement in a way that sparks followers to commit to goals related to the shared vision. Intellectually stimulating leaders inspire and encourage followers' innovation and creativity by challenging their assumptions, challenging the norm, and challenging responses to problem solving; leaders encourage followers to risk and reframe problems and approaches in a new way to create novel ways of problem solving. Lastly, individualized consideration is a description of transformational leadership that refers to how leaders invest in and support each individual follower to coach and mentor them to success (pp. 78-79).

Bolsinger (2018) takes this concept further and provides a model for Transformational Leadership. He speaks of transformation in the Christian community as a transformation that takes place individually and as a group, both leaders and followers (pp. 39, 43). His model of Transformational leadership consists of a multi-dimensional model that details task-, relations-, and change-oriented behavior (Yukl, 2010, p. 69). This model is a three-circle Venn Diagram consisting of Technical Competence, Relational Congruence, and Adaptive Capacity; where the three components overlap is where Transformational Leadership lies (Bolsinger, 2018, p. 43). Bolsinger brings these three components together by stating that technical competence brings the leader credibility, that relational congruence makes the leader trustworthy, and that adaptive capacity allows growth in the midst of challenges and change (p.44).

Adaptive Leadership

A second theory to support this research is the Adaptive Leadership Theory. It is a theory based on change, and it is defined as "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle challenges and thrive" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 21). More specifically, "adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between values people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior" (Heifetz, 1998, p. 22). This type of leadership addresses the gap between what people value and what those people do in reality. It has the potential to illuminate competing values, especially in times of crisis, change, or pressure. Adaptive challenges also require adaptive problem-solving that cannot be replicated with skills that already exist; "they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways – changing attitudes, values, and behaviors – people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 13).

Bolsinger (2017) identifies three areas of consideration when working through adaptive challenges. The first is a recommitment to core ideology; this is where leaders remember who the organization is at the core and acknowledge its identity and higher purpose (p. 95). The second is reframing the strategy:

> Reframing is another way of talking about the shift in values, expectations, attitudes or habits of behavior necessary to face our most difficult challenges. It is a way of looking at the challenge before us through a different lens and in seeing it differently finding the possibilities for a new way of being and leading. (p. 96)

Lastly, new learning is foundational for adaptive leadership theory. Leading a learning process is required for adaptive leadership; if the same solutions and skills can solve the problem, it is not adaptive work (p. 97).

Research Methods

The research question aimed to explore how to pastor creativity by investigating what leadership practices encourage creative process engagement in the Coquille Foursquare Church worship team. Because of the uniqueness of this church and the exploratory nature of the question, the chosen research methodology was a qualitative approach consisting of a case study (Leedy & Omrod, 2019, p. 89). The research question asked to seek out what relationships exist between the leadership of the church and the creativity of the worship team instead of focusing on what a single relationship might be made of, so the case study focused on remaining open to take developing ideas, changing interpretations, and emerging patterns into consideration (p. 89).

The reviewed literature identifies Transformational Leadership and its many aspects: empowerment, knowledge sharing, psychological safety, and adaptability. Each of these is shown to have a positive relationship with creativity in employees. This research aimed to fill a gap in the literature by exploring what relationships exist between leaders and follower creativity in the church. The local church where the research took place is different than the typical work setting because worship team members are volunteers and relationships among members and leaders are more informal and relational. Moreover, while leadership theories are still very applicable in this setting, the church stands on one main foundational element that differentiates it from any other business or company: the character and movement of God. This was a unique setting for this research to be conducted.

Description of Method

       This case study was made up of three focus group interviews and observations of interactions, recorded church services, and other collected visual and written material for the purpose of categorizing the data into common themes and finding common patterns (Leedy & Omrod, 2019, Table 8.1). The groups that were interviewed were the church leadership and council members, worship team members, and members of the church. This provided three different perspectives and sources of insight regarding the leadership and the worship team and how they relate. Interviewing this way also helped to minimize any optimistic bias that the leaders might have individually held. Additionally, observations made of interactions in person and online helped to triangulate, make the research credible, and confirm what was said in the focus group discussions (Leedy & Omrod, 2019, p. 94).

       Many of the focus group members were very supportive of this research and were excited to see the outcome of this study. I have agreed to share my findings and a completed copy of this Capstone project with any of the leadership, participants, or leaders of other churches in the area that request to read it.

Justification of Research Method

       The qualitative approach is the most effective way to study the proposed research question. Because the answer to this question is more complex than a simple explanation or a single relationship, a qualitative approach will best address and handle the potential variety of data that will emerge through each focus group. Qualitative approaches are designed to enter an ambiguous situation or phenomenon; this research question does not ask to dive into a particular pattern that may exist in the relationship between leadership and creativity because it is asking to explore what potential patterns exist in the first place. A quantitative approach would be best to

dive deeper into a very specific facet in the relationship, but the exploratory nature of this question is broader and demands the design of this research be open to the ongoing development of patterns and interpretation. These aspects of the research occur as data is collected through observation and the stories and experiences of those being interviewed.

While qualitative research can better go in-depth in broader questions, this project will still be limited due to time and resource constraints. To take this into consideration, the research question is asked specifically of leaders and church members of Coquille Foursquare Church. This limitation is intentionally put in place because it has been observed that this church is having unique outcomes compared to other churches in the area and surrounding areas.

Researcher Description

I am a licensed pastor through the Foursquare Church. I pastor worship at Coquille Foursquare Church and have been involved in worship ministry for the last 13 years here and in previous other churches. Because of this I have experience working with and working under different styles of pastors and worship leaders. I also consider myself a creative person; I have a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in graphic design with an emphasis in illustration. I have experience as a freelance designer and have worked as a creative administrator for a Bible college in the past. I currently do graphic design for Coquille Foursquare Church as well. Aside from my experience in worship and creativity, I am a novice researcher seeking to learn and grow.

Subjects

All focus group members were required to be over the age of 18, were to have considered Coquille Foursquare church their church home, and were to sign an informed consent form. For the leadership and council member focus group, each member either must have been a leader of

a ministry in this church for at least a year, or they must have been a council member for longer than one term. The worship focus group consisted of members who have been on the worship team consistently for at least one year and had participated on the team in a creative capacity. Lastly, the church member focus group consisted of members of the church who had consistently and actively attended the church for at least three years, and they must have been involved in or volunteered in at least one ministry at the church.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

The participants of the focus groups are all church members of Coquille Foursquare Church, and I have a personal relationship with most of them. The worship team focus group consists of team members that I lead and play music with on a weekly basis. The leader and council member focus group consists of leaders that I work with, including my pastor. These existing relationships were a benefit to the research because each member understands my passion and interest in this topic. Most had communicated interest in my findings and were dedicated to help me complete my research by being open to joining the focus group conversations.

Bias

Because I am the worship pastor at Coquille Foursquare Church and have relationships with most of the focus group members, I will not be included in the study in order to remain unbiased. I have only served here for two years, and I believe that will minimize bias because I am not as rooted in the history of the church or the town as many of the church members are. I will also rely on triangulation between observation, interviews, and collected online and physical resources to look for patterns and themes. In addition, being intentional in keeping observations and personal interpretations separate will help minimize bias. Observations refer to what is really

being seen and heard, and interpretations are what I think is happening (Leedy & Omrod, 2019, p. 240).

Ethical Assurances

Potential Risks to Participants

Interviews took place in the church sanctuary with chairs and tables, and all observations of team members were made when more than one other person was present in the building Interview questions and conversations did not discuss any sensitive personal experiences regarding abuse, well-being, or trauma, and they did not expose any participants to potentially triggering stimuli. Because the nature of the interviews was focused on best leadership practices, the information given did not place any of the participants at risk. This study did not include minors or any other risk groups who would need special protections or considerations (*Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Involving Human Participants: Guidance in Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction*, n.d., p. 2).

For any research involving human subjects, minimal risk is defined by the U.S. Food and Drug Association as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of physical or psychological examinations or tests" (*Minimal Risk*, 2014). This study fits this definition because the research did not include anyone at risk, and it did not put any participants at risk. Because of this, the Institutional Review Board exempted this research from review (*Levels of IRB Review*, n.d.).

Educating Participants and Ensuring Confidentiality

Each participant signed an informed consent form that communicated the participant's voluntary involvement and right to terminate at any time, the purpose and benefits of the study,

the types of interview questions that were asked, the nature of the observations to be made, a guarantee of confidentiality after data collection, and information regarding how to contact the researcher (See Appendix A). Though the data was impossible to collect anonymously, all data was made anonymous after collection to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of each participant. All digital data is kept on a personal password-protected computer, and all forms and printed data are secured in a personal locked file box.

Research Protocol and Procedures

Before collecting data, permission was given by the lead pastor of Coquille Foursquare Church to interview church members, use the building for interviews, and observe any materials online, on the church network, or in person for the purpose of this research project. Because I removed myself from the discussions to remain unbiased, the discussion questions were formed to help relay any information that might seem obvious and would have otherwise been left unsaid.

Participant Recruitment

Church members were asked in person a month in advance if they were interested in participating in the study, and those who were interested received an invitation by email discussing the logistics and details (See Appendix B). Each member was offered the option to join via video call technology, but each member showed up in person.

<div align="center">Data Collection and Data Analysis Approaches</div>

Data Collection Approaches

For this research, focus group interviews were conducted and observational data was gathered. Each discussion lasted about an hour and fifteen minutes, included introductions, six

open-ended discussion questions, and the offer to add anything else to the conversation (See

Appendix C).

The leader and council member group consisted of the lead pastor, the leader of the

nursery and church décor, the leader of the prayer team, and five council members, some of

whom participate in ministries at the church. The worship team group consisted of two worship

leaders, the worship tech leader, and three singers. Each of these members has taken part in extra

creative activities that have benefited or taken place at the church such as song writing, action,

play writing, sign language interpretation, and visual art. Two other invited members were

unable to attend. The church member group consisted of six well-known members of the church

who are involved in ministries such as the preaching team, greeting team, and women's ministry.

Observational data was collected in three ways. First, data was collected from the internet

on the church website and social media accounts. This included the core values and mission of

the church, past service and event recordings, and weekly updates and current events. Data was

also collected from church leaders and elders who were able to provide printed historical

accounts and archives of the church. The online content was especially useful to view because it

created a wall between myself and the worship team and leaders. This wall allowed for

observation to take place without the accidental bias or inauthentic action from knowingly being

observed at the moment.

Second, observation of the worship team took place during team practices and church

services. Being immersed in the culture and activities of the church and the worship team was

equally as useful and important as viewing their interactions online. This type of observational

data helped to confirm that what was happening in online recordings was what was happening

outside of the recordings in "real life" as well.

Lastly, data was collected by observing the conversation and relationship dynamics between the members of the focus groups. Leading group discussions is beneficial and is set apart from one-on-one interviews. In these group discussions, interactions took place naturally around a table, outside of the context of a worship practice or Sunday service. This revealed more of the authentic relationships between people in the groups outside of their normal activities in the church.

Recording and Data Transformation

Each interview was recorded with a microphone and saved as an audio file. Voice-to-text technology was also utilized to transcribe the interviews as they were happening. Online observation data was kept track of in a notetaking program. Notes for each piece of online material included the source and the link for where it can be found.

Pilot Testing

Due to the lack of resources and time to do a pilot test of the focus group questions, a pilot test was not conducted for this study. Pilot testing is an important piece of the interview process because it allows researchers to discover blind spots in the questions and their assumptions of how the interview process will turn out. In this study, it would have been beneficial to pilot test the focus group questions in order to better understand how certain questions would answer other questions in the interview.

Data Collection Challenges

Not many challenges were present during data collection. A few key members were unable to attend the focus group discussions, but there were still enough members. Also, due to the lack of a pilot test, one of the focus groups answered the questions slightly differently than the other focus groups. While new perspectives and useful data still emerged, it would have been

beneficial to further clarify or reword the questions. In general, during the focus group process, it was found that elaboration or providing definitions of certain terms used in the questions would have proved useful to clarify what was being asked.

Data Analysis Approaches

Data was analyzed using Creswell's (2013) Data Spiral approach that includes five steps: data management, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, and interpreting data into codes and themes, interpreting the data, and representing and visualizing the data (pp. 182-188).

Data Management

Before analyzing the focus group interview data, the transcripts that were written using voice-to-text technology were read while listening to the audio recording to revise and make corrections to the transcript that were misinterpreted by the technology. Each transcript was also labeled with interviewer names and time stamps for easy reference. Every piece of observational data was also saved and organized.

Reading and Memoing

Analysis started with assigning a color to each interview question. Because focus groups are discussion-based, conversation went back and forth. Questions were often answered within other interview questions. Memoing consisted of making notes according to the color code assigned to the questions. For example, when being asked about the culture of the church, a focus group member answered the question and elaborated in a way that answered the question about feedback that the leaders give worship team members; in this case, the focus group member answered both questions, and it was memoed. Other memos noted emerging patterns and repetitive concepts summarized into short phrases.

Describing and Classifying the Data into Codes and Themes

The next step of the analysis process included bringing all of the memos together into one document and assigning codes to each question, response, and focus group member for easy reference. For each focus group, the responses and ideas noted for each focus group member and each question were brought together into three categories: Repeating/Recurring Ideas, Profound/Isolated Ideas, and Implicit Ideas. Most entries in these three categories for each of the three focus groups were brought together and grouped into six emerging themes, each with subthemes.

Interpreting the Data

The themes were interpreted under the lens of the research question: what leadership practices are encouraging creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team. This brought the themes from abstract ideas to leadership practices that are happening in this context. Observational data was used to bring contextual examples, further validity, and support to the emerging themes. This data is also present in the coded document.

Representing and Visualizing the Data

As previously stated, six themes emerged from the data, each with subthemes (See Figures 1 and 2). These themes helped to develop further discussion, recommendations, and conclusions for this study.

Figure 1

Emerging Data Analysis Themes

Figure 2

Emerging Data Analysis Themes and Subthemes

Results and Findings

During the data analysis process, all data was gathered into a Google Sheets spreadsheet (Appendix D). Codes were assigned to each question with Q. Focus group members were also coded: W for worship team members, C for church members, and L for leaders and council members. For example, Q1W1 refers to the first focus group member of the worship team focus group and their response to question one. Q2C3 refers to the third focus group member of the church member focus group and their response to question two. Another group of people are coded with X; these represent other church members who were referred to in stories shared by focus group members. Additionally, the observational data was coded based on the location it was found: Y for YouTube, A for Facebook, and B for website.

To process the coded data from the interviews, the data was narrowed into three categories: repeating and recurring ideas (R), profound and isolated ideas (P), and implicit ideas (I). The entries in these three categories were combined into seven emerging themes (E), each with subthemes (S) that gave an answer to the central research question: what leadership practices best encourage creativity in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team?

Openness to Diverse Activities

The first theme to emerge from the research is the openness to diversity of activities at Coquille Foursquare Church. First, there are many creative activities and expressions of creativity that take place. These activities are often led by worship team members, the worship pastor, or the lead pastor (A1, A14, A18). A variety of creative outlets that take place at the church were mentioned: plays, artwork, tech, décor, songwriting, poetry, design, spoken word, drama, and games (Q1W1, Q1W2, Q1W3, Q1C2). Secondly, creative events and meetings that take place in the church also make room to encourage these creative activities.

Creative Activities and Expression

One of the activities that was commented on the most by focus group members from all three groups was the team's collaborative songwriting (Q1W1, Q1W2, Q1W3, Q1W4, Q1C5, Q1L8). While some of the worship team members have written many of their own songs, some of which are regularly sung during Sunday morning services, L8 comments, "My most favorite songs that they've written are the ones they did together" (Q4L8, Y5, Y6, Y7). Writing collaboratively as a team has been a new experience that has helped some of the worship team members grow by challenging them with new experiences. W3 shared his thoughts and said that he had never written with other people until coming to this church. Writing songs had always been a private and personal activity, and, if the song never ended up really meaning something, he would just throw the song away without ever letting anyone see or hear it. W3 continued:

> To be in a team, a group like this, where we get together and write and we bounce ideas off each other, the end result might not always be what we had in mind. But it is always better than what we had in mind, and that's always fun and hard. (Q2W3)

Another activity that allowed for worship team members' expression of creativity was a series of livestream sessions put on by the worship team. When Covid-19 resulted in small occupant capacities in buildings, the church started livestreaming most of the days of the week. Saturday nights were reserved for the worship team. Team members would rotate each week and do different activities for about an hour live on Facebook (Q1W3). Activities included sharing stories and music, different art projects, and games (A11, A13, A16).

Creative Events and Meetings

In addition to creative activities, the church leads many creative events. There have been Christmas plays, Worship in the Park events, and Worship Nights (Q1C4, Y2, A17, A22). One

event that was brought up during discussion in all three of the focus groups was Worship Night. W4 expressed that Worship Night was a very creative event because there was no plan; there was no set list of songs that the team would be playing, and it was dependent on the creativity and leading of the Holy Spirit (Q1W4). L8 shared a story that took place during worship night that serves as an example of this:

> Probably the climax for me was [W4] coming up and turning [X7]'s pages while [X7]'s eyes were closed because [W4] knows what song is supposed to be next. [W4] can't find it, and [X7] is like, 'You're going to do it, you just sing and we'll follow'... [X7] already knew what she was looking for without even asking what it was. Then [X5] hears it by ear and picks out the exact chords and rolls with it on the piano. (Q2L8)

The team relied on the voice of the Holy Spirit to play through songs, combine them together, and leave room for Spirit-led new songs to be sung (Q2C6).

Though not an event like a worship night, another scheduled form of creativity includes Resource Team Meetings for the upcoming sermon series. These are led by the lead pastor who gathers a variety of people from different ministries to come, collaborate, and share ideas for the upcoming sermon series. C5 described it this way: "It allows for the expression from different perspectives that the leadership team who makes the final decisions can pull from these resources… and really bring it about in a way that blesses everyone in the church" (Q1C5).

The sermon series that was the most talked about was the 2021 spring series: Ephesians: Living Beyond the Norm. Birthed in the resource team meeting for this series were two creative drama pieces that became a regular part of each Sunday service in the series. One of these included X3 dressed as Paul, the writer of Ephesians, bound and led by a Roman guard (played by a different church member each week) to the stage to read aloud the portion of Scripture

being discussed that day as if he was writing the letter to the Ephesians from prison (Q1W5, Y10). The other creative element that came out of the resource team meeting for this series was a humorous series of videos called, "The Ephesystem: Flex Your Faith." W6 played the main character, Antonio Smalls, and recorded a video using a green screen and the church's newer tech equipment each week that would relate to a main idea in the sermon for that weekend (W1, Y1). These elements are not present in every sermon series. New creative ideas and ways to include others show up in every series. "Every Sunday is a new adventure. Every series is a completely different perspective" (Q3C4).

In addition to these elements in the sermon series, one other creative idea was mentioned in one of the focus groups: journaling. The church ordered and gave out journals to the church members who wanted one. Each Sunday in the series, a handout was placed in the bulletin and posted to the church's Facebook group that had questions corresponding to the message that Sunday. Church members were encouraged to journal about any of the questions, and come to church the next week and share what they had discovered or what the Lord shared with them during service. C3 commented, "I think it's a great idea, and I have never been good at journaling or notetaking. It's something I want to grow in, and, with that being offered, I'm going to get there" (Q1C3).

Acceptance

The second theme emerging from the data is acceptance. Acceptance breaks into two subthemes: grace, and opportunity and space to grow. When asked about the culture of the church, and when sharing stories about the worship team members, acceptance was a theme that emerged greatly in all focus groups.

Grace

The allowance of grace for worship team members to be imperfect was a recurring theme in the research. W6 believes that this grace for imperfection is one of the main reasons that creativity is allowed to exist in this church:

When you have that environment where people are allowed to be people, the other aspects of their lives start to come out, the things that, normally, people would never bring up in church, discuss, or even offer… out of fear or just because it isn't the culture. (Q3W6)

These other aspects include the creative activities, skills, and talents that are a normal part of people's daily lives. W6 continues by sharing that home life and church life are allowed to be the same at the church; there's no separation or expectation for anything or anyone to be different (Q3W6).

W4 shared a story of her experience with anxiety, the fear of messing up as a vocalist, and how God had healed that and changed their perspective. She shared that there was a Sunday that she was leading, and they prayed, "God, thanks for taking my fear. Also, if I mess up, that's okay because people here love me and they're not going to judge me" (Q2W4). She continued by stating that she messed up on the first verse, but she was okay "because I knew how that would be received, and I knew I wasn't going to be in trouble for that" (Q2W4). Another worship team member communicated that she is not in trouble for messing up vocally or musically, but she is more encouraged by the team and is able to learn from her mistakes (Q2W5).

This grace is communicated by leaders who understand that they, too, are imperfect and also need grace. W2's personal experience with leadership has deeply affected his growth, and he appreciates the openness and transparency of leadership to say, "I'm not perfect. See, I

understand some of your struggles. I struggled with it too. Let me tell you about the God who loves me because I know He loves you the same" (Q3W2). W6 states that when leaders are okay with being imperfect, when they are okay and move on from their mistakes, it communicates to the congregation "come as you are," and that promotes unity (Q6W6). He also states, "I truly believe that our church would prefer messy on stage, but the person on stage is an actual example of worship than someone who can play every single note completely perfect and is disengaged spiritually and emotionally" (Q3W6). Ultimately, this fits the church's fifth core value: embracing living in a grace-filled community (B1).

Opportunity and Space to Grow

This grace creates a breeding ground for opportunity and space to grow. Another recurring idea that was present in the data was the diverse levels of experience in worship team members. There are those who have been engaging in creative activities their whole life, and there are those who have been given the opportunity to be a part of something that they have never done before. A story that came up in every focus group was that of X4. X4 was given an opportunity to lead a verse by himself, something that he had never done before, and he did well (Q2W5, Q2C4, Q2L2). C4 spoke of the opportunity that he got to do something he had never done before. He is going to be playing a part in the play that the church is putting on for the community in December, 2022, and he says that the encouraging tone of the leadership of this play is saying, "We need you, we want you, we want you to do your best. Don't worry if you can't sing a note; we will talk it through with you" (Q2C4).

Five of the six worship team focus group members shared how they have had new experiences and room to grow at the church, and other focus group members shared stories about them and other worship team members' growth. One story that stood out was that of W3. L8

communicated how much W3 had grown here, and L3 added, "There's an acceptance there of it's okay to not have it totally perfect and all figured out. You can really learn as you go, and sometimes that means sparks fly because iron sharpens iron… that's part of the process" (Q2L3). Acceptance and grace allow for people to process and grow.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the third theme that emerged from the data. It breaks down into three subthemes: Welcoming and inviting, Teamwork, and Clear Boundaries. In addition to acceptance, inclusion was another main idea that recurred in each focus group.

Welcomed Involvement

While many of the worship team members are experiencing acceptance and room to grow, church members and guests are experiencing the inclusivity of the church as a whole. C2 mentions that the diverse expressions of creativity draw people in and open the door for people to become involved and share their own creativity: "I feel like the church has opened up to inviting every person that walks through the door to participate with the inspiration they got through journaling and through the lesson" (Q3C2). Journaling was one way that people could participate on Sunday mornings. Another way that people are often invited to participate is when the speaking pastor brings up the flip chart and asks an open question for the congregation to answer out loud while the pastor jots it on the chart (Y12). W3 describes the experience as "simple," "non-threatening," and "non-scary" (Q1W3). Another question that pastors have asked people to share in the past is God's wondrous works and mighty deeds in their lives in the past week. L8 says that the intentionality of getting people engaged in a two-way form of communication has helped unify people on Sunday mornings (Q6L8).

Outside of the speaking pastor engaging church members from the stage, L2 commented that L8 is excellent in reaching out and inviting people to be a part of something (Q6L2). L6 also acknowledges that people are accepted given many opportunities to be involved:

Back in the old days, 20% of the people did 80% of the church responsibilities. Ours is almost the opposite of that. All of our people are like, "this is my church. I get to be a part of it, and I get to do something to add what I have to everybody else" … People have the opportunity of stepping into an area of ministry that they might not have had. Or they just sat back in another church and just sat, watched, and became an absorbent person rather than a participant person. (Q3L6)

Acceptance, opportunity, and invitation have helped to get church members engaged and involved in various ways and at various levels. On a simple level, L1 noted that there is a responsiveness in the worship team to the congregation and in the congregation to the worship team. The worship team includes the congregation; they are in constant communication (Q6L1).

Teamwork

The worship team is one of the ways that church members are welcome to become involved in no matter the level of skill or experience. Because of this, it has grown to have over 20 members, multiple leaders, and a diverse combined skillset (Q4C4). C2 speaks about this open invitation, the teamwork, and the effects that it has on the congregation:

It just felt like a really generously open invitation. Nobody was saying that you have to be really great. I could hear the invitation go out to just come and make a joyful noise…and watching a generous leadership that does not always take the lead vocal… It feels like it's all been really a movement of grace. Everybody is saying "we want you to step into this place just as joyfully as any of us who trust our talent. We want you to be

able to step up into that place also." I feel like it's the whole church's generous offering

to say "we want all of you, no matter what your talent level is," and then you just get to

discover that hidden talent that you didn't even know. (Q4C2)

This openness has allowed for new people to easily be folded into the team and is an example of

the church's seventh core value (Q4W2, B1). C3 also notes that she loves how worship team

members support each other and sing each other's songs. The team is not driven by ego, and they

allow room for other members to lead songs and play other instruments (Q4C2, Q4C6, Q4L6,

Q4L8).

Clear Boundaries

This subtheme is based on a profound idea contributed by C5. He brought up how clear

boundaries are present in the church and why they have to be in order for inclusion to work well.

He states that leadership is willing to immediately handle anything that is out of line with grace

and pull it back in a collaborative and relational way (Q3C5). He states that the culture and

environment of the church "wouldn't be at all healthy just to have the invitation and openness

without that corresponding discipline in relationship with people" (Q3C5). From there, C2

interpreted those comments as safety, a safe culture, and she noted that "God is a God of order,

and you know He dictates that that's how it should be. So, when you do have leadership that

supports order, you can feel safe in that place" (Q3C2).

Adaptability

The next emerging theme is adaptability. It breaks down into two subthemes, based on

the two different ways the worship team is able to adapt. They are able to adapt together as a

team, like they did during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are also able to adapt individually

according to what is needed each Sunday.

Response to Covid-19

When the pandemic brought restrictions and guidelines to how church was able happen, this church grew and thrived (Q3W6). "It didn't slow us down for a second because we were willing to embrace creativity" (Q3W6). W6 continues by communicating the willingness exhibited by the leadership and the team to combat the challenges that were faced in this season, obedience to the new requirements and the Lord, and the trust that the church has had in the creativity of the team and in the Lord in order to still see growth (Q3W6). L3 also noted that she loved how willing and open the church was to instant change and how the leadership allowed the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and resource the team (Q3L3). W4 gave an example of this by remembering the creative solution the leadership team had for seating arrangements when the indoor occupancy was only 25 people. Because the church had a lower level with its own entrance and bathrooms, the church could legally have 25 people on each floor, and they livestreamed the service downstairs and had pastors available (Q2W4).

Versatility of the Team

This subtheme was inspired by a profound comment made by L1. This is what she believes about the diversity of the worship team:

> Part of what makes them able to go from the variety of places an individual fills in the team… they move in such an adaptability to fill the need… Every member of the team is versatile. They aren't one-focused; they are focused on the team and how they can fit the team today. (Q4L1)

L8 later adds what could be one of the foundational truths about the what makes the worship team so versatile: "The creativeness is their affinity in Christ, but their unity together is to worship" (Q4L8). Observational data shows that multiple team members are ready and willing to

take different roles on the team and adjust and adapt to whatever is needed that Sunday (Y5, Y6, Y7, Y9).

Support

Support is the next emerging theme. It breaks into three sub themes: Encouragement and Coaching and Mentoring.

Encouragement

When asked about how leadership gives feedback to the worship team, some focus group members responded: praise, pats on the back, giving credit to those on the team who wrote a song, bragging, and positive affirmations (Q5C2, Q5L7). These are also seen in the observational data (Y13, Y14). On a deeper level than that, some of the focus group members communicated how the leadership values the worship team. C6 said that L8 values the team by helping with worship practice on Saturday nights (Q5C6). L7 stated, "We really need you guys. It's not just listening to you worship, but it prepares for battle or the Lord moving in power. I really believe that the worship team is the key" (Q4L7). Ultimately, L8 says that, as a leader, his greatest encouragement to the worship leaders is to trust them and trust the Holy Spirit in them (Q5L8).

Coaching and Mentoring

C5 commented that he has seen coaching conversations between team members and leaders. He describes the coaching process in three steps: Conversation, Follow Up, Opportunity. In other instances, other focus group members have noted that they know that any criticism or feedback they get is with the intention to help, not to hurt (Q3W2, Q5L3). Mentoring need not be formal; it happens in friendships and relationships at the church. W5 noted this:

We have men in this church that will stand alongside other men who struggle. [X3] is an example. He used to come into a church, pretty much just being an island, and I

appreciate [W2] who can realize when [X3] struggles. You go up and encourage him…

it's real; it's not fake. (Q3W5)

C4 stated that the welcoming nature of the church is what helps foster "healthy relationships where people can talk to one another about their issues, their struggles, and be treated with dignity" (Q3C4). This fits the church's mission statement: "We are a Foursquare Family committed to growth in relationship with God and others, impacting culture" (B2). C4 also elaborated on the type of feedback that is given by leadership to the worship team. He described it as making adjustments instead of corrections. L6 describes it this way:

[L8] will usually quietly, over a period of time, pull that person aside unrelated to the rest of us or even to the knowledge of us, directly increase that person of how to do it right rather than what they're doing wrong. (Q5L6)

In addition, C5 made an interesting point based on a story that he told about an experience that he had with the worship team. The church sent C5 and some of the worship team to a small town two hours away as a guest pastor and worship team; C5 said that the team made an impact on the congregation of the other church because they were able to reproduce their knowledge of worship and tech with the team there (Q2C5). When it comes to coaching and mentoring, C5 communicated the importance of learning and giving away, reproducing knowledge and skills. Because Coquille is a small town, it is often said that people are just leaving, but he says, "Everyone leaves means there's no value here; they come, learn, and are given away means there's something of extreme value that now is reproduced somewhere else" (Q2C5).

Contextual Action

The last theme that emerged from the research is Acting Contextually. This comes from a profound comment from C5. When asked about what stands out about the worship team, C5 stated that the team is contextual to Coquille and Coos County; they are not trying to copy or be like any other worship team or do any of the newest worship trends that were featured in the most recent conference. While acting contextually will look different for every church, this theme breaks into two subthemes based on the context of Coquille Foursquare Church. The first subtheme is Identity and Anointing, and the second subtheme is Fun.

Identity and Anointing

After asking how they have seen creativity used at the church, the very first answer that was given in the leader focus group was that creativity is, and has always been, part of the church's identity; "it's an essential part of God to us, in us, and through us" (Q1L1). Expanding on that, L7 stated, "This church just has the anointing… it just causes people to blossom, and that's what brings an expectation of, God's going to move" (Q1L7).

Fun

Because this is a church that is creative, accepting, and has clear boundaries, fun is a large part of the culture. Because creative elements are a regular part of the Sunday services, fun is also present. W6 mentioned that he led worship in an American flag jumper (Q2W6). W5 added that many people dressed up for that Sunday, and W1 also added that they came with their lawn chairs as well (Q2W5, Q2W1).

Interpretation and Discussion

This study attempted to understand how creativity is led and encouraged. By conducting three focus group interviews and using observational data, this study explored how creativity is

encouraged in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team. The six themes that emerged from

the research are Openness to Diverse Activities, Acceptance, Inclusion, Adaptability, Support,

and Contextual Action. These themes are connected to the reviewed literature.

Discussion

One piece of the literature mentioned previously was Hebrews 10:24: "discover creative

ways to encourage others and to motivate them toward acts of compassion, doing beautiful

works as expressions of love" (The Passion Translation, 2020). Each of these six themes fits this

verse, if the heart and intention behind them is to encourage others, drive them to compassion,

and express love. As leaders in the church, true acceptance, inclusion, and support cannot be

separated from love. The motivation and purpose behind any creative events and activities ought

to have love at the core. Contextual action helps drive others to act with compassion towards

those in the church and in the area based on whom the Lord has called that local church to be.

Openness to diverse activities is a theme that can be connected to Transformational

Leadership theory. Transformational Leadership is characterized by four aspects: idealized

influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration

(Bass & Riggio, 2016, pp. 78-79). Leaders who remain open to diverse creative activities,

expressions, events, and ideas are exercising the intellectual stimulation aspect of

Transformational Leadership; this is the aspect that challenges team members to challenge what

is normal, take risks, and come up with new approaches to solving problems creatively (p. 78).

Intellectual stimulation requires the leader to be open and willing to consider and act on new

creative and innovative ideas.

Transformational leadership is also shown to contribute to creating a psychologically safe

environment (Carmeli et al., 2013, p.129). This type of environment is necessary when it comes

to taking creative risks and sharing new ideas, which can be a potentially vulnerable action for some team members to take. Leaders who are open to diverse activities help communicate the safety of the team and the leadership by allowing room for new ideas, expressions, activities and events to be considered and occur.

Acceptance is another theme that fits into the literature about psychological safety. Psychological safety refers to team member's perception of how safe it is to be themselves and take risks in the work environment (Carmeli et al., 2010; Carmeli et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2019). If employees feel safe at work and with their leaders, it is likely that they will be more able to build their Psychological Capital and feel more free to creatively problem-solve and offer ideas. Grace to "let people be people" and providing space for opportunities to grow technically, relationally, and spiritually are two subthemes that go hand in hand for leaders to make a commitment to leading in authenticity and growth at the same time. Psychological capital is affected when team members are given the opportunity to try new skills, have new experiences, and are coached along the way.

Inclusion is a third theme that can connect to psychological safety. When leaders create a safe and welcoming environment, and when members recognize that safety, they are more likely to participate and become involved in creative expression and join ministry teams under the clear boundaries and parameters set by the leadership. This course of action and commitment has the potential to be a risk for some church members if psychological safety is not perceived. This can, therefore, affect church members' psychological capital. The Psychological Capital of the individual is helpful in growing and moving forward despite different types of leadership styles; however, leaders can play a role in making the organization an environment that is more psychologically safe for employee Psychological Capital to grow and develop.

Adaptability is confirmed by the Adaptive Leadership Theory. The church's response to Covid-19 was an example of requiring "experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization" in order to change and adapt to the new world under new restrictions and guidelines (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 13). The worship team also echoes this idea every week, adapting to the new arrangements of the musicians on the stage, tech people running the equipment, and creatives adding to the services in new ways.

Support is a theme that fits into Transformational Leadership. It can fall under the Individualized Consideration aspect. Individualized consideration is the leader's ability to show concern for a team member's growth and well-being by investing, coaching, and mentoring each person (Bass & Riggio, 2016, pp. 78-79). The consistency of leadership encouragement of the worship team helps to communicate value. The coaching conversations and mentoring that are rooted in relationship help the team members grow and challenge old patterns and thought processes. This support is crucial as team members share, collaborate, and express creativity; it promotes psychological safety.

Contextual Action requires leaders to act according to the context in which they are placed. Coquille Foursquare Church is a small church in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. What is done here will look different than what is done in a mega church in Atlanta. The subthemes of Identity and Anointing and Fun can transcend these contextual differences, even if they look different. Contextual Action connects to Adaptive Leadership Theory. Leaders must adapt to and act in what is happening in their church, in their town or city, in their region. They must act in accordance to what the Lord is doing in each of those areas and who He has called that local church to be. Instead of using skills that already exist or are copied from another church somewhere else, leaders must complete adaptive work using "experiments, new

discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 13).

Limitations of the Research

One of the main limitations of this study is the small number of participants and the lack of diversity in those participants. The focus group members were only chosen from Coquille Foursquare Church and the study was based on the unique results that are happening at this church. While the data and findings may prove beneficial to similar churches in surrounding areas, more research should be conducted to see if these findings are still true in churches of different denominations and religions, geographic areas, congregation size, cultures, and ethnicities.

Another limitation of the research includes the lack of resources and time to do a pilot test of the focus group questions. Pilot testing is an important piece of the interview process because it allows researchers to discover blind spots in the questions and their assumptions of how the interview process will turn out. In this study, it would have been beneficial to pilot test the focus group questions in order to better understand how certain questions would answer other questions in the interview. During the focus group process, it was found that elaboration or providing definitions of certain terms used in the questions would have proved useful to clarify what was being asked.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Recommendations for Application

In order to help promote and encourage creativity in churches, the first recommendation for application consists of three parts:

1. The church leadership should invest in making a space for creativity to take place.

2. The church leadership should create planned opportunities for creativity to take place.

3. The church leadership should allow a form of access to the creative space for unplanned creative activities to take place.

Creating a space that is dedicated to the creative expression of worship and creative team members is a way to communicate value and dedication to the growth and development of creative abilities in the church. Planned opportunities to be creative and share ideas, like resource team meetings, bring team members together to collaborate and build on others' ideas to share with people, make them laugh, love them well, and contextualize the gospel in creative ways. Providing access to the space for unplanned activities to take place allows space for the creative process to happen in different team members. Leaders cannot control when team members are and are not creative or when the Holy Spirit may bring inspiration. Allowing access to the space give freedom for members to meet together to create, write songs, and collaborate.

The second recommendation to encourage creative process engagement is to not keep creativity a secret. If the leader is aware of creativity happening, encourage those behind it, and create excitement by sharing it with others in the church. This might look like sharing a piece of artwork, poetry, or song created by a team member that can be a support in a sermon. Publicly celebrate creative activities and forms of expression as it fits within what the Lord is doing in the service that day.

Recommendations for Research

The first recommendation for research emerging from this study is regarding the data collection technique. A mixed-methods approach could be useful to build on this research by surveying a broader range of church members, worship team members, and leadership from a variety of churches, then interviewing key members of the worship and creative teams of each

church to see if these same themes emerge, what new themes emerge, and what can and cannot be confirmed in continuing research.

The second recommendation for research is to explore how Adaptive leadership theory and team creativity interact and what the relationship is between them. Creative Adaptability is a very new topic that is currently emerging in research and filling in gaps. This study only starts to explore that a relationship may exist. Future research can build on this topic, especially as it pertains to the church. The western church, in general, is notorious for not being able to keep up with the trends and cultural differences in the secular world enough to properly contextualize the gospel well. It would be beneficial to explore how Adaptive Leadership Theory could impact church's ability to contextualize through creative efforts.

Conclusion

The findings of this research suggested what leadership practices help encourage creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team. The qualitative focus group interviews and observational research were designed to study and discover the perspectives of leadership and council members, worship team members, and church members at Coquille Foursquare Church regarding how creativity is encouraged and led. This research is significant because it provided tangible themes for leaders and pastors to gain insight from and consider when it comes to encouraging creative engagement in team members at their churches in their contexts. The overall results added to the discussion of the emerging relationships between leadership practices and team creativity by discovering six themes and leadership practices that are present in the encouragement of creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team: Openness to Diverse Activities, Acceptance, Inclusion, Adaptability, Support, and Contextual Action.

Amabile (1997) summarized that, in order to manage and lead creativity, leaders ought to recruit those who already have a passion for what they do, and they should foster an environment for that passion to flourish; that is where real innovation can occur in an organization (pp. 55-56). The present research suggested practices that leaders can use to foster this type of environment for creative team members. Leaders who are open to new ideas and expressions of creativity create help create a safe environment for people to share, create and collaborate. Allowing people to be people and welcoming them to be included in the activities and ministries around the church help to create ownership in church members that makes them participative rather than absorbent. Leader support and the capacity to act adaptively in changing situations is important whether it is a new Sunday with new challenges or whether it is a global pandemic with unprecedented regulations. At the core of it all, when leadership acts contextually according to the identity and anointing that the Lord has given that local church, it leaves room for people to freely "discover creative ways to encourage others and to motivate them toward acts of compassion, doing beautiful works as expressions of love" (The Passion Translation, 2020, Hebrews 10:24).

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Research Project:
Pastoring Creativity: Leadership Practices That Encourage Creative Process Engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's Worship Team

Researcher Name: Kaylee Hanks
                     e: khanks@lifepacific.edu
                     c: 559-801-5831

The goal of this project is to explore what leadership practices encourage creative process engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's worship team.

Participation in this project will consist of one focus group. The basic interview questions will be sent to you in advance for your consideration. The interviews will be recorded for research process. During the research process and once the project is finished, the interview material will be kept in secure places. Any reference made to these interviews will be made under pseudo-names for each individual in the church.

Participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any point. All responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

I consent to participate in this study:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Appendix B

Invitation to Participate

Hi Coquille Foursquare Family,

I am a graduate student at Life Pacific University, and I am close to completing a master's degree in Strategic Leadership. This program requires the completion of a research project regarding an area of leadership that I find interesting.

My proposed research topic is leadership practices that encourage creative engagement in the worship team at Coquille Foursquare Church. It will explore patterns and themes that emerge among our church members regarding how our leaders encourage our worship team members to be creative. The goal of this project is to find these patterns and themes, and determine what practices best encourage creative team members to be creative.

This is a preliminary invitation to see if you would be interested in talking about your experience here at the church.

If you are interested, I can send you more information and answer any questions you might have. Ideally, I would like to responsibly meet in person, but if you would prefer to meet via Google meet or Zoom, I can arrange that as well. I would like to have the interviewing stage of my project complete by September 24, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaylee Hanks
Worship Pastor
Coquille Foursquare Church

Appendix C

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Opening Questions:

- How do you see creativity used here at the church?
  - Specific examples, activities, events
- What stories or victories can you share regarding the creativity of our worship team or team members?

Key Questions:

- How would you describe the culture of our church?
  - What examples of this culture could you share?
- What stands out to you about our worship team?
  - Positive and negative
- How have you seen leaders in this church give feedback to our worship team members?
  - Positive, negative, encouragement, constructive criticism
- How have you seen the leaders of this church promote and foster unity?
  - In the worship team
  - In the church
- What is your dream for this team at this church?

Closing Questions:

- Is there anything else you would like to add to this conversation?
- Are there any topics that I missed in this conversation that you feel are important or might contribute to the study?

Appendix D

Data Analysis Spreadsheet

The Data Analysis Spreadsheet is available by clicking this link: [Data Analysis Spreadsheet](#)

GRADING RUBRIC FOR MASL CAPSTONE RESEARCH PAPER – FINAL [ORST 610]

Name of MASL Student: _ Kaylee Hanks Date Paper Received: _12/19/2021___
Title of Paper: Understanding Creativity: Leadership Practices That Encourage Creative Process Engagement in Coquille Foursquare Church's Worship Team.

Faculty: _Remi Lawanson, Ph.D.   Research Assistant: Silvia Velasquez, M. A.

Paper Component	Points Possible	Master's Level Expectations	Points Awarded
APA & STYLE			
APA format	5	Correct title page, TOC, headers, and appendices; no missing elements	5
APA source documentation	5	Proper in-text citation, block quotes, reference page	5
Writing mechanics	5	No grammar or spelling errors; academic tone	5
TOTAL POINTS	15		15
INTRODUCTION			
Abstract	2	Correct length, all elements included, keywords	2
Table of contents	1	Proper format & placement	1
Background	2	Giving larger organizational/congregational contextual data including history, demography, "the hook"	2
Statement of the Problem/ Description of Need; Justification	2	Demonstrating the need for research and the relevance to specific context.	2
Central Research Question	2	Central Research Question	2
Project Researcher Identification Assumption, Delimitation, and Limitation	1		1
TOTAL POINTS	10		10

Paper Component	Points Possible	Master's Level Expectations	Points Awarded
LITERATURE REVIEW			
Scholarly sources	2	1) Number of, appropriateness of (relevant and current), use of scholarly books and journals. 2) What have others said about this topic?	2

		3) What previous research exists? 4) Are there consistent findings, or do past studies disagree?	
Synthesis of sources	2	1) Citing, contrasting, critiquing, comparing, connecting, describing literature position, findings, and their theoretical significance to your research. 2) Using at least five key themes as framework for organizing the Literature Review content. 3) Relating your study to the larger dialogue in the literature.	2
Gap in literature	2	Discussing the gap(s) in literature and previous studies	2
Biblical/ Theological Basis for the Research	2	Covering the biblical basis for this research and connecting to the research topic and central research question!	2
Relevant Leadership Theory	2	Connect at least one relevant leadership theory to the research.	2
TOTAL POINTS	10		10
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY			
Description of Methods	5	Description of Suitability and Justification of Method for the study. Participants/Subjects. Bias	5
Ethical assurances	3	Risks articulated; preventative steps taken	3
Research Protocol & Procedures	2	Logical, thorough description. Validity and reliability; thorough and detailed	2
TOTAL POINTS	10		10
Data Collection and Data Analysis			
Data Collection and Presentation	10	1) Data Collection and Presentation. 2) Logical and thorough description of Data	10

		Collection Approaches for the research 3) Describing Pilot or Field testing, if, where, and when done. 4) Data collection challenges/field issues and what you did to mitigate them.	
Data Analysis	10	Describing Data Analysis Approach/Approaches used.	10
Visual and Non-textual Presentation of data	5	Visual and Non-textual Presentation of data	5
TOTAL POINTS	25		25

Paper Component	**Points Possible**	**Master's Level Expectations**	**Points Awarded**
Results, Findings, Discussion, and Interpretation			
Results and Findings	5	1) Connecting data analysis to initial research questions and hypotheses as applicable 2) Allowing the data to speak. 3) Tying findings and analysis with central research question.	5
Discussion and Interpretation	5	1) Explanation of results 2) References to previous research 3) Deduction 4) Using the Themes emerging from Data Analysis as Framework for engaging the Discussion. 5) Limitations and Weaknesses in the Research: Exploring the factors that could have improved the effectiveness.	5
Recommendations	5	2-5 Recommendations 1) Articulating changes or improvements being recommended by your research project 2) Aligning with the themes emerging from your research data analysis and results to	5

		serve as appropriate framework for articulating or outlining the recommendations. 3) Regarding where future research might be directed.	
TOTAL POINTS	15		15
CONCLUSION			
Summary	2	Adequately summarizing main themes and/or sections of the project	2
Future Oriented Application	5	**1)** Stating what you have discovered about your subject matter 2) Stating where future research might be directed 3) Developing it in a way to make your reader understand why your research should matter to them 4) Not a summary of the main topics, but 5) A synthesis of the themes and main points 6) Providing a chance to leave a lasting impression 7) Summarizing your thoughts and the larger significance of the study 8) Demonstrating the importance of your ideas 9) Restating the main argument 10) Providing a place for you to persuasively and succinctly restate your central research question, given that the reader has now been presented with all the information about the topic.	5
Reference List	5	Quality and number of references cited	5
Appendices Tables and Figures	3	Quality and appropriateness of appendices including tables and figures with proper format and spelling.	3
TOTAL POINTS	15		15

	Possible	Awarded
Style & APA	15	15
Introduction	10	10
Literature Review	10	10
Research Methodology	10	10
Data Collection & Analysis	25	25
Findings & Recommendations	15	15
Conclusion (Ref & Appendices)	15	15
TOTAL POINTS	100	100

Date: _12/24/2021_____

Signature: _____

Name: __Remi Lawanson, Ph.D._____