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Collective Competencies and their Constitutive Elements: a case study in a Brazilian Fashion Group

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to identify the constitutive elements and main collective competencies (CC) in the Lunelli Group Creation Center's work teams, a business group focused on the fashion industry from the state of Santa Catarina in Brazil. Through exploratory and qualitative research, applying the case study strategy, conducted semi-structured interviews (with 36 employees from 6 work teams of the Lunelli Group's brands), and realizing a participant observation. The results demonstrate that the main CC, identified based on their constitutive elements, were the capacities to cooperate, create, planning collection, decision-making, solve problems, approval collection, and meet goals. We believe that these CC will allow organizations to understand teams' collective activities better, making it possible to develop the disabled CC and form the absent CC necessary to improve the team's performance and contribute to the organizational results.

KEYWORDS

Collective competencies, Constitutive elements, Work teams, Fashion

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1. INTRODUCTION

Collective competencies (CC) started to gain more space in discussions about competence in the last decade (Gentil & Chétodel, 2018; Guernoub & Kerkoub, 2019), driven by the development of social relationships established in teams and between teams, which provide an opportunity for joint learning and a better understanding of roles and responsibilities (Liberati et al., 2019). Thus, CC has become an essential element for carrying out shared activities, solving problems together, and facing the unexpected (Iazykoff, 2018; O`Neal et al., 2020). Therefore, it is possible to understand that CC emerge from collective work practices (Avelino et al., 2017), where a group of individuals collaborate towards a common goal (Todero et al., 2016), creating the shared values that structure these workgroups (Araújo et al., 2019).

However, some scholars point out the lack of work on CC (Silva et al., 2022; Wagner et al., 2020; Fuel et al., 2021) and their marginalization due to the emphasis on studies of individual and organizational competencies (Avelino et al., 2017; Langlois, 2020). In this context, the lack of empirical evidence to prove the dynamics of CC is noticable (Wagner et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2022). This low level of diffusion about the application or operationalization of the concept reveals the difficulty of dealing with a not very real notion and the complexity faced in its identification and management, (Colin & Grasser, 2011; Silva & Mello, 2011) the most diverse areas of organizational performance.

In this context, this article aims to identify the constitutive elements and the main CC in the Lunelli Group's Creation Center's work teams, to contribute to the CC debate. The textile fashion sector was chosen because despite the creative processes involved in the fashion industry it is based mainly on individuals. There is a growing role based on teamwork (Cortini et al., 2019). In creating a fashion collection, different groups of professionals are involved whose cooperative activity, organized around shared knowledge, makes them work in close contact and share a final goal to be successful in the market (Mora, 2006).

Besides, the textile and clothing segment employs 1.5 million direct employees, the second largest employer in Brazil's manufacturing industry, with revenues of US$ 48.3 billion in 2018, presenting the fourth position in the world ranking (Associação Brasileira da Indústria Têxtil e de Confecção [ABIT], 2019), with the clothing industry in the southern part of Brazil being highly representative in the economic and social context of the country (Libânio & Amaral, 2016).

We conducted a case study in the Lunelli Group Creation Center, a Brazilian fashion Group, through semi-structured interviews with 36 employees from 6 Lunelli Group's brands and followed their work activities through participant observations. The results demonstrate the CC central constitutive elements in the teams researched, signaling the complementarity, interdependence, and interrelation of these elements. We also identified seven CC in the work teams (capacities to cooperate, create, planning collection, decision-making, solve problems, approval collection, and meet goals) that portray their collective mobilization to obtain superior performance in carrying out their shared activities.

This study seeks to contribute to the literature by identifying the constitutive elements that collaborate for the CC formation and development, reinforcing the internal social factors important for work teams. We point out some literature advances in CC because few studies report their identification, and none identified CC relating them to their constitutive elements. We believe that the identification of CC and its constitutive elements will allow organizations to improve their teams' performance, adding to organizational results. The study also presents managerial contributions by bringing a better understanding of collective activities, revealing

elements capable of developing CC in creative teams. It also contributes to the fashion industry, demonstrating the CC and their constitutive elements that would help assist collective creativity and the development of fashion collections.

2. COLLECTIVE COMPETENCIES

The CC had its origin in the first discussions about semi-autonomous teams and on studies of the socio-technical current. The idea that the productive system would optimize its results with a group of actions that emphasize the technical and social parts of the project. Rescuing the importance of reflecting on the meaning of work and collective processes in organizations (Bitencourt et al., 2013). Subsequently, literature from France (Le Boterf, 2003; Retour & Krohmer, 2011) deepened the notion of CC to understand their nature and manifestations. In Anglo-Saxon research, the authors were concerned with the connection between collective functioning and performance (Defelix et al., 2014).

The concept of CC is in the process of being appropriated (Silva & Ruas, 2014) because it is very comprehensive and brings together different cognitive and social phenomena to assist the capacity to act and react collectively (Avelino et al., 2017) within organizations, which makes it challenging to structure a single concept or definition for CC. In practice, it refers to two levels: the lower level, where the CC are more than an individual's competence, and the upper level, in which the CC is less than organizational competences (Colin & Gresser, 2011). Table 1 presents some definitions of CC.

Table 1
Definitions of Collective Competencies

Avelino et al. (2017, p. 209)	It refers to the participation and interaction of individuals in workgroups. It is an intermediate component in organizations' functioning, placed between individual competencies at the micro-level and organizational competencies at the macro level.
Hedjazi (2018, p. 394)	The ability of group to solve more problems that its individual members. So, it is extremely important to treat the group or team as the most significant social unit.
Guernoub and Kerkoub (2019, p. 86)	Represents the sum of the individual skills of the group members, plus the relationships that group members have between them, that is, their interactions. Collective competence thus becomes the competence of the team.
Wagner et al., (2020, p. 109)	Refers to both abilities of a team (sum of individual competencies), as well as the relationships and collaborative processes among its members (more than the sum of individual competencies), working together.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We observed that different contributions reveal two different and complementary concepts to apprehend the idea of CC. The first refers to a team's operational know-how that makes it possible to achieve a level of performance that would not be achieved by a single individual or by the sum of individual competencies. The second points to the idea that individuals who work in groups create a CC from which the operational translation will occur at the time of the actions performed individually (Retour & Krohmer, 2011).

The construction process of the CC is enriched by the activity of collaboration, through exchanges, confrontations, negotiations, and interpersonal interactions (Hedjazi, 2018), and for them to emerge, it is assumed that rules and conditions are needed that will create relevant combinations of competences (Le Boterf, 2003). It is necessary to understand the dynamics of the team and understand the ties of cooperation and influence among its members (Guernoub & Kerkoub, 2019).

2.1. Constitutive Elements of Collective Competencies

Just as individuals develop fundamental competencies for their performance, teams also develop CC to add value to teamwork and contribute to the organization's performance (Puente-Palacios & Brito, 2017). According to Bitencourt et al. (2013), it is possible to have a methodology that identifies and develops CC. By reflecting the constitutive elements of CC, it is possible to (re) think actions and strategies to stimulate these competencies' emergence. Klein and Bitencourt (2012) identified four constitutive elements of CC: sensemaking, shared understanding, action, and coverage.

Sensemaking is related to the team's capacity to make the action meaningful. The meaning-building process must include a capacity for reflection to make the actions of other members relevant and the adaptation of these actions considering the information provided (Klein & Bitencourt, 2012). This makes sense and can be understood in the way teams build and deconstruct the environment in which they work, concerning previous events (Allen et al., 2018). The sensemaking process can happen, for example, in meetings to analyze and debate problems and, over time, the decisions taken to solve these problems can end up being incorporated as routines by the team (Tello-Gamarra & Verschoore, 2015).

Shared understanding is considered a complement to sensemaking and socialization. In this process, team members are involved in negotiating the meaning of their work through these members' interaction in a continuous process of developing sensemaking (Bitencourt et al., 2013). In this way, the coordination of a team's activities is accepted by each member, building an understanding of activities compatible with their teammates (Bourbousson & Fortes-Bourbousson, 2016). Thus, this dimension is formed by three sub-dimensions: interactions, which can take place formally or informally with a collaboration network, such as meetings by phone, email, or online communication platforms; the coordination of knowledge, recognized as the sharing of knowledge and communication, for example in the exchange of emails between the team members; and the collective spirit, understood as a synergy of collective actions, as in the team's synergy to conduct a project, for example (Tello-Gamarra & Verschoore, 2015).

The action refers to the idea that competence only happens through action. That is, an individual is competent when acting in a particular context. In CC, it also plays a central role and can take two forms: reflective action, which is related to intentional actions, and needs, for its existence, for their to be a previous construction of the group's meaning based on moments of interaction; and non-reflective action, which is guided by routines, standards, and rules, and which deals with the automated processes of organizational behavior that happens naturally (Klein & Bitencourt, 2012). Tello-Gamarra and Verschoore (2015) exemplify these actions through a study conducted with basis of a voluntary project in the third sector. The reflection activities took place with unforeseen events and eventualities, such as the lack of water in the training building, or a classroom device that did not work. The non-reflective activities, on the other hand, were related to day-to-day routines, such as the application of a culture of evidence and accountability.

The coverage is related to the definition of scope: a cut determined at a specific moment, based on time and space. Time will set the task's experience, composing practical competence, such as professional experience and activity planning (Bitencourt et al., 2013; Klein & Bitencourt, 2012). Space determines a place where competence occurs, such as spaces for team meetings (Klein & Bitencourt, 2012) or routines, which can house and mobilize attributes and competencies of a collective nature that could result in its development (Broman et al., 2019). Tello-Gamarra and Verschoore (2015) point out the importance of scope for the execution of a project carried out in the third sector. Time was considered a vital factor for the development of all project phases, and space was important for the coordination, execution, and project results dissemination.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The study is characterized as exploratory, qualitative, and uses a case study strategy. The object of the research is the Lunelli Group—a Brazilian business group focused on fashion, and a reference in the textile market where it has been operating for 40 years in the sector. The Group has 16 plants in Brazil and an international plant in Paraguay. Due to the group's scope, the study used, as its unit of analysis, six work teams from the Creation Center located in Guaramirim, in the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina. Its teams are responsible for creating and developing the garments of the Lunelli Group for the five brands of the group (Lunender, Lez a Lez, Hangar 33, Alakazoo, and Fico).

The collection of primary data was executed through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The semi-structured interview was followed by a script established with 12 open questions, based on predefined categories (sensemaking, shared understanding, action, and coverage) proposed by Klein and Bittencourt (2012). The script was validated by two professors who are specialists in the field of CC. The interviews were conducted at the Creation Center in Guaramirim between October and November 2019.

Of the 40 employees who worked at the Creation Center, four were excluded since they were newly hired. In this way, 36 collaborators were interviewed, five coordinators, 12 stylists, nine designers, and seven style assistants, all from 6 different work teams. All interviewees (36 collaborators) answered all interview questions referring to predefined categories. The Creation Center comprises five teams from the respective brands of the Lunelli Group and one team responsible exclusively for creating and developing jeans pieces for the five brands of the group, totaling the analysis of 6 work teams (Table 2). A combination of two codes identified employees, first representing their team and then identifying them as as team members. The coordinator responsible for two teams was identified differently as E2-3.

We recorded all interviews, with the interviewees' authorization, totaling approximately 14 hours of audio recording. To observe the dynamics and functioning of the different work teams analyzed, the researcher accompanied and participated in work activities at the Creation Center, such as meetings, collection approval, runway shows, and conventions, among others. The observations occurred between October and November 2019, totaling approximately 85 hours of participant observation, with the information recorded in a field diary by the researcher. This field diary contains information about the teams' work dynamics, interactions between their members, shared languages used, and other details experienced by the researcher daily with the work teams.

Table 2
Teams' characterization

Teams	Number of components	Codes
Team 1	1 coordinator; 1 style assistant; 4 designers; and 3 stylists.	E1M1, E1M2, E1M3, E1M4, E1M5, E1M6, E1M7, E1M8, and E1M9.
Team 2	1 coordinator*; 1 style assistant; 2 designers; and 1 stylist.	E2-3M1, E2M2, E2M3, E2M4, and E2M5.
Team 3	1 coordinator*; 1 style assistant; and 1 designer.	E2-3M1, E3M2, and E3M3.
Team 4	1 coordinator; 2 style assistants; and 2 stylists.	E4M1, E4M2, E4M3, E4M4, and E4M5.
Team 5	1 coordinator, 1 style assistant; and 3 stylists.	E5M1, E5M2, E5M3, E5M4, and E5M5.
Team 6	1 coordinator; 1 style assistant; 2 designers; and 6 stylists.	E6M1, E6M2, E6M3, E6M4, E6M5, E6M6, E6M7, E6M8, E6M9, and E6M10.

Note: *Coordinator responsible for two teams.
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We performed data analysis using the data obtained from semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The interviews were transcribed in full to preserve the quality of the content and classified into pre-defined analysis categories, following the content analysis criteria proposed by Bardin (2011). To assist in this process, we used data analysis software ATLAS.ti version 8.

3.1. Creation Center

Because the unit of analysis of this research is the Creation Center of the Lunelli Group, it is necessary to understand how their work activities are developed in order for better data analysis comprehension. In the Creation Center, all 6 teams work in an open plan space delimited by specific layouts for each team, and they follow a general annual work schedule established together with other sectors. Based on the annual work schedule, the Creation Center makes a daily schedule for its work teams, with all the steps to be completed for each collection. In general, all teams follow a pattern to create and develop their collections based on the daily schedule.

At the beginning of each collection, the research theme is carried out: that is, each team is inspired by a theme that, from it, the collection garments are created. From the definition of the theme, the teams prepare the colors and mesh maps, choosing which fabrics and colors they will use in the collection. The next step for defining the collection is to plan the number and type of pieces that will be developed. Then, price planning is carried out based on the choice of fabric. So, the price of the garment is pre-calculated so that later, when choosing prints or trims, the stylists know the value of the piece, and if they can reduce costs or not.

In the next step, the construction of "families" is carried out: that is, the garments are divided into categories that will have the same pattern, the same visual unit, and similar characteristics. Subsequently, the definition of prints takes place, in which the prints of the families and pieces of clothing are chosen. Next, the sketch drawing is carried out, which is a drawing or sketch that receives the elements of creativity that the design determines. Technical datasheets for each

garment are also made, containing all the product information, related to cutting, sewing, and type of fabric, among others. With the technical sheets ready, the modeling sector carried out the preparation of the test piece, which, after finished, returns to the Center for a conference. The last stage consists of the collection approval, in which the team presents the collection with a theme and a parade of test pieces. Finally, all test parts are analyzed by a company employees committee composed of different sectors (commercial, modeling, engineering, etc.), which verify technical specifications, costs, and product design.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Through the collected evidence, we identified the constitutive elements and the main CC present in the Lunelli Group's Creation Center.

4.1. Constitutive Elements

Follow the detailed analyses of each CC's constitutive element (sensemaking, shared understanding, action, and coverage).

4.1.1. Sensemaking

Sensemaking corresponds to establishing shared meanings and understand how a team is processed (Einola & Alvesson, 2019). Klein and Bittencourt (2012) defined three elements that involve sensemaking about the constitution of CC: context, roles, and communication.

The **context,** or structure, favored the sensemaking process by providing a positive environment for the teams' actions (Klein & Bittencourt, 2012; Weick, 1993). They are related to the construction of meaning for the collections' development: the company's values, the schedule, and the goals. The Group's values (enthusiasm, simplicity, and obsession with results) are present in the teams and contribute to the sense of collective work, "the company's values characterized by 90% of employees", reports E1M8. We observed in the daily activity that the daily schedules and goals provide meaning to the context of activities for all the teams at the Creation Center as E1M3 says "we program everything through goals and schedules".

Along these lines, the definition of **roles** is fundamental for fulfilling goals and schedules in teams, giving meaning to their actions. Interviewee E1M1 recognizes that employees have defined team roles through related activities. E3M2 complements by stating that roles are interdependent, in which individuals need to make exchanges to supplement their roles.

In creating the collective sense, **communication**'s importance as a central component is highlighted (Weick et al., 2005). Evidenced by a shared language, developed by a common vocabulary among team members (Retour & Krohmer, 2011), and heavily used by design teams (Libâno & Amaral, 2016). The use of technical terms and a language shared between the teams was perceived as expected in the daily communication process. E2M5 recognizes that some technical words are created and end up being incorporated by the team, "I have a print that gives a 'leather effect' then I go there and create the 'leather effect print' on my head, then I share".

We perceived a common language used by the designers, who employed a few words to express drawing techniques and streamline the communication process. Teams also use language linked to identifying the team with the brand. In Team 6, the collections are named by the collection's theme, inspired by the place where they made their research trip, "we no longer treat high summer, spring, but the collection's name" (E6M1).

4.1.2. Shared understanding

Shared understanding occurs when individuals work towards a mutual objective, and they understand the subject of this objective (Tan, 1994). In a work team, the cognitive proximity between its members is considered an essential element in forming attitudes favorable to knowledge sharing (Moreno et al., 2020). In this logic, Klein and Bittencourt (2012) establish three elements of analysis of the shared understanding: interaction, coordination of knowledge, and collective spirit.

Interaction is recognized as the shared space for debate and the definition of team activities or the exchange of experiences (Hansson, 2003; Le Bofert, 2003). At the Creation Center, teams carry out daily interaction processes that make up the collective dynamics of work activities. The moments of most significant interaction, as perceived by the teams were: at the conference of the pilot pieces, meetings, brand conventions and research trips.

We perceived the pilot pieces conference as a moment of constant interaction in the teams, "we see the final results, and we exchange ideas, what could have been changed, what we could have avoided" (E3M2). In planning meetings, team members interact by discussing ideas and suggestions for improvement. When holding the collection convention, equivalent to a brand event for sales representatives, Team 6 demonstrated intense interaction and collaboration. Research trips allow teams moments for interaction, either with team members or members of other brands who end up traveling together.

Knowledge is essential for the constitution, development, and maintenance of CC (Dupuich, 2011), improving collaboration, communication, and understanding between team members (Langlois, 2020). Some professionals with previous experiences in developing the collection exchanging these experiences informally, through daily conversations, or during interaction moments. The interviewees portrayed that, during the execution of these activities, their members can exchange technical knowledge in order to improve and streamline the processes, observing the presence of informal learning in the team.

Participation in events, such as fairs and workshops, allows teams to share knowledge with members who were unable to attend. This sharing occurs by reporting what they observed, market news and fashion trends, photos, design materials, and software. Research trips provide employees with access to a large amount of information, subsequently shared with their teams. Employees who have traveled usually prepare a presentation with captured images and reference pieces for employees who have not traveled.

The team's common goal achievement occurs when there is an interdependent relationship between members (Boreham, 2004; Hansson, 2003) and a competencies complementarity (Le Boterf, 2003). These aspects show the **collective spirit**, seen as a cognitive framework shared by members of the team who provide to them a capacity to synthesize its contradictory social processes inherent in collective life (Silva et al., 2014).

Regarding the achievement of goals, E1M5 notes that people help each other in times of delay and divide the work among themselves to not hinder the schedule. E1M9 highlights the collective spirit presence when problems arise in the team "everyone gets involved, and everyone pulls the other". We perceived Team 6's collective spirit during the brand events as the collection convention, where the entire team needed to work together to be successful. At these events, collective engagement and shared commitment to brand performance were noticeable, where union and synergy in work activities were even more evident in the team.

4.1.3. Action

According to Klein and Bittencourt (2012), the collective interactions can suffer a reflexive action or a non-reflective action. The **reflexive action** is related to the collective reflection caused by the subsequent observation of a team's complicated situation (Epstein et al., 2017). At the Creation Center, there was a reflexive action on the activities already carried out by the teams in some moments: when planning the collection, receiving feedback, and carrying out the activities.

The planning in the teams is built through a reflective process, considering the activities already carried out to seek improvements through this reflection. E1M1 explains, "every time we have to be making parameters of what we are creating, we base on what we worked, so we are always reflecting on that, based on results". In planning the collection, the teams seek to parameterize the ranking of the most sold pieces from the past collections, observing characteristics such as coloring, printing, and design.

The market feedback provides moments of reflection for the teams, whether in product development or collection planning, using it as references for brands. E1M8 notes, "these results help a lot. We understand what the path that we must follow is". The teams also seek the feedback of the brand's commercial representatives, intending to know better the buyer's and the consumer's desires. The reflective processes on the activities already carried out end up becoming a reference for the team's activities. In Team 6, reflections about the activities carried out in previous events serve as a basis for planning new ones in the future.

Non-reflective action concerns the roles and routines used in defined or predictable situations, without the need for reflection, as they are based on previous experiences and routine actions (Weick, 1993). Broman et al. (2019) highlight those organizational routines can harbor and mobilize attributes and competencies of a collective nature, resulting in their development.

The Creation Center workflow itself presents routine actions performed in each new collection, such as theme research, color and mesh map, pattern definition, sketch design, technical sheets, and collection approval. They are linked to the annual and daily schedule, being charged by the teams through the goals.

4.1.4. Coverage

For Klein and Bittencourt (2012), the development of CC involves the contextual idea, a notion of comprehensiveness; that is, the idea of time and space in which collective reflection and the exchange of experiences occur.

Time involves experience about the task and tacit knowledge for practical competence (Hansson, 2003; Klein & Bittencourt, 2012). Thus, the CC is built by the team and appears over time due to interactions between individual and organizational competencies (Loufrani-Fedida & Missonier, 2015; Guernoub & Kerkoub, 2019). We observed that time in the Creation Center teams was related to professional experience and coexistence in the team.

The professional experience acquired by the teams throughout the collection's creation allowed them to learn and improve the team's activities. E1M2 commented on this fact "I think it was a lot with learning, with what was happening. I think we are learning from what is going on in each situation, each collection and approval is knowledge". Some employees with longer service time in the group, lived professional experiences that ended up being shared as learnings for the team, as well as the professional experiences lived in other companies.

The coexistence between the members seems to be a factor that contributed to the teams acquiring professional experience. According to E2M5 "professional knowledge gives a lot to the experience that you have when I go through some problem, or someone from the Center passes, we usually share it, so I think we end up contributing to the general knowledge of the team".

Space refers to where the CC takes place, stimulating interpersonal competence, which coincides, while practical competence is developed continuously through time (Hansson, 2003; Klein & Bittencourt, 2012). The company's physical space allows the collective interaction of employees. Interviewee E1M2 notes that "we have a lot of this exchange of experiences of other employees, through our meetings and passages of sketches, from the approvals themselves". E1M1 highlights the importance of external space. He portrays that he organized two creative immersion processes with his team, one in his own home and another in a flower shop. According to him, these outside spaces allow the team to think outside the factory environment and seek creative inspiration.

The E1M8 addresses the national and international research trips, in which malls, squares, and tourist places are visited, seeking creative and clothing references. The "white room" is an environment used by the teams for planning the collection, which visually manages to plan the creative process. We also perceived that the virtual space was an environment for the development of collective meaning. The teams use WhatsApp, Instagram, and Pinterest groups—virtual environments that enhance the team's capacity to create and exchange images and information.

To demonstrate our findings through a more objective analysis, Table 3 presents a synthesis of the constitutive elements of the CC identified in the Creation Center work teams.

Table 3
Synthesis of the Constitutive Elements of Collective Competencies

Constitutive Elements	Elements involved	Identified elements
Sensemaking	Context	Values, timelines, and goals
	Roles	Defined and interdependent roles
	Communication	Technical terms and shared language
Shared Understanding	Interaction	Pilot conference, meetings, conventions, and research trips
	Knowledge	Professional experiences, informal learning, events, and research trips
	Collective spirit	Achievement of goals, problem solving, and conventions
Action	Reflexive	Collection planning, feedback, and execution of activities
	Non reflexive	Workflow, timelines, and goals
Coverage	Time	Professional experiences and coexistence of the team
	Space	Meeting room, external space, research trips, "white room", and virtual space

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

It is possible to consider that CC constitutive elements provide actions and strategies to stimulate the emergence of these competencies, being closely related and not considering them separately (Klein & Bitencourt, 2012). This interrelation can be observed as some elements are repeated, such as schedules, goals, research trips, and professional experiences.

4.2. Collective Competencies

We described the work teams' CC based on the constitutive elements: sensemaking shared understanding, action, and coverage. Through the collected evidence, we identified the main CC present in the Creation Center.

The first CC identified was the **capacity to cooperate**, a competence already recognized in the works of Pauvers and Schieb-Bienfait (2011) and Silva and Ruas (2016). For Felix et al. (2019), cooperation is sharing the meaning of wanting to do something together, printing an orientation when doing it, and indicating the value and subjective relevance of acting in common. The cooperation capacity was identified by the values of companionship and unity present in the teams investigated, when problems arise that need to be solved together or when members cooperate to meet the established deadlines. The interviewee E4M4 expresses, "inside it is like a cooperative, everyone has to cooperate so that the burden does not get too heavy just for you, so you always have to share the work with people, because you alone cannot do anything".

It was observed the presence of cooperation, evidenced in the people`s collaboration to achieve the goals, in the work overload and the execution of tasks of absent members. We also perceived participation in the provision of help among employees. Also, especially in draftsmen's activities, they are free to exchange their briefings with each other when they do not fit their profile or technical difficulties.

The second CC identified was the **capacity to create** due to its relevance to the collections' development. We observed that collective creativity is an intentional set of processes, activities, and mechanisms mediated by a collective interaction and social exchange, through which a new idea, procedure, product, or service is generated (Cirella & Shani, 2012). We found that the collective construction of the creative process is too present in the teams. As much as it is possible to create alone, the collective work further strengthens the collaborative objectives. The capacity to create was recognized in moments of sharing ideas, in which members collaborate in the creative process through suggestions; "it is like a wheel of exchange of ideas", points out E2M2.

We considered the creation of prints by members to be a joint work, given that the team tries to seek other points of view for its construction. We observed that they built the pattern by interference from each person's creative profile and professional experiences, who, together, through different characteristics, collectively contribute to the final work. The interviewee E6M8 states, "we have forty prints more or less in one collection, nobody would ever be able to do it alone, or think about the prints and create the prints, so this question of the briefing, pattern creation and coloring is certainly something that we have to be together".

A fashion collection requires planning and developing a set of products considering market needs analysis (D'Avolio et al., 2017). The teams' **capacity to plan the collection** was identified as a CC, considering the collective contribution to its planning. The process of developing a fashion collection is dynamic and requires intense communication between team members, encompassing decision-making, from defining a product mix to market feedback. Monitoring the complete cycle of a collection allows the team to acquire knowledge and improve their creative process (Treptow, 2013).

The joint planning of the collection makes the complementarity of ideas possible since the whole one is interconnected. The need to have harmony and alignment in decisions between the team members is present in the E6M6 explanation: "there is always an exchange, I missed a fashion show, or I ended up not noticing that a color was up, it ended passing by, someone else has it, it is good to do it together [...] it is necessary to have a brand, collection unit, it is imperative" (E6M6). We also noticed that the joint planning allows the collection to be aligned with the brand, the exchange of constructive criticisms, and a greater diversity of opinions, not allowing only a person's taste to interfere in the whole planning.

We observed that they take decisions together to reinforce the **capacity to decision-making**, choosing the best alternative. Collective decision-making is a way of overcoming partial information and knowledge barriers since organizational information and knowledge are not always explicit and available (Angeloni, 2003). In Team 5, the decisions regarding collection catalogs and marketing materials are jointly directed by the team to the marketing department, as an example of the scenarios for photos and the products' colors, recognizes E5M5.

Within the planning, the team needs to make some decisions, such as color choice, fabrics, and the collection theme. They made this decision together because everyone uses these elements in the products' development. There must be a consensus on which will be necessary in order for everyone to use the collection.

The fifth CC identified was the **capacity to solve problems.** Lemos and Almeida (2019, p. 121) explain that problem solving is "a cognitive skill, grouping various cognitive functions that converge for the analysis, understanding, and resolution of situations that present a different format problem to be solved" therefore, we observed, in the team, collective interactions in their work environment, involving cognitive diversity in order to solve problems.

In Team 2, when problems arise, members come together to discuss what can be done and choose the best decision to solve the issue quickly. In Team 3, individuals try to understand the problem together to find the easiest solution, "it does not matter if someone made a mistake, the person has to admit they made a mistake, try to find a solution, and see that the team always tries to solve it together" (E3M3).

In Team 6, the capacity to solve problems together appeared in the E6M4 statement: "I see that it is possible to score as positive in the team the fact that people get together to solve things right away, you know, and be able to move things forward. It can be a union in the sense of solving problems, with agility" (E6M4).

The **capacity to approval collection** presents itself as a CC as the team members get together to show the collection's theme and expose the team's pilot pieces to a group of evaluators. According to Treptow (2013), at an approval meeting, the clothes pieces are presented by the designers that explain each model, justifying the fabrics and trims used and describing the color variants in which each piece will be available.

The joint work on the collection's approval has the intention to solve doubts about the products. The idea of the collection is sold for the commission's acceptance. E1M2 highlights that the collection approval is a collective activity "because if it were with a person just analyzing it, we would not have this perception of creation". This view demonstrates that the teamwork, constituted by the team's knowledge about its creation process, collaborates for the collection's approval to be successful. The interviewee E5M5 complements, "the product approval also

together gives you more security, because you alone there sometimes forget a crucial point or get a little more nervous, and there we would help each other".

Finally, it was perceived in some teams the **capacity to meet goals** through collaboration and mutual help, where members can meet the goals within the given period. We recognized this capacity in the E2M3 opinion about what activity would not be possible to be able to carry out individually: "it is taking the goals in time, I would not be able to achieve them alone, just with the whole group together. Because it is a lot of work for one person, many things come out, and then you need the team". Goal setting in work teams emphasizes increasing teamwork skills, such as communication, mutual support, and feelings sharing. Another objective of this approach is to increase trust between people, as well as the confidence in the team (Dipboye, 2018).

We presented in Table 4 the main CC definitions mapped in the work teams of the Creation Center, based on the empirical findings identified previously.

Table 4
Creation Center teams' Collective Competencies

CC	Definition	Teams
Capacity to cooperate	Capacity for team members to act together and help each other achieve their shared goals. It involves wanting to do things together, acting in common, and establishing relationships of mutual trust.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
Capacity to create	Capacity for team members to collaborate to jointly create an idea or product. It involves interaction, social exchange, collective ideation, and collective creativity.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
Capacity to planning collection	Capacity for team members to jointly develop procedures, plans and actions aimed at creating a fashion collection. It involves the discussion of opinions and ideas, the joint alignment, and the definition of objectives.	1, 2, 3, and 6
Capacity to decision-making	Capacity for team members to choose the best alternative in favor of a shared goal. It involves aggregating information and knowledge, consensus of decisions, and exploration of the situation to be decided.	1, 2, 3, 5, and 6
Capacity to solve problems	Capacity for team members to get involved in solving a problem, seeking to solve it by developing solutions and action planning. It involves joint targeting, communication, and cognitive skills.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
Capacity to approval collection	Capacity for team members to be able to approve products in the collection. It involves the coordination of knowledge, persuasion, and the complementarity of information.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
Capacity to meet goals	Capacity for team members to be involved in planning actions to achieve goals. It involves sharing, mutual support, and communication.	1, 2, 3, and 4

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

As observed in the CC mapped in Table 4, the collective sense construction occurs by establishing knowledge, and the development of team spirit inside an organization (Macke & Crespi, 2016), seeking to achieve a common or shared goal. Although some CC can be understood as the team attributes or activities, we observed in the teams' daily interaction that they have a collective capacity to mobilize themselves to obtain superior performance in carrying out their activities, configuring themselves as a CC. Finally, to contribute to the understanding of the CC concept, through Figure 1, we sought to illustrate the three dimensions of competencies (individual, collective, and organizational).

Figure 1 shows the three dimensions of competencies, making it possible to observe the articulations between individuals, teams, and organizations. The individual one consists of a cohesive knowledge combination, abilities, and other personal elements (Osagie et al., 2019), which, in action or through some event, results in a delivery process (Kuzma et al., 2017). The organizational dimension reflects the mobilization and transfer of knowledge, skills, and resources that add value to the organization, people, and society. Its main characteristics are sustainability, coordination capacity, development capacity, and goal orientation (Munck & Galleli, 2015).

When reflecting on the theoretical and empirical findings previously presented, this study defines CC as the capacity of a people group seeking to achieve common or shared goals. This capacity does not represent the sum of each person's skills but the joint work through the interaction of these individual competencies. Thus, the CC involves the coordination of knowledge, collective engagement, collaboration, synergy, communication and learning processes, exchanges, and social interactions.

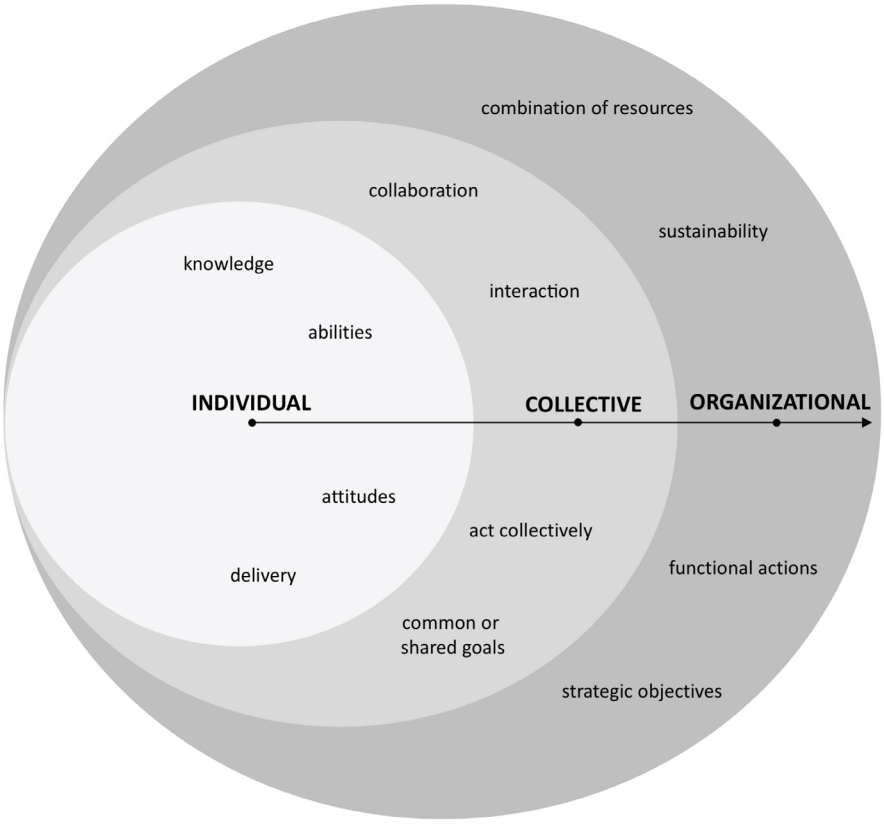

Figure 1. Competence Dimensions
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because of the fact that empirical studies on CC are still further explored, this study sought to identify the constitutive elements and the main CC in the Creation Center of the Lunelli Group's work teams. To reach this objective, we structured the theoretical contribution, presenting the conceptual bases for this research's development, and, based on the empirical evidence presented, we highlighted below some theoretical contributions.

Unlike the other studies that have only identified CC (e.g., Graz et al., 2020; Pauvers & Schieb-Bienfait, 2011; Silva & Ruas, 2016) or its constitutive elements (e.g., Klein & Bitencourt, 2012; Macke & Crespi, 2016; Tello-Gamarra & Verschoore, 2015; Todero et al., 2016), this study advances in the literature, being the first to identify CC and specifically relate them to their constitutive elements. It was this gap that we sought to fill by empirically revealing the dynamics of CC through its constitutive elements, demonstrating that the synergistic combination of these elements is essential for the formation and development of CC in work teams.

Regarding the CC constitutive elements, we bring some reflections from our empirical findings. The CC elements (context, roles, and communication) that involve the sensemaking process contributed to forming a work sense in the teams. The activities context provided an environment that supplied meaning to work activities, such as values, schedules, and goals in teams. Defined and interconnected roles in work teams made the execution of tasks meaningful. Through a language shared among members, communication made it possible to create meaning in the team's experiences, for example in the technical terms and common language used in the Creation Center.

The elements (interaction, knowledge, and collective spirit) that contemplate the shared understanding collaborate to understand the team members to occur to achieve the shared objectives. The interaction element allowed exchanges between team members to take place and that the understanding is shared (e.g., meetings, conventions, and research trips). The knowledge element enabled the knowledge sharing which resulted from the teams' work activities, through informal learning and professional experiences. Moreover, the collective spirit included a collective commitment dynamic to achieving goals, as noted in problem solving and collection conventions.

However, the action must consider one of the "sine qua non" conditions for CC to happen. In the reflexive action, there was a collective reflection of the activities already carried out in the interaction moments, as observed in planning meetings or post-receiving feedback from the teamwork. The non-reflective action referred to the routines or defined roles performed through previous experiences, being established by the workflow in the Creation Center.

The collective action scope concerned the factors of time and space in which collective reflection and the exchange of experiences occurred. The CC was built over time by the team's interactions and experiences in the Creation Center. In this context, space was the place where competence happened and could be developed. Finally, we emphasized that these elements were essential for the CC constitution and reinforced the importance of sharing knowledge, collective interactions, creating meaning in experiences, collective reflection, and team commitment. Thus, we considered that the constitutive elements of CC are complementary, interdependent, and interrelated.

The primary CC that we mapped were the capacities to cooperate, create, planning collection, decision-making, solve problems, approval collection, and meet goals. However, some teams had a higher number of CC than others. We believe that this is linked to social interactions, such as collaboration, mutual support, communication, and social exchanges, to achieve shared goals. This social approach involved collective sense, teamwork, and an emphasis on the relationship between people.

In practical and managerial terms, these findings can be useful as the CC identification allows organizations to understand the teams' collective activities, making it possible to develop the disabled CC and form the absent CC to improve the team's performance and contribute to the organizational results. For the fashion industry, this study contributes to identifying elements and CC capable of contributing to the improvement of creative teams' work activities, collective creativity, and the development of fashion collections.

As a limitation of this study, there is the singularity of application in a single Group and field of activity, not allowing generalizations to be made to other companies. As a recommendation for future research, we suggested identifying CC in different contexts to compare the results. We also suggested exploring quantitative methods seeking to measure CC based on its constitutive elements.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

LHS: concept, method, data collection, data analysis, theoretical background, references and full paper review. TG: concept, method, data analysis, theoretical background, references and research supervision.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.