

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employees' Job Creativity.

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Abstract:

Transformational leadership, of the four dimensions, which has the greatest impact on job creativity was the focus and an assessment of the extent of impact was carried out. A quantitative descriptive-analytical approach was applied. Data was collected from a self-administered questionnaire with a 320-item sample from both service and industrial organizations where 287 completed surveys were collected, giving a response rate of 89.7%. Job creativity was assessed using a twelve-item scale built on the work of Zhou and George (2001). The data was subjected to analysis involving descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple and multiple regression. Mediation was examined through the bootstrapping procedure as outlined by Hayes (2022).

Data indicated that employees' perception of their experience with transformational leadership was moderate to high ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.68$), and that they reported a lower perception of their own job creativity ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.72$). Transformational leadership accounted for approximately 46.3 percent of the variance in job creativity ($R^2 = .463$, $F = 245.73$, $p < .001$). Of the three variables, intellectual stimulation ($\beta = .318$, $p < .001$) and individualised consideration ($\beta = .247$, $p < .001$) were the strongest predictors, followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta = .191$, $p < .01$). Creative self-efficacy partially mediated the overall relationship, accounting for about a third of the effect. There were no variations by gender; however, employees with more than ten years reported lower creativity scores compared to other employees...

Keywords: transformational leadership, job creativity, intellectual stimulation, creative self-efficacy, employee innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, organisations compete for the ability to produce new ideas and execute them quickly. This new competitive environment has elevated the importance of creativity to an unprecedented degree. The type of creativity that is required in the workplace is the creative idea generation of novel and useful products, procedures or processes that are beneficial to the organization (Amabile, 1988).

If the workforce has to be creative, the next most obvious question is, what factors influence creativity the most. There has been a great deal of research, and the most influential factor is a manager or supervisor. Most employees do not base their opinion of their organization's commitment to innovation and creativity on polished mission statements. Rather, they base their opinions on how their direct supervisors behave and interact with them on a daily basis. The research by Amabile et al (2004) studied 238 knowledge workers and recorded their daily activities.

Over the other leadership models mentioned in the literature, transformational leadership has had the most focus. The model is based on Bass (1985) describing how some leaders push their followers to achieve at a greater level than expected by the effort-reward exchange, by helping followers to change their values of what is important and how they perceive themselves. This model is described by Bass and Riggio (2006) by the four groups of behaviors or the 'four I's': idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Although not as clean as the textbook summaries, empirical evidence is beginning to develop. Shin and Zhou (2003) found that this leadership style was positively correlated to the level of intrinsic motivation in 46 Korean companies. In contrast, Wang and Rode (2010) showed no significant main effect.

This inconsistency is the reason the topic is still researched. This is why the present study goes beyond the overall correlation and breaks transformational leadership into its four dimensions and examines them independently against job creativity...

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Many organizations throughout this region include "innovation" as a published value. There has been less analysis of whether the behavioral cues of supervisors influence the propensity to speak up with new ideas.

Transformational leadership and creativity in the Gulf Cooperation Council region is an understudied empirical area. Alessa (2021) analyzed 22 studies in Saudi Public Universities and found an employee creativity coefficient of .857.

The other gap in the literature is behavioral. There is a relationship confirmed; however, organizations are still lacking guidance on which behaviors to promote.

This research study hopes to address the literature gap by answering, what is the role of transformational leadership (in all four levels) on the job creativity of employees and what is the psychological mechanism that underpins that effect?

1.2 Hypotheses of the Study

Six hypotheses were derived from the questions and from the theoretical review presented in Section 2.

H1: There is a statistically significant positive effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of transformational leadership as a whole on the job creativity of employees.

H1a: There is a statistically significant positive effect of idealised influence on job creativity.

H1b: There is a statistically significant positive effect of inspirational motivation on job creativity.

H1c: There is a statistically significant positive effect of intellectual stimulation on job creativity.

H1d: There is a statistically significant positive effect of individualised consideration on job creativity.

H2: Intellectual stimulation contributes to explaining the variance in job creativity more than the other three dimensions.

H3: Creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job creativity.

H4: There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceived level of transformational leadership attributable to the demographic variables of the sample.

H5: There are statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in reported job creativity attributable to years of service.

H6: The four dimensions of transformational leadership taken together explain a significant proportion of the variance in job creativity beyond what any single dimension explains alone.

2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Idealized influence. This component of Bass's model that earlier writers called charisma, is split by Bass into attributed and behavioral forms. A supervisor who is high in this dimension is trusted and places collective before individual interests. This dimension of Bass's model is less directly related to creativity. However, the supervisor's trust diminishes the exposure of the individual for proposing an unconventional idea.

Inspirational motivation. The leader is able to communicate a motivational and inspiring picture of the future that others can envision and have a sense of accomplishment in attaining. This component links the accomplishment of routine, mundane tasks to the vision.

Intellectual stimulation. Within this component, there is an emphasis on questioning, reframing, and offering alternatives, while remaining constructive. Jung, Chow, and Wu (2003) reported a strong and positive path from transformational leadership to the climate of innovation ($\beta = .58$) in a sample of 32 companies in Taiwan, and attributed most of this path to the component of intellectual stimulation.

Individualised consideration. Leaders who treat subordinates as individuals with different needs, delegate

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as a method of development, and listen and coach demonstrate this behaviour. Of all the dimensions this is the one that is the most susceptible to the issues associated with the span of control.

.2 Job Creativity

Creativity within a business context is generally described as the development of novel ideas in the form of products, services, or processes that hold real value (Amabile, 1988).

Empirical research has found four dimensions that occur across different instruments. Generating ideas involves the creation of alternatives. Searching for and exploring ideas involves the searching for and finding different ways of working and techniques rather than waiting for the problems to show themselves. Promoting ideas involves selling the idea to colleagues and superiors to gain their interest. Planning for the implementation of ideas involves developing workable plans to carry out the idea, and this dimension lies on the border of innovation and is found in some but not all instruments..

2.3 The Theoretical Link between the Two Variables

There are three main theories that help explain the relationship between transformational leadership and job creativity and, for the most part, they are not mutually exclusive.

The motivational theory. According to Amabile's componential theory of creativity, the social context impacts creativity primarily through the motivation. In a study of 787 South Koreans, Shin and Zhou (2003) showed that intrinsic motivation completely mediated the relationship.

The self-belief theory. According to social cognitive theory, the mechanism lies in self-assured belief, rather than motivation. Gong et al. (2009) reported that creative self-belief mediated the leadership-creativity relation and, in a study of 348 manager-employee dyads in Indian information technology firms, Mittal and Dhar (2015) showed that the second half of the path was mediated, while knowledge sharing moderated self-belief.

The Empowerment Account. This account is reliant more on structure than on psychology. Transformational leaders-empower by delegating. This results in the employees perceiving a greater sense of competence, self-determination, meaning, and impact (the four elements Spreitzer defined in 1995). Empowerment was found to carry the effect in a Saudi sample of 503 employees, while intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, did not (Al Harbi, Alarifi and Mosbah, 2019).

2.4 Previous Studies

Nguyen et al. (2022) explored 420 employees of 21 telecommunications companies in Vietnam. In line with the expectations generated by most simple models, the researchers reported that employee creativity was not directly related to transformational leadership.

Alessa (2021) reported a review of 22 empirical studies of transformational leadership in Saudi public universities. Correlations with creativity were reported to be highly positive and reached .857 for employee creativity and were from .710 to .875 for managerial creativity. As reported in Section 1, correlations of this nature are far beyond the prevailing norms and are most likely to reflect common method variance in the primary studies.

The study by Yin, Ma, Yu, Jia, and Liao (2020) analyzed the results of more than 400 knowledge workers and resulted in the most detailed study on the behavioral dimensions of this population. With respect to the behavioral dimensions of leaders, psychological safety fully mediated the relationship between intellectual stimulation and knowledge sharing, team efficacy mediated the relationship between inspirational motivation, and both mediated individualized consideration. Thus, it is wrong to combine them.

The meta-analysis by Koh, Lee and Joshi (2019) has the most extensive implications for the field. Compiling 127 studies, they arrived at a positive total effect, and a negative direct effect when mediators were incorporated, with a few paths moderated by geographic region.

In their study of 212 employees working under 71 workgroup leaders across 55 organizations, Wang and Rode (2010) found that transformational leadership, in itself, failed to significantly predict creativity. The highest levels of creativity were only seen in a three-way interaction of transformational leadership, identification with the leader, and a climate of innovation.

2.5 Commentary and Research Gap

Most studies show a positive relationship, although this relationship is far from consistent. Mediation becomes the norm. Whatever the effect of transformational leadership may be, it seems to operate by altering employees' perception of themselves and their work, rather than by inspiring them to think of new ideas.

Dimension-level analysis, when it is done, is also quite instructive. Most other studies collapse the four dimensions to a single score. Hughes et al. (2018) believe that this is the major methodological weakness in the field..

The present research differs in three respects. It reports dimension-level results as the primary analysis, answering the aggregation criticism directly. It applies the method-bias remedies of Podsakoff et al. (2003) in a setting where they have rarely been used. And it tests creative self-efficacy as the mediator where empowerment has already been shown to operate (Al Harbi et al., 2019).

3. Method and Procedures

3.1 Approach, Population and Sample

The study follows the descriptive-analytical approach, which suits questions about the level of a phenomenon and the strength of relationships among its variables rather than the effect of a deliberate intervention. Quantitative data were gathered through one self-administered questionnaire and tested statistically. The design is cross-sectional.

The accessible population included roughly 1,100 non-management and first-line management employees within eleven participating service and industrial organizations.

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample-size table, 285 responses are needed to capture this population at a confidence level of 95%. A total of 320 employees were randomly selected within a stratified sample, and no employer was overrepresented by the sampling framework. 295 responses were collected with a usable response rate of 89.7%, as 287 of the 320 surveys collected were usable.

Table (1): Distribution of the sample according to demographic variables (n = 287)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	164	57.1
	Female	123	42.9
Age	Less than 30 years	78	27.2
	30 to less than 40	112	39.0
	40 to less than 50	66	23.0
	50 years and above	31	10.8
Educational qualification	Diploma or below	61	21.3
	Bachelor's degree	179	62.4
	Postgraduate degree	47	16.4
Job level	Non-supervisory	216	75.3
	First-line supervisory	71	24.7
Years of service	Less than 5 years	96	33.4
	5 to less than 11	104	36.2
	11 to 15 years	54	18.8
	More than 15 years	33	11.5
Sector	Service organisations	173	60.3
	Industrial organisations	114	39.7

3.2 Instrument of the Study

Section two measures transformational leadership through twenty items adapted from the short form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004), five items for each of the four dimensions. Respondents rate how frequently their immediate supervisor displays each behaviour.

Section three measures job creativity through twelve items adapted from the scale of Zhou and George (2001), chosen over the earlier measure of Tierney, Farmer and Graen (1999) because it covers idea promotion explicitly.

Section four measures creative self-efficacy through the three items of Tierney and Farmer (2002).

All items in sections two to four are answered on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree or

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never) to 5 (strongly agree or always). Interpretation of the resulting means follows the conventional division of the range: 1.00 to 2.33 is a low level, 2.34 to 3.67 a moderate level, and 3.68 to 5.00 a high level.

Two procedural safeguards against common method bias were built in, following Podsakoff et al. (2003).

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Face and content validity. Seven academic referees in organisational behaviour and human resource management reviewed the initial form.

Construct validity. Exploratory factor analysis with principal component extraction and varimax rotation was run on the pilot data.

Convergent and discriminant validity. Thresholds follow Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2022). Average variance extracted was .612 for transformational leadership, .574 for job creativity and .639 for creative self-efficacy, all above .50, and composite reliability was .92, .90 and .84.

Internal consistency was assessed through Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) on a pilot sample of 42 employees, who were excluded from the final analysis, and re-calculated on the full sample.

Table (2): Reliability coefficients for the study variables (n = 287)

Variable / Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Idealised influence	5	.87
Inspirational motivation	5	.89
Intellectual stimulation	5	.91
Individualised consideration	5	.88
Transformational leadership (total)	20	.93
Job creativity	12	.90
Creative self-efficacy	3	.84

3.4 Test of Common Method Variance

Because all variables came from the same respondents, two statistical checks were run alongside the procedural remedies above. Harman's single-factor test loaded all items onto one unrotated factor accounting for 31.4 per cent of total variance, well below the 50 per cent threshold.

3.5 Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed as follows:

1. To test the direction and strength of relationships, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed.
2. Hypotheses H1 and H1a to H1d, H2, and H6 were tested with simple linear regression. Hypotheses H3 and H4 were tested with multiple linear regression (enter method).
3. Hypothesis H3 was tested with the mediation analysis, using bootstrapped samples of 5,000 with the method described by Hayes (2022).
4. Hypotheses H4 and H5 were tested with Independent-samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance, with Scheffé post-hoc comparisons respectively.

The significance level was set at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ Throughout normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were checked before the regressions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Level of Transformational Leadership

Table (3): Means, standard deviations and rank of the dimensions of transformational leadership (n = 287)

Rank	Dimension	Mean	Std. deviation	Level
1	Idealised influence	3.83	0.71	High
2	Inspirational motivation	3.76	0.74	High
3	Individualised consideration	3.66	0.79	Moderate

Rank	Dimension	Mean	Std. deviation	Level
4	Intellectual stimulation	3.58	0.81	Moderate
—	Transformational leadership (total)	3.71	0.68	High

Transformational leadership, according to the overall mean of 3.71, falls in the high range but at the lower edge of that range. Employees ranked their supervisors the highest on aspects of self-presentation, like being trusted and being a visionary, and the lowest on aspects of supervisory activity. The cost for the supervisor of idealized influence and inspirational motivation is essentially zero, whereas intellectual stimulation costs the supervisor time, tolerance of conflict, and self-contradiction in front of others.

4.2 Level of Job Creativity

Table (4): Means, standard deviations and rank of the dimensions of job creativity (n = 287)

Rank	Dimension	Mean	Std. deviation	Level
1	Idea implementation planning	3.62	0.77	Moderate
2	Idea generation	3.61	0.75	Moderate
3	Idea search and exploration	3.49	0.80	Moderate
4	Idea promotion	3.44	0.83	Moderate
—	Job creativity (total)	3.54	0.72	Moderate

Job creativity sits at a moderate level, below the leadership score, and idea promotion ranks last. Employees generate ideas and can plan how to apply them, but they are less willing to push those ideas in front of colleagues and managers. An idea that is never promoted has no organisational consequence at all, which is why Zhou and George (2001) built the dimension into their scale.

4.3 Relationship between the Two Variables

Table (5): Correlation matrix of the study variables (n = 287)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Idealised influence	1					
2. Inspirational motivation	.672**	1				
3. Intellectual stimulation	.618**	.701**	1			
4. Individualised consideration	.645**	.663**	.687**	1		
5. Creative self-efficacy	.441**	.512**	.579**	.534**	1	
6. Job creativity	.512**	.574**	.631**	.596**	.604**	1

Note. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Transformational leadership as a composite correlated with job creativity at $r = .681$, $p < .001$. Every dimension correlated positively and significantly with creativity, with intellectual stimulation strongest and idealised influence weakest.

Table (6): Simple regression of job creativity on transformational leadership

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. error	F	Sig.
Leadership → Creativity	.681	.463	.461	0.529	245.73	.000

The model is significant, $F(1, 285) = 245.73$, $p < .001$, and transformational leadership explains 46.3 per cent of the variance in job creativity. **H1 is accepted.**

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4.4 Relative Contribution of the Four Dimensions

Table (7): Multiple regression of job creativity on the four dimensions of transformational leadership

Dimension	B	Std. error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Idealised influence	.106	.054	.104	1.98	.049	.41	2.41
Inspirational motivation	.186	.060	.191	3.12	.002	.37	2.68
Intellectual stimulation	.283	.054	.318	5.24	.000	.35	2.83
Individualised consideration	.225	.054	.247	4.16	.000	.39	2.59

Model summary: $R = .705$, $R^2 = .497$, adjusted $R^2 = .490$, $F(4, 282) = 69.66$, $p < .001$.

All four dimensions make significant contributions, therefore, I accept H1a, b, c and d. However, idealized influence crossed the $p = .049$ threshold slightly, so it should be read as marginal.

Of the four dimensions, idealized influence has the lowest standardized coefficient ($\beta = .318$), roughly three times less than that of intellectual stimulation, thus, I accept H2. The four dimensions combined explain 49.7% of the variance, while just intellectual stimulation explains 39.8% of the variance, therefore, the set adds meaningfully beyond its strongest member and I accept H6.

The order in this ranking inverts the order in Table 3, and this finding of the study is the most interesting.

4.5 Mediating Role of Creative Self-Efficacy

Mediation was tested with the bootstrapping procedure of Hayes (2022) using 5,000 resamples, with transformational leadership as predictor, creative self-efficacy as mediator, job creativity as outcome, and the demographic variables as covariates.

Table (8): Mediation analysis — creative self-efficacy between transformational leadership and job creativity

Path	Coefficient	Std. error	t	Sig.	95% CI
a: Leadership → Creative self-efficacy	.612	.049	12.49	.000	[.516, .708]
b: Creative self-efficacy → Job creativity	.341	.058	5.88	.000	[.227, .455]
c: Total effect of leadership on creativity	.694	.045	15.42	.000	[.606, .782]
c': Direct effect of leadership on creativity	.485	.054	8.98	.000	[.379, .591]
a × b: Indirect effect	.209	.039	—	—	[.137, .289]

The indirect effect is important here, because the bootstrap confidence interval excludes zero, and the direct effect is still significant following the introduction of the mediator. This shows that creative self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship, explaining roughly 30.1 percent of the total effect. Hence, H3 is supported.

The result of partial mediation is similar to Gong, Huang, and Farh (2009) as well as to Mittal and Dhar (2015).

4.6 Differences according to Demographic Variables

Table (9): Differences in the study variables according to demographic variables

Variable	Test	Value	df	Sig.	Result
Gender (transformational leadership)	t	1.42	285	.157	No difference
Gender (job creativity)	t	1.08	285	.281	No difference

Variable	Test	Value	df	Sig.	Result
Job level (transformational leadership)	t	1.77	285	.078	No difference
Educational qualification (transformational leadership)	F	0.94	2, 284	.392	No difference
Years of service (job creativity)	F	6.87	3, 283	.000	Significant difference

H4 is accepted. No demographic variable produced a significant difference in perceived transformational leadership. The absence of a gender difference contradicts a common assumption in regional practice that male and female employees evaluate supervisory behaviour differently. **H5 is also accepted:** years of service produced a significant difference in job creativity.

Table (10): One-way ANOVA and Scheffé comparisons for job creativity by years of service

Group	n	Mean	Std. deviation
Less than 5 years	96	3.71	0.69
5 to less than 11 years	104	3.58	0.71
11 to 15 years	54	3.40	0.74
More than 15 years	33	3.29	0.78

Scheffé comparisons identified the gap between the newest group and the two oldest.

The downward gradient provides two potential explanations and the data are unable to distinguish between the two. Employees may become less creative as routines harden and the cost of proposing change increases.

4.7 General Discussion

The dimension ranking is the most important outcome. Intellectual stimulation predicts creativity three times more than idealized influence, which is practiced least, so making transformational leadership the single bundle of four behaviors results in an even spread of effort across dimensions with a significant variance.

One discrepancy can't be glossed over. Of the four dimensions, idealized influence is the one employees rate highest, and, with the other three dimensions controlled, this dimension barely reaches significance. However, the preferred reading is that it is a precondition, and it correlates at .512 with creativity on its own, and its coefficient collapses because of the other three..

5. Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research

5.1 Conclusion

Data collected from 287 employees at eleven service and industrial organizations measured the primary hypothesis. Transformational leadership accounts for 46.3% of the variance in job creativity, and all four dimensions were shown to contribute significantly to this variance.

The most interesting aspect of this data may be the dimension ranking. The most important dimension of transformational leadership (intellectual stimulation) is also the least practiced (mean = 3.58). The least important dimension (idealized influence) is the most practiced (mean = 3.83).

The effect of creative self-efficacy accounts for roughly 30% of the variance. When viewed together, the data studied here suggest a rather conservative conclusion. There is a measurable amount of truth in the statement that leadership influences employee creativity and that this impact is most measurable through the one most important dimension that most organizations neglect to measure and foster..

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for organisations

1. Rethink leadership development around intellectual stimulation rather than physical or verbal presence. Some examples of skills that could be included in this track could be running a meeting in a way that ensures the least senior person speaks first, responding to a colleague with a different perspective without shutting it down, and reframing a common problem in a new light.

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2. Rethink the rewards accompanying your performance appraisal. So long as managers are evaluated solely on their ability to execute the instructions they receive, challenging the instructions is a personal risk with no reward.

3. Consider a score of low idea promotion not a personal failure for an employee but a failure of the system. Employees are generating ideas moderately, and promoting ideas even less.

4. Maintain the span of control of first-line supervisors. The second strongest predictor of this is individualized consideration, which cannot be practiced on a large number of direct reports.

Recommendations for researchers

1. As aggregation obscures the canceling effects documented by Yin et al (2020) and this author, dimension-level results should be published as regular reports rather than as appendices.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation is an absence of a longitudinal design. Henker, Sonnentag, and Unger (2015) used a longitudinal design to establish a unidirectional causal relationship.

Another limitation is the reliance on a single source of data. The measures used in Section 3 help contain, but do not alleviate, respondent bias, and supervisor rated creativity would have been stronger.

The sample was restricted to eleven companies who were willing to participate. The organizations that are willing to be studied on leadership may not be a random sample, and the bias may be in favor of better led companies.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

1. A longitudinal study measuring one instance of supervisory behavior and assessing the following creative output after six to twelve months. This would help resolve the causal ambiguity.

2. A test of all the competing mediators (empowerment, psychological safety, intrinsic motivation and creative self-efficacy) in one single model, in order to see which of these applies in the Arab case.

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