



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP - EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY RELATIONSHIP: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE VOICE BEHAVIOR AS MEDIATOR

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Abstract

Employee creativity is essential in every organization and has become the center of attention for academics and practitioners. However, until now, the factors that influence employee creativity are still being debated. This research analyses the mediating impact of employee voice behavior between transformational leadership and employee creativity at the Education Department, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The number of respondents in this study was 164



employees. This research model was tested using Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis with Smart-PLS software version 3.2.9. The analysis found that transformational leadership positively and significantly affects employee voice behavior and creativity. Employee voice behavior also has a positive influence on employee creativity. Furthermore, employee voice behavior is proven to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Employee voice behavior, Employee creativity, Educational Department, Province of Aceh, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most essential things in human life. Through education, one can develop the potential to benefit the community, himself, religion, and nation. The quality of education is not only produced by educators such as teachers and students, but the institutions that support them also play a significant role in overseeing the course of the primary duties of the leaders at every level of education and performing services so that it can increase the creativity of educators. It aligns with the educational objectives under Law No. 20 of 2003 of the Republic of Indonesia on the National Education System. The institution supporting it is the Ministry of Education in each region. In order to achieve the objectives of national education, the Education Ministry, in particular the Education Department of Aceh, has played an essential role in developing the creative potential of its employees to improve the quality of service and performance of the staff, affecting the effectiveness of the service learning process teaching in schools and eventually can improve quality education.

Every organization, including the Ministry of Education, requires good management in order to be able to provide services to the public or the community. The creativity of public service officials can encourage the effectiveness of government administration in serving the public as well as responding to the various changes that occur in the environment. Creativity is the key to strengthening the foundation in the face of the digital age. Through creativity, employees can demonstrate their potential and abilities to solve every problem by finding creative solutions and implementing new approaches to solving the problems encountered to improve employees' performance. However, the phenomenon suggests that the creativity of employees in the Aceh Provincial Education Service is still low, which is characterized by a) low willingness of employees to propose new ways to improve the quality of service, b) employees do not have creative solutions in resolving problems, and c) employees lack to develop adequate plans for implementation of new ideas in carrying out the job.

Many factors influence the level of creativity of employees in an organization. Therefore, the low level of creativity of staff in an organization depends heavily on the conditions or environment of the organization itself. Transformational leadership style is one factor that can influence employees' creativity in an organization (Shafi *et al.*, 2020). Officers who attach themselves to the organization because of their sense of pleasure will be easier to create. Officials who have confidence that they are capable and intelligent enough will also be more likely to have creativity. Employee voice behavior also influences creativity (Nazir *et al.*, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Creativity

According to Perry-Smith (2006), creativity is the ability of an employee to create or produce something different, whether it is an evaluable result or an idea or action that produces a new and different creation. Creativity is an individual mental process that gives rise to a compelling new idea, process, method, or product that is imaginative, aesthetic, flexible, integrated, and differentiated, capable of solving a problem in various fields (Indrajita *et al.*, 2021).

On the other hand, Indrajita *et al.* (2021) defined creativity as the ability to respond, respond, and provide a way out of all existing disruptions, the capacity to engage in the process of discovery for authenticity, the ability of intelligence, cognitive style, and personality/motivation, the ability to produce or create something new. Therefore, this creativity is based on: 1. Fluency, the ability to produce many ideas. 2. Flexibility is the capacity to present various solutions or approaches to a problem. 3. Originality is the capability to trigger an idea in original ways, not clichés. 4. Elaboration is the ability to describe something in detail. 5. Redefinition is the ability to review a question based on perspectives different from what is already known to many people.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity

An employee's creativity is the ability to create or produce something different, either as an evaluable result or as an idea or action that produces a new and different creation (Perry-Smith, 2006). Transformational leadership is when a leader can motivate and inspire his followers to work by removing personal interests for the organization's benefit for better organizational effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership styles positively influence employee creativity (Shafi *et al.*, 2020; Widiatoro *et al.*, 2023; Simamora *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) in this study is as follows:

H₁. Transformational leadership positively affects employee creativity.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior

Transformational leadership can motivate and inspire followers to work out personal interests in the organization's interests for better organizational effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2013). At the same time, Employee voice behavior is the freedom of an employee to communicate ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues to improve the functioning of an organization (Morrison, 2014). Several previous studies have proven that transformational leadership positively influences employee voice behavior (Rasheed & Shahzad, 2021; Zhang & Inness, 2019; Afsar *et al.*, 2019). Under transformative leadership, employees have a high level of trust and understanding of their superiors, which can encourage them to express ideas freely and openly with little concern about being misunderstood or criticized. Duan *et al.* (2017) showed that transformational leadership allows employees to gain more opportunities and use more communication channels to speak and informally exchange information or ideas with superiors. Based on this description, the second hypothesis (H2) in this study is as follows:

H₂: Transformational leadership positively affects employee voice behavior.

Employee Voice Behavior and Employee creativity

Employee voice behavior is an independent behavior in which an employee communicates ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about issues related to the job to improve an organization's or unit's functioning (Morrison, 2014). In contrast, staff creativity is the ability of employees to create or produce something different, either as a valuable result or as an idea or action that produces a new and different creation (Perry-Smith, 2006).

Employee voice behavior promotes greater employee creativity by provoking effective and innovative ways of thinking in the workplace (Nazir *et al.*, 2020). Employee voice behavior can lead to the development of unique ideas in the workplace. Mainly, employee voice behavior can be beneficial to employees and organizations. If the organization implements better employee voice behavior, it will increase employee creativity and vice versa. Previous research reveals the positive impact of employee voice behavior on employee creativity (Salendu, 2020; Soomro *et al.*, 2021; Chen & Hou, 2016; Dedahanov *et al.*, 2016; Kremer *et al.*, 2019). Based on this description, the third hypothesis (H3) is as follows:

H₃: Employee voice behavior positively affects employee creativity

Employee Voice Behavior as a Mediator

Transformational leadership can motivate and inspire its followers to work out personal interests in the organization's interests for better organizational effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Employee voice behavior is an independent behavior in which an employee

communicates ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about issues related to the job to improve an organization's or unit's functioning (Morrison, 2014). Creativity is the ability of an employee to create or produce something different, whether it is an evaluable result or an idea or action that produces a new and different creation (Perry-Smith, 2006). In general, there is a linear relationship between the three variables. In other words, if an organization can implement transformational leadership well, it will generate employee voice behavior or high employee voices and further enhance employee creativity. Thus, employee voice behavior lies between transformational leadership and employee creativity, called the mediation variable. Based on the above description, the fourth hypothesis (H4) in this study is as follows:

H₄: Employee voice behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is quantitative research. The population of the study is the Civil State Apparatus (ASN) employee of the Department of Education of the province of Aceh, Indonesia, which has 279 employees. In order to get the sample, this study uses probability samplings, namely stratified random sampling, and sing the Slovin formula with the sample number of 164 employees. For obtaining a valid and reliable variable size, a previously validated scale is used to measure all variables. All items were measured on a Likert-5 scale ranging from very disagreeable (1) to (5) very agreeable. In terms of hypothetical testing, this study uses SEM-PLS supported by previous research (Sefnedi *et al.*, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondent's profile

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Demographics	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	68	41.5
	Female	96	58.5
Age	< 26 years	3	1.8
	26 - 30 years	11	6.7
	31- 35 years	21	12.8
	36 - 40 years	50	30.5
	> 40 years	79	48.2
Formal Education	High School	7	4.3
	Undergraduate	116	70.7
	Master	40	24.4
	PhD	1	0.6

Working experience	1 - 5 years	13	7.9
	6 - 10 years	21	12.8
	11 - 15 years	63	38.4
	16 - 20 years	48	29.3
	> 20 years	19	11.6

The above table shows that the majority of respondents in this survey are women (58.5%) over the age of 20 (48.2%), and formal education is undergraduate (64.6%).

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement Model Assessment (MMA) is helpful to test each statement item with its latent variables consisting of convergent and discriminant validities. Convergent validity consists of outer loadings (>0.7), composite reliability (>0.07), and AVE (> 0.5), while discriminant validity is composed of Fornell Larcker criteria and cross-loading methods (Sefnedi *et al.*, 2023)

Table 2: The Results of Convergent Validity Analysis on Transformational Leadership

Statement items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's alpha (C.A.)	Composite reliability (C.R.)	AVE
1. Leaders set high standards for work (TL1)	0.794			
2. Have a strong belief in leadership values (TL2)	0.893			
3. Leaders provide personal attention to neglected employees (TL3)	0.801			
4. Leaders find out what they want and help them get it (TL4)	0.774			
5. Leaders appreciate good work (TL5)	0.873			
6. Leadership spends time training and educating each staff (TL6)	0.825			
7. Leadership treats staff as individuals and not just as staff (TL7)	0.849			
8. Leaders teach how to see old problems in new ways (TL8)	0.876			
9. Leaders emphasize the use of intelligence to overcome obstacles (TL9)	0.858	0.981	0.982	0.732
10. Leadership supports staff opinions with good reason (TL10)	0.877			
11. Leadership mobilizes each mission together (TL11)	0.895			
12. Leaders become role models (TL12)	0.885			
13. Leaders suggest new ways to complete assigned tasks (TL3)	0.888			
14. Leaders develop ways to encourage performance (TL14)	0.879			
15. Leadership speaks optimistically about the future (TL15)	0.838			
16. Have trust in the leadership (TL16)	0.865			
17. Proud to be associated with leadership (TL17)	0.808			
18. Have complete confidence in the leadership (TL18)	0.884			
19. Leadership transmits its mission to staff (TL19)	0.849			
20. Leaders express satisfaction when their expectations are met (TL20)	0.883			

The table 2 shows that all statement items that measure transformational leadership have outer loading values greater than 0.7. So, all statement items are valid (Sefnedi *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the C.A. value is 0.981 (greater than 0.7), C.R. is 0.982 (greater than 0.7), and AVE is 0.732 (greater than 0.5), where the results of this analysis have met the required criteria.

Table 3: The Results of Convergent Validity Analysis on Employee Voice Behavior

Statement items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's alpha (C.A.)	Composite reliability (C.R.)	AVE
1. Develop and make recommendations regarding issues or problems related to work and affecting the organization (EVB1)	0.857			
2. Communicate opinions about work-related issues to others, even if they disagree (EVB2)	0.910			
3. Encourage other employees to speak out and get involved in issues that affect the organization (EVB3)	0.883			
4. Obtain information about work-related problems or issues where opinions may be helpful to the organization (EVB4)	0.890	0.943	0.955	0.778
5. Get involved in work-related issues that affect the quality of work in the organization (EVB5)	0.876			
6. Speak up within the organization to change procedures with new ideas (EVB6)	0.875			

Based on the table above, all statement items that measure employee voice behavior have outer loading values greater than 0.7, so all statements are valid (Sefnedi *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the C.A. value is 0.943 (greater than 0.7), C.R. is 0.955 (greater than 0.7), and AVE is 0.778 (greater than 0.5), where the results of this analysis have met the required criteria.

Table 4: The Results of Convergent Validity Analysis on Employee Creativity

Statement items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's alpha (C.A.)	Composite reliability (C.R.)	AVE
1. Propose creative ideas to achieve organizational goals (EC1)	0.904			
2. Have new and innovative ideas (EC2)	0.902			
3. Have a new approach to solving problems (EC3)	0.903			
4. Have creative solutions to solve problems (EC4)	0.914			
5. Propose new ways for smooth work (EC5)	0.902			
6. Have practical ideas to improve performance (EC6)	0.910			
7. Looking for new technology and techniques to make work run smoothly (EC7)	0.903	0.980	0.982	0.810
8. Suggest new ways to improve the quality of work (EC8)	0.919			
9. Be a source of creative ideas (EC9)	0.853			
10. Not afraid to take risks (EC10)	0.866			
11. Spread ideas to other employees (EC11)	0.897			
12. Demonstrate creativity in work when given the opportunity (EC12)	0.917			
13. Able to develop adequate plans for the implementation of new ideas (EC13)	0.908			

The table 4 shows that all statement items used to measure employee creativity have outer loading values greater than 0.7, so it can be interpreted that all statement items are valid (Sefnedi *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the C.A. value is 0.980 (greater than 0.7), C.R. is 0.982 (greater than 0.7), and AVE is 0.810 (greater than 0.5), where the results of this analysis have met the required criteria.

Discriminant validity shows the uniqueness of a construct from other constructs. Discriminant validity uses the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, cross-loading, and HTMT methods (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Table 5: Discriminant Validity Results-Fornell Larcker Criterion Method

Variable	Employee Creativity	Employee Voice Behaviour	Transformational Leadership
Employee Creativity	0.900	-	-
Employee Voice Behaviour	0.847	0.882	-
Transformational Leadership	0.836	0.832	0.855

Table 5 reveals that all variables have the most significant correlation value with themselves compared to other variables. For example, the correlation score between employee creativity and itself (employee creativity) is 0.900. This correlation value is higher when compared to the correlation between employee creativity and employee voice behavior (0.847) and transformational leadership (0.836). The same applies to the employee voice behavior and transformational leadership variables. Thus, the discriminant validity analysis using the Fornell-Larcker criteria has fulfilled the rule of thumb.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity Results-Cross Loadings Method

Items	Employee Creativity	Employee Voice Behavior	Transformational Leadership
EVB1	0.754	0.857	0.739
EVB2	0.818	0.910	0.786
EVB3	0.698	0.883	0.686
EVB4	0.760	0.890	0.735
EVB5	0.720	0.876	0.701
EVB6	0.724	0.876	0.747
EC1	0.904	0.772	0.774
EC10	0.902	0.767	0.747
EC11	0.904	0.760	0.763
EC12	0.914	0.769	0.790
EC13	0.903	0.816	0.788
EC2	0.910	0.759	0.770
EC3	0.903	0.743	0.749

EC4	0.919	0.752	0.754
EC5	0.853	0.703	0.647
EC6	0.866	0.705	0.680
EC7	0.897	0.800	0.760
EC8	0.917	0.771	0.753
EC9	0.908	0.783	0.786
TL1	0.745	0.695	0.794
TL10	0.756	0.759	0.893
TL11	0.597	0.674	0.801
TL12	0.584	0.607	0.774
TL13	0.719	0.714	0.873
TL14	0.674	0.668	0.825
TL15	0.695	0.712	0.849
TL16	0.694	0.702	0.876
TL17	0.689	0.677	0.858
TL18	0.773	0.751	0.877
TL19	0.753	0.726	0.895
TL2	0.758	0.727	0.885
TL20	0.743	0.711	0.888
TL3	0.735	0.706	0.879
TL4	0.756	0.720	0.838
TL5	0.711	0.747	0.865
TL6	0.668	0.713	0.808
TL7	0.760	0.743	0.884
TL8	0.705	0.700	0.849
TL9	0.743	0.753	0.883

It found that the correlation value of a statement item with its latent variable was greater than that of the item with other latent variables. For example, the correlation value of the EVB1 statement item on the employee voice behavior variable is 0.857, which is greater than the employee creativity (0.754) and transformational leadership (0.739) variables. This finding interpreted that the EVB1 statement item is trusted to measure employee voice behavior variables. This explanation also applies to other statement items. Thus, the variables of employee creativity, employee voice behavior, and transformational leadership have adequate discrimination (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

R square and Q square

R Square measures how much endogenous variables are explained by exogenous variables, while Q Square helps determine how exogenous variables predict endogenous variables (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The results of the R square and Q square analysis are presented in the table 7.

Table 7: Results of R square and Q square

	R Square	Category	Q Square	Category
Employee Creativity	0.773	Strong	0.619	Strong
Employee Voice Behavior	0.692	Medium	0.532	Strong

The R square value of the employee creativity variable is 0.773, which means that transformational leadership explains employee voice behavior of 77.3% (Table 7). The magnitude of this influence is included in the strong category. Furthermore, the employee creativity variable has a Q square value of 0.619, which means that the ability of Transformational Leadership and employee voice behavior to predict employee creativity is in a strong category (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Then, the R square for the employee voice behavior variable is 0.692, which means that the influence of Transformational Leadership on employee voice behavior is 69.2%, where the magnitude of this influence falls into the medium category. Furthermore, the Q square obtained for employee voice behavior is 0.532, which means that the ability of Transformational Leadership to predict employee voice behavior is included in the strong category (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Structural Model Assessment

Structural Model Assessment (SMA) is a model to predict causal relationships between latent variables. SMA is useful for testing research hypotheses. The results of the SMA using the bootstrapping method are as follows.

Figure 1: Structural Model Assessment

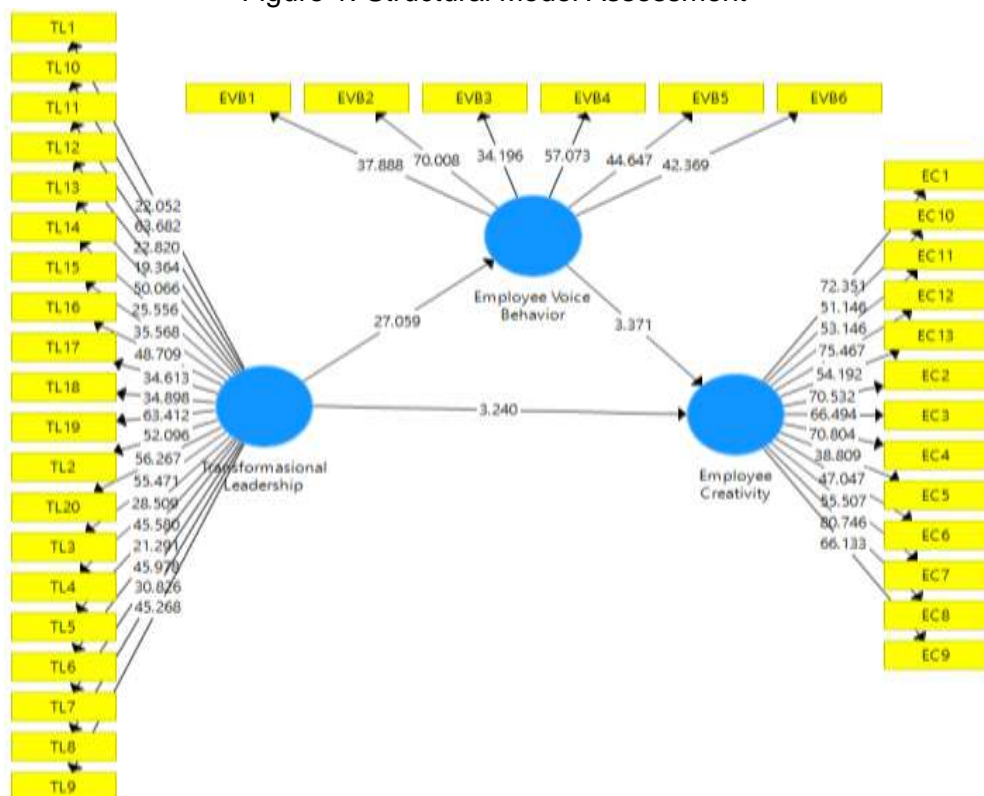


Table 8: The Results of Hypothesis Testing

Direction	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis
Transformational leadership -> Employee Creativity	0.426	3.240	0.002	H ₁ Accepted
Transformational Leadership -> Employee Voice Behavior	0.832	27.059	0.000	H ₂ Accepted
Employee Voice Behavior -> Employee Creativity	0.492	3.371	0.001	H ₃ Accepted
Transformational leadership -> Employee Voice Behavior -> Employee Creativity	0.410	3.168	0.002	H ₄ Accepted

The effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity has an original sample of 0.426, t-statistics of 3.240 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.002 (<0.05); thus, H₁ is accepted. This finding means that the better the implementation of transformational leadership in the Education Department, the higher the employee creativity. On the other hand, if the Education Department cannot implement transformational leadership well, it will impact low employee creativity. These results align with previous research findings (Shafi et al., 2020; Widiantoro et al., 2023; Simamora et al., 2021), which stated that transformational leadership positively and significantly affects employee creativity.

The second hypothesis is that transformational leadership affects employee voice behavior. The results of this hypothesis test obtained an original sample of 0.832, t-statistics of 27.059 (>1.96), and p-values of 0.000 (<0.05); thus, H₂ is accepted. This finding means that if the Education Department can implement transformational leadership well, it can improve employee voice behavior. On the other hand, if the Education Department cannot implement transformational leadership well, it can cause low employee voice behavior. This research's results align with previous research (Rasheed & Shahzad, 2021; Zhang & Inness, 2019; Afsar et al., 2019), proving that transformational leadership is a determining factor in employee voice behavior.

The third hypothesis is that employee voice behavior positively and significantly affects employee creativity. The results of testing this hypothesis found that the original sample was 0.492, t-statistics 3.371 (>1.96), and p-values 0.001 (<0.05); thus, H₃ is accepted. These results mean that the higher the employee voice behavior in the Education Department, the higher the employee's creativity. However, on the contrary, low employee voice behavior will result in low employee creativity. The results of this research are supported by previous research (P Salendu, 2020; Soomro et al., 2021; Chen & Hou, 2016; Dedahanov et al., 2016; Kremer et al., 2019), which also empirically proves that employee voice behavior is significantly influenced by employee creativity.

The final hypothesis is that employee voice behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity. The results of testing the hypothesis found

that the original sample was 0.410, with t-statistics 3.168 (>1.96) and p-values 0.002 (<0.05); thus, H_4 is accepted. These results mean that educational organizations that can implement transformational leadership well will give rise to high levels of employee voice behavior and, in turn, will increase employee creativity. On the other hand, if the educational organization cannot implement transformational leadership well, it will cause low employee voice behavior and impact low employee creativity.

CONCLUSION

This research analyses the mediating impact of employee voice behavior between transformational leadership and employee creativity at the Education Department, Aceh Province, Indonesia. Based on the research results, several conclusions are as follows: a) transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity and employee voice behavior, (b) employee voice behavior has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity, and (c) employee voice behavior mediates the relationship between leadership transformational and employee creativity.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Some limitations of this research are (a) this research was conducted at the Aceh Education Office, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Therefore, the results of this research cannot be generalized to apply equally to other educational organizations. So, it is recommended for future researchers to replicate this research model and test it in other educational organizations. (b) this research limits the variables of transformational leadership and employee voice behavior as determining factors for employee creativity. Therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to add other variables that can influence employee creativity theoretically.

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