

## The effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity: The mediating role of intrinsic motivation

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-**Global business progress creates intense competition. Many factors can be used as a foundation in winning the competition, one of which is the role of human resources or employees in the organization. Therefore, employees must continue to be paid attention to and improve their ability to work, so that they can reach a certain level of creativity. This study analyzes employee creativity measured based on the role of transformational leadership with intrinsic motivation as a mediator.

**Design/Methodology/Approach-**This study analyzes the level of creativity in employees of Bank Syariah Indonesia Sudirman Branch Office Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The number of research samples was 46 respondents. The sample was selected using the saturation method or using the entire population as a sample. Then the research data was obtained using a questionnaire. The analytical tool used in this research is Smart PLS version 4.

**Findings-**The findings showed that employee creativity was positively impacted partially by transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation. It has also been proved that transformational leadership improves intrinsic motivation. This research also proves how motivation plays a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

**Research limitations/implications-**This research is only limited to employees of Bank Syariah Indonesia Sudirman Branch Office Yogyakarta, Indonesia, so it can be said that it cannot be used as a foundation for assessing the creativity of other branch employees. In addition, this study uses the object of Islamic banks, so it cannot be used as a description of conventional employees in Yogyakarta.

**Originality/value-**This research is still very minimal and conducted by previous researchers who used the object of Bank Syariah Indonesia Sudirman Yogyakarta Branch Office employees. Generally, previous studies used the object of different branch offices or used conventional banks.

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## 1. The Introduction

Globalization has had a huge impact on the business world (Surugiu & Surugiu, 2015). The increasingly competitive global market and development of advanced technology require every company to increase competitiveness (Shrivastava, 2018). Excellent, creative, and innovative human resources, as well as the ability to adapt quickly, are provisions to face the era of globalization.

Employee creativity is a key factor in building a culture of innovation in an organization so that the organization will be able to create a competitive advantage (Arsawan et al., 2022). Furthermore, employees are the most important elements that affect the success of an organization (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016) because they have integrated abilities in the form of thinking power, physical power, behavior, and traits determined by heredity and environment. This shows that creative employees can provide new ideas and contribute directly to maintaining organizational sustainability.

One of the important elements that determines the success of an organization in achieving organizational sustainability is leadership style (Saleem, 2015). Leaders play an important role in managing human resources to achieve a company's vision and mission (Macke & Genari, 2019). In other words, a good leadership style can affect the smooth operation of a company in achieving its goals. In addition, the right leadership style can make employees have positive feelings about their work and increase their motivation at work, thereby increasing employee motivation (Mickson & Anlesinya, 2020). Transformational leadership is a leadership style that influences employee motivation (Alqatawenh, 2018).

The most effective leadership style is transformational leadership since it employs reasoned thinking, is proactive, efficient, and results-driven, and encourages employees to contribute new values and behaviors to the business (Chang et al., 2017). Naqvi et al. (2017) explain that transformational leadership is future-oriented with attention to planning, open-mindedness, and energy. Four characteristics of transformational leadership are described by leaders: intellectual stimulation (thinking outside the box to solve problems); charisma or idealized influence; inspirational motivation (telling a compelling vision to inspire employees); and individualized consideration (helping, mentoring, and developing employees) (Olcer, 2015). According to social cognitive theory, transformational leadership has a significant role in employee learning from an external perspective (Wang et al., 2020). Transformational leaders who engage in intellectual stimulation set expectations that spark employee creativity. Through behavior, transformational leaders enhance employees' abilities to develop new ideas. Through personalized attention, transformational leaders assist employees overcome their fear and become more creative by demonstrating empathy, care, and support. Lastly, transformational leaders support employees in using their expertise to advance their skills (Jyoti & Dev, 2015).

A transformational leadership style supports and motivates employees to perform higher at work through participation and appreciation of good performance for employees. According to Nguyen et al. (2019), transformational leaders can set clear and specific goals for their subordinates, support their subordinates, inspire their subordinates, and create innovation at work. Leaders must observe and understand the factors that motivate employees to behave innovatively (Faraz et al., 2018). Leaders must provide motivation and inspiration to stimulate and challenge employees to achieve goals as well as the vision and mission of the organization (Khan et al., 2020). The more effective the application of a transformational leadership style to employees, the more it will increase employees' intrinsic motivation. That is, a leader with high charisma can empower employees personally through inspiring motivation and stimulating them intellectually. According to Delaney and Royal (2017), employees who are intrinsically motivated put out more effort since they are highly interested, curious, and eager to learn. Research by Nguyen et al. (2019) and Laksmiana and Riana (2020) discovered that transformational leadership improves intrinsic motivation.

According to the componential theory of creativity, intrinsic motivation has the greatest impact on employee creativity or it can be said that intrinsic motivation is one of the predictive factors for creativity (Liu et al., 2016). Employees with intrinsic motivation are more motivated to solve problems creatively. Intrinsically motivated employees are often less pressured by their

responsibilities, as they like to solve problems with solutions that tend to be new and innovative. Thus, it can be concluded that the awareness and effort to overcome challenges and the desire to solve problems indicate that intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on creative ability. According to the model developed by Amabile and Pratt (2016), intrinsic motivation indicates psychological readiness as one of the important factors to enhance creativity. Creativity requires deep interest in the field, endurance, and perseverance; therefore, these three conditions are closely related to intrinsic motivation. Empirical studies have also shown a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and employee creativity (Fischer et al., 2019).

Intrinsic motivation, in this study, acts as a factor that supports the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity. Intrinsic motivation is the desire from within an individual to do or complete something because it feels interesting, challenging, and personally satisfying (Saeed et al., 2019). Meaningful work can increase employees' intrinsic motivation to engage in innovative endeavors (Bibi & Afsar, 2018). An employee usually lacks the confidence to try to express opinions, new ideas, and solutions to help solve problems within the organization; therefore, intrinsic motivation is needed as a strength within the individual.

The Bank Syariah Indonesia, Sudirman Branch Office Yogyakarta, Indonesia, was the subject of this research. Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI), which was formally founded on February 1, 2021, marked a new chapter in the history of the Indonesian banking sector. Bank Rakyat Indonesia Syariah, Bank Syariah Mandiri, and Bank Negara Indonesia Syariah merged to become the BSI. By combining the strengths of the three Islamic banks, this merger offers better financial capacity, a wider reach, and more comprehensive services. The creation of BSI is also a reflection of Indonesian Islamic banking, which is contemporary, global, and beneficial to all living things. There is a chance that BSI may keep expanding and join a select group of top Islamic banks worldwide. The Indonesian government has a goal to establish a halal banking sector ecosystem and a large and powerful national Islamic bank, in addition to achieving favorable growth results and climate support. With the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia presents new opportunities.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Malik et al. (2017) and Shafi et al. (2020) showed that transformational leadership can foster employee creativity. Transformational leadership is closely related to other determinants for building a creative work culture, such as a clear vision, encouragement, independence, challenge, and promotion of innovation. The intellectually stimulating nature of transformational leaders encourages employees to think in new ways to find solutions (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). The behavioral traits of transformational leaders can enhance employee creativity. By reorienting their attention toward success and development, transformational leaders desire to raise employees' awareness, interest, and inventiveness (McCleskey, 2014). According to organizational theory, a transformational leader is one who infuses an organization with regeneration and change. However, creativity in a corporate setting typically takes into account the capacity to create new goods, new ideas, and useful procedures (Koseoglu et al., 2017). Thus, the ability of employees to produce high-potential, new ideas, products, and procedures that enhance performance is the definition of creativity (Sirkwoo, 2015). According to Koseoglu et al. (2017), leaders are still able to encourage, support, and contribute to the innovation of their employees. Based on this, leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behavior are expected to enhance and encourage employee creativity by engaging in creative behavior, thus inciting employees to do the same (Basadur et al., 2014).

### **H<sub>1</sub>: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Employee Creativity**

Leaders must observe and understand the factors that motivate employees to behave innovatively (Faraz et al., 2018). Leaders must provide motivation and inspiration to stimulate and challenge employees to achieve goals as well as the vision and mission of the organization (Khan et al., 2020). The more effective the application of a transformational leadership style to employees, the more it will increase employees' intrinsic motivation. That is, a leader with high charisma can empower employees personally through inspiring motivation and stimulating them

intellectually. Because they are highly interested, curious, and eager to learn, intrinsically motivated employees put out more effort (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Creativity is encouraged and risk-taking daring is produced by intrinsic motivation. Employees under a transformational leadership style are encouraged and motivated to do better by participating in the appreciation of their own work, which boosts their confidence in their ability to continue being competent. Previous research from Nguyen et al. (2019) and Laksmana and Riana (2020) proved that transformational leadership will further increase the intrinsic motivation of employees.

**H<sub>2</sub>: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Intrinsic Motivation**

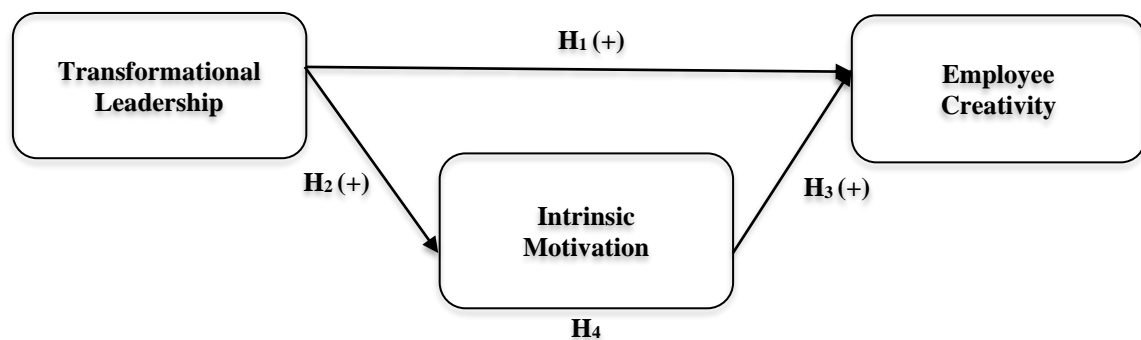
Workplace creativity is enhanced by intrinsic motivation (Zhang & Gheibi, 2015). Based on their interest, curiosity, and want to learn, employees are encouraged to be creative by intrinsic motivation (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Employees that are driven by internal motivation will be prepared to take chances, confident in their ability to innovate, and will work hard at their jobs (Hur et al., 2016). Good intrinsic motivation is a driving factor for employees to perform various positive behaviors and bring new creativity to their work. The higher the intrinsic motivation possessed by a person, the higher the innovative ideas and creative outcomes that are produced. Employees who work based on interest enjoy their work and dedicate more time to it (Ryan, 2017). A significant influence of intrinsic motivation on creativity levels is that the job involves service to others. The provision of services to others is driven by the need for relatedness (Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018). In turn, this can increase intrinsic motivation and generate creative and innovative ideas. Previous research from Cerasoli et al. (2014) and Liu et al. (2016) proved that intrinsic motivation positively affects employee creativity.

**H<sub>3</sub>: Intrinsic Motivation Has a Positive Effect on Employee Creativity**

The research conducted by Al Harbi et al. (2019) and Siyal et al. (2021) found that transformational leadership affects creativity through intrinsic motivation. Employees become highly creative when they have a higher intrinsic motivation. Social exchange theory states that when transformational leaders can support and care for each person on an individual basis, they will inspire them to see their own worth and creative potential. Employees are therefore intrinsically motivated, which supports high levels of innovation. Additionally, transformational leaders encourage their employees to use creativity when performing duties. Enhancing employee creativity is another essential function of intrinsic motivation.

**H<sub>4</sub>: Transformational Leadership Has a Positive Effect on Employee Creativity with Intrinsic Motivation as Mediating**

Figure 1 shows the research framework and the elements that influence employee creativity. Transformational leadership is thought to have a direct effect on employee creativity, whereas intrinsic motivation plays a mediating role.



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

### 3. Research Methodology

The population of this research data is the employees of the Bank Syariah Indonesia Sudirman Branch Office Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and the sampling method in this study uses the saturated sample method. The total sample used in this study was 46 people who worked at the Bank Syariah Indonesia Sudirman Branch Office in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Research data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained indicator items that represented each research variable. The transformational leadership variable (TL) is measured by 19 indicator items, the intrinsic motivation variable (IM) is measured by four indicator items, and the employee creativity variable (EC) is measured by five indicator items. Each of these indicator items is measured using a Likert scale with a 5-point rating.

The research data were then analyzed using a validity test, reliability test, and hypothesis testing using the Smart PLS version 4 analysis tool. A validity test was used to measure whether the indicator items of each variable were valid (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020). If an indicator item's factor loading value is higher than 0.6, it can be considered valid (Hair et al., 2020). The indicator item was eliminated and retested if the factor loading value was less than 0.6. We performed a validity test first, and then a reliability test. If a respondent consistently answers the indicator item, the variable can be considered reliable (Mohamad et al., 2015). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores were used in a reliability test. Cronbach's alpha must be greater than 0.6 and the composite reliability must be greater than 0.7 in order to be considered reliable (Hair et al., 2020). Hypothesis testing comes next when all the variables have been considered reliable. Hypothesis testing was performed based on the p-value for each hypothesis. If the p-value for each hypothesis is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Meanwhile, if the p-value was greater than 0.05, the hypothesis was rejected (Hair et al., 2020).

### 4. Result and Discussion

#### Characteristics Respondent

Table 1 shows respondents' characteristics. In general, male respondents dominate (52%) of the respondents were male respondents (48%). The age of respondents was dominated by the age range of 21-30 years, namely 37 respondents (80%), followed by the age range of more than 30 years, as many as eight respondents (18%), and finally respondents with an age of less than 20 years, as many as one respondent (2%). In addition to the gender and age categories, respondent characteristics can be seen based on education level. The majority of respondents were undergraduate graduates (34, 72%), followed by high school graduates (10, 24%), and the rest were diploma graduates.

**Table 1. Characteristics Respondent**

Classification	Description	Frequency	
		Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	24	52
	Female	22	48
Age	< 20 years old	1	2
	21 – 30 years old	37	80
	> 30 years old	8	18
Education	High School	10	24
	Diploma	2	4
	Bachelor	34	72

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

#### Validity Test

Figure 2 shows the research model when testing using smart PLS. Based on this figure, the factor loading value of each indicator item for the transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee creativity variables.

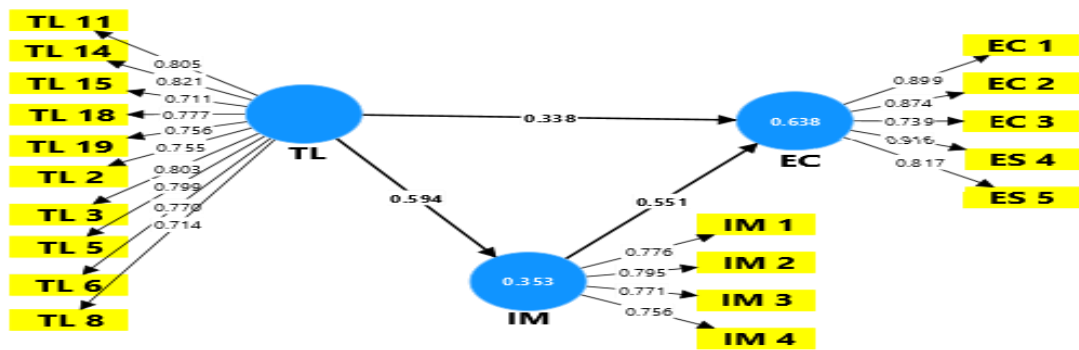


Figure 2. Measurement Model

The results tabulated in Table 2 are indicator items with factor-loading values greater than 0.6. Based on the results of the validity test, it is known that there are nine items in the indicators of the transformational leadership (TL) variable that were removed because the factor loading value was less than 0.6. The eliminated indicator items were TL 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, and 17.

Table 2. Validity Test Result

Indicator	TL	IM	EC
TL 2	0.755		
TL 3	0.803		
TL 5	0.799		
TL 6	0.770		
TL 8	0.714		
TL 11	0.805		
TL 14	0.821		
TL 15	0.711		
TL 18	0.777		
TL 19	0.756		
IM 1		0.776	
IM 2		0.795	
IM 3		0.771	
IM 4		0.756	
EC 1			0.899
EC 2			0.874
EC 3			0.739
EC 4			0.916
EC 5			0.817

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

### Reliability Test

The reliability test results are displayed in Table 3 according to each variable's composite reliability scores and Cronbach's alpha. The variables of creativity, intrinsic motivation, and transformational leadership all exhibited composite reliability values greater than 0.7 and Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.6. These findings support the assumption that the three variables are reliable.

Table 3. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Transformational Leadership	0.925	0.939
Intrinsic Motivation	0.786	0.806
Employee Creativity	0.903	0.906

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

### Hypothesis Test

Table 4 presents a tabulation of the hypothesis-testing results. The results of the direct hypothesis testing show that transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation have a positive effect on employee creativity (the first and third hypotheses are accepted). The results of the direct hypothesis testing between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation were also proven to have a positive effect (the second hypothesis is accepted). Testing the mediation hypothesis showed that intrinsic motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity (the fourth hypothesis is accepted). The decision was measured based on the p-value, in which all hypotheses showed a p-value of less than 0.05.

**Table 4. Hypothesis Test Result**

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistic	P Value
Transformational Leadership → Employee Creativity	0.338	0.343	0.113	2.987	0.003
Transformational Leadership → Intrinsic Motivation	0.594	0.621	0.101	5.861	0.000
Intrinsic Motivation → Employee Creativity	0.551	0.546	0.110	5.027	0.000
Transformational Leadership → Intrinsic Motivation → Employee Creativity	0.327	0.339	0.084	3.873	0.000

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

### Discussion

#### The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

The first explains that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee creativity. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Malik et al. (2017) and Shafi et al. (2020), which proves that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee creativity. Transformational leadership encourages employees to continue to hone their abilities and ultimately increases their creativity (Kasimoğlu & Ammari, 2020). This leadership style can inspire, motivate, and guide employees to achieve their common goals. Transformational leadership can encourage employees to reevaluate prospective issues and their work environment, thus stimulating their thinking to develop innovative ideas (Jun & Lee, 2023). Transformational leaders create a work climate that supports creativity (Henker et al., 2015). Transformational leaders motivate their employees by providing a desired vision, high-performance expectations, and individualized support (Chebon et al., 2019). This motivation should foster employees' involvement in efforts to improve their performance and bring them closer to their desired vision. Thus, employees with transformational leaders can look for better ways to do their jobs. Transformational leaders also strengthen employees' creative concepts. Therefore, employees should be more confident when trying new approaches and generating creative ideas.

#### The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Intrinsic Motivation

The second explanation is that transformational leadership has a positive effect on intrinsic motivation. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Nguyen et al. (2019) and Laksmana and Riana (2020) which show the results that transformational leadership has a positive effect on intrinsic motivation. Transformational leadership, described as inspirational motivation by leaders in an organization, also increases motivation among employees (Andriani et al., 2018). Based on employee assessments, transformational leadership is described as leaders who encourage employees to innovate in solving problems to foster employee morale. Using the right leadership approach, individual creativity can provide organizational change that can improve organizational effectiveness and viability. Correspondingly, transformational leaders encourage employees to engage in behaviors that enhance creativity and take necessary actions to solve problems.

### **The Effect of Intrinsic Motivation on Employee Creativity**

Employee creativity is positively impacted by intrinsic motivation, as explained in the third section. The findings of this research support those of Cerasoli et al. (2014) and Liu et al. (2016), who showed that employee creativity is positively impacted by intrinsic motivation. Employees must be sufficiently engaged in a problem to seek solutions in order to be innovative. Therefore, motivation helps to manage the amount of time employees spend on the issue and come up with innovative solutions. Employees who are intrinsically motivated are more inclined to take chances and experiment with new concepts. Because of this, workers that are intrinsically motivated are more stimulated at work, which increases their creativity. Intrinsic motivation implies that people have an intrinsic tendency to improve their abilities and to discover and learn new things. From an early point in their lives, people can act out of interest and desire to learn without rewards. Intrinsic motivation is an internal feeling that individuals can use to improve their talents or capacities through training or experimentation (Malik et al., 2015). Smith et al. (2015) said that an intrinsically motivated person will be more curious, intellectually adaptable, willing, and ready to seek new knowledge, and ultimately encourage them to be creative. Thus, intrinsic motivation is considered to be an important factor in creativity (Zhang et al., 2014).

### **The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity with Intrinsic Motivation as Mediating**

The fourth section explains that intrinsic motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity. The results of this study are in line with the research conducted by Al Harbi et al. (2019) and Siyal et al. (2021), which showed that transformational leadership affects creativity through intrinsic motivation. When employees are intrinsically motivated, they are more innovative. Social exchange theory states that when transformational leaders can support and care for each person on an individual basis, they inspire people to recognize their worth and creative potential. Employees have intrinsic motivation, which encourages high levels of innovation. Transformational leaders encourage their staff to be innovative in their task completion. Additionally, boosting employee creativity is significantly supported by intrinsic motivation.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the research results described above, this study concludes that intrinsic motivation mediates the positive effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity. This means that transformational leaders can encourage motivation from within employees, which, in turn, encourages new ideas or creativity in completing their tasks. Employees certainly need support from leaders and motivation so that they can display their creative ideas. Therefore, the role of transformational leaders and the encouragement of motivation from within are very important in increasing employee creativity. The limitation of this research is that the number of samples is still relatively small and is only limited to employee respondents at the BSI Sudirman Branch Office, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Therefore, the results of this study can be said not to describe BSI employees throughout Indonesia. With these limitations, future research should increase the number of samples or expand the research object to increase the variety of research.

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