

From Leadership to Innovation: Understanding the Motivation to Learn

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Abstract - The purpose of this study was to apply the influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior, and the mediating role of learning motivation on the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior. The questionnaire, designed as a self-reported survey, was distributed to permanent employees of a manufacturing company in the automotive sector. Data was collected from 203 employees. The hypothesis was tested using structural equation modeling. Data processing using SEM method with SmartPLS 3.0 software. The findings show that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee innovative work behavior and motivation to learn to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the effect of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior as well as the impact of innovative work behavior variables. The implication is that organizations should pay attention to creating a climate that supports innovation and encourages individuals to learn new knowledge and skills, and provides employees with opportunities to use their acquired knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Innovative work behavior, motivation to learn, transformational leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

An important factor in determining an organization's competitive advantage is innovative work behavior (Asbari, Novitasari, et al., 2021; Asbari, Purba, et al., 2021a; Fikri et al., 2020; Novitasari, Supiana, et al., 2021; Suroso et al., 2021; Sutardi et al., 2022; Waruwu et al., 2020). Innovative work behavior refers to activities related to employee development, promotion, and implementation of useful innovations at any organizational level (Asbari, Purba, et al., 2021a, 2021b). Innovative work behavior includes developing new ideas, technologies, and techniques, as well as testing and applying new methods related to business procedures, in certain work areas.

Organizations need to develop innovations to meet the problems and challenges that arise due to increasing global competition, customer expectations, or market changes (Asbari, Santoso, et al., 2019; Hutagalung et al., 2021). This is a challenge that requires employees to engage in innovative behavior to increase the innovation power of a nation more communally. Innovation helps organizations to become viable and widely accepted as a factor of organizational success (Asbari, 2019; Jumiran et al., 2020). One of the best ways to be innovative is to take advantage of the innovative capabilities of employees (Bernarto et al., 2020; Novitasari, Asbari, et al., 2021). Using their innovative abilities, employees can better contribute to organizational success by generating, promoting, and implementing new and useful ideas for improving work procedures, products, and services. Therefore, organizations need to identify and improve the factors that govern individual innovative work behavior.

Due to the complexity of the challenges, employees need to work and learn together to develop new and innovative solutions (Asbari, Wijayanti, et al., 2019; Novitasari, Radita, et al., 2022). Although transformational leadership is supposed to be positively related to followers' innovative work behavior, research has yielded inconsistent results and meta-analytic findings show a high degree of variation in the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior (Afsar et al., 2020; Masood & Afsar, 2017). Given these inconclusive findings, the researcher re-questioned the relationship of transformational leadership to innovative behavior by considering what explanatory mechanisms or mediators enable transformational leaders to be able to promote innovative work behaviors. The purpose of this study is to confirm and answer the relevance of the impact of the relationship between these variables. Thus, this study examines the mediating role of employee motivation to learn in the process by which transformational leadership influences employees' innovative work behavior. In the domain of creativity research, most research has focused on the influence of leadership on employee creativity rather than on innovative work behavior, as well as leaving employees involved in idea generation and implementation (Lee et al., 2020). Therefore, from an interactionist perspective, this research is here to explain the important role of learning between leadership and innovation factors.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Transformational leadership is described as a process in which leaders play an idealized role, such as modeling, stimulating, and encouraging innovative work behavior. Leaders are also idealized to provide inspirational motivation and are involved in supporting and guiding followers to achieve the shared vision and goals of the organization (Goldsmith et al., 2004). Transformational leaders' attention and personal support of leaders to followers' needs and requirements can increase their influence on followers' involvement in creative activities. By constantly questioning and challenging followers' assumptions and thinking, these leaders stimulate followers' intellectual thinking, which ultimately encourages followers to engage in the generation and implementation of ideas.

Such leaders can articulate the organizational vision intertwined with individual goals, increasing inspirational motivation among followers (Luthans et al., 2007). Therefore, it is assumed that transformational leaders can inspire individual employees by connecting their future with the future of the organization and encouraging them to engage in innovative work behaviors by developing a strong sense of shared vision and a sense of belonging with the organization. Transformational leaders have a positive influence on increasing organizational innovation (Asbari & Novitasari, 2022; Haq et al., 2022). This transformational leader can move employees, and drive employees' interests into motivation to pursue the organization's vision. This effect is achieved through intellectual stimulation, emotional attraction, and inspiration of the leader and the goal of innovation appears vibrant, lively, interesting, and even real (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019). Transformational leaders, through visionary initiatives, functional skills, individual mentoring, supportive culture, and intellectual stimulation abilities, can influence employees to engage in innovative work (Asbari, 2020; Novitasari, Johan, et al., 2022). Such leaders usually encourage employees to engage in innovative work behaviors by providing a supportive environment (Singgih et al., 2020). According to Asbari, Purba, et al. (2021a), transformational leaders create supportive workspaces through inspiration, motivation, and individual preferences. Such a supportive environment effectively increases employee motivation to engage in initiating and implementing new ideas. This environment also provides support and feedback in finding innovative and optimal solutions. Based on the arguments above, it is hypothesized as:

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

It is said that "continuous commitment to learning is central to innovation" (Rhee et al., 2010). While Weisberg (1999) states that learning can be indispensable to increasing creativity. So, creative behavior in generating ideas is a stepping stone to innovative work behavior to adopt and implement useful ideas (Asbari & Novitasari, 2020; Fayzhall et al.,

2020; Tiara et al., 2021). Learning orientation can be considered as one of many motivational orientations, and according to the authors, this kind of behavior involves individuals in activities that assist individuals in generating and implementing useful ideas. Employees' decisions to engage or not to engage in innovative behavior are influenced by their motivation to learn. Learning motivation refers to the desire of employees to learn new knowledge or insights that encourage individuals to be creative and innovative in their work (Asbari, Novitasari, et al., 2021). Individuals with a strong motivation to learn will make various efforts to learn whenever they identify learning opportunities, which have the potential to lead to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Sujan et al. (1994) stated that individuals who value learning, are often motivated, value personal growth, and enjoy mastering any given task. Individuals with a strong motivation to learn to see difficult tasks as opportunities for growth and development, and seek feedback from others to improve their performance. The strong learning orientation of employees will reduce excessive attention to image and any efforts to protect one's reputation during interpersonal interactions (Frink & Ferris, 1998). Other studies support this idea by stating that individuals with a learning orientation will often seek the challenges that individuals offer, and opportunities to learn and master any given task effectively, according to Colquitt et al. (2014). Transformational leaders focus on intrinsic motivation, facilitating employee professional development, and having a shared vision (Yukl, 2012). It is also assumed that transformational leadership, by developing a fair climate, can increase employee intrinsic motivation and ultimately foster innovation in the organizational context. Many researchers have found that transformational leadership has a significant effect on employees' desire to change, their motivation to learn and make additional efforts at work, and the ability to implement innovations (Asbari & Prasetya, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2021). It is assumed that learning motivation can play a mediating role in the process of influencing transformational leaders on employees' innovative work behavior (Saeed, 2020). Therefore, based on the theory, assumptions, and evidence of previous research, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee learning motivation.

H3: Learning motivation has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

H4: Learning motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' innovative work behavior.

To that end, the authors build a research model as shown in Figure 1 below:

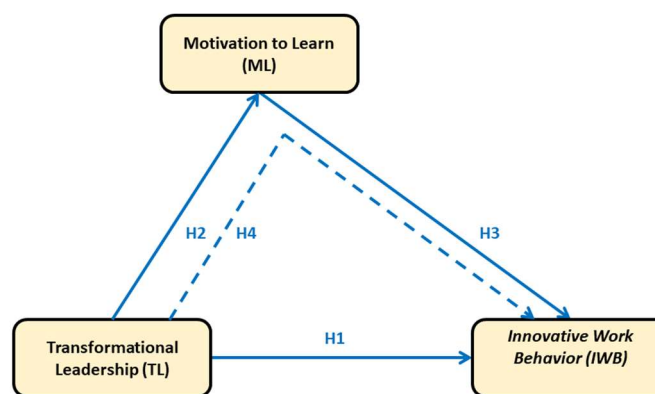


Figure 1. Research Model

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative approach and survey methodology were used to collect employee data. For this study, 300 sets of questionnaires were given and 203 sets of returned and valid ones were given. So, as many as 67.7% of employees were involved in this study as respondents. Employees were asked to voluntarily fill out a questionnaire containing statements about demographics, transformational leadership, learning motivation, and innovative work behavior. The questionnaire contains the names of the respondents on the back which is only used for identification and matching purposes. Complete confidentiality is guaranteed where the names of the respondents are only owned by the researcher.

All study constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale. All measurement items were adapted from previous research after studying the evolution of the variables of interest. Innovative work behavior on a ten-item scale was adopted from the study of De Jong & Den Hartog (2010). Transformational leadership was measured using employee ratings on the 20 transformational leadership items of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, specifically the Form5X-Short in which followers rate their leader. This scale has 20 items measuring four subscales (ideal influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation), each of which has five items (Bass & Avolio, 1997). While learning motivation was measured by three items adapted from Noe & Schmitt (1986), supplemented by one item from (VandeWalle, 1997).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

A total of 203 employees participated, consisting of men (78.6%) and women (21.4%). Respondents have different age groups, ranging from under the age of 29 years (47.6%), 30-49 years (44.5%), and over 50 years (7.9%). Their length of employment also varies, 34% of whom are under 5 years, 50% have worked between 5-10 years, and the remaining 16% have worked more than 10 years. While the highest education of respondents is the majority of senior high school (SMA/SMK) level, which is 75%, and the remaining 25% are undergraduates.

The measurement model testing phase includes testing convergent validity and discriminant validity. Meanwhile, to test construct reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used. The results of the PLS analysis can be used to test research hypotheses if all indicators in the PLS model have met the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability testing. A convergent validity test is done by looking at the loading factor value of each indicator to the construct. In most references, a factor weight of 0.7 or more is considered to have strong enough validation to explain latent constructs (Chin, 1998; Ghozali, 2014; Hair et al., 2010). In this study, the minimum acceptable loading factor is 0.7, with the condition that the AVE value of each construct is > 0.5 (Ghozali, 2014). After going through SmartPLS 3.0 processing, all indicators have a loading factor value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. The fit or valid model of this study can be seen in Figure 2. Thus, the convergent validity of this research model has met the requirements (Purwanto et al., 2019; Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2020; Purwanto, Asbari, & Santoso, 2021b, 2021a; Purwanto, Asbari, Santoso, et al., 2021). The value of loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE for each construct can be seen in Table 1.

Discriminant validity is carried out to ensure that each concept of each latent variable is different from other latent variables. The model has good discriminant validity if the AVE squared value of each exogenous construct (the value on the diagonal) exceeds the correlation between the construct and other constructs (the value below the diagonal) (Ghozali, 2014). The results of the discriminant validity test are using the AVE squared value, namely by looking at the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value obtained as shown in Table 3. These results in Table 3 show that all constructs have an AVE square root value above the correlation value with the latent construct. others (via the Fornell-Larcker criteria). Likewise, the cross-loading value of all items from an indicator is greater than the other indicator items as mentioned in Table 3, so it can be concluded that the model has met discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, a collinearity evaluation is carried out to determine whether there is a collinearity problem in the model. To find the collinearity, we need the VIF collinearity statistic for each construct. If the VIF is more than 5, then the model has collinearity (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Table 4, all VIF scores are less than 5, i.e. the results of the collinearity structural model reveal VIF values below 2. This shows that this research model does not have multicollinearity problems.

Construct reliability can be assessed from the value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of each construct. The recommended value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.7 (Ghozali, 2014). The reliability test results in table 1 show that all constructs have composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7 (> 0.7). In conclusion, all constructs have met the required reliability.

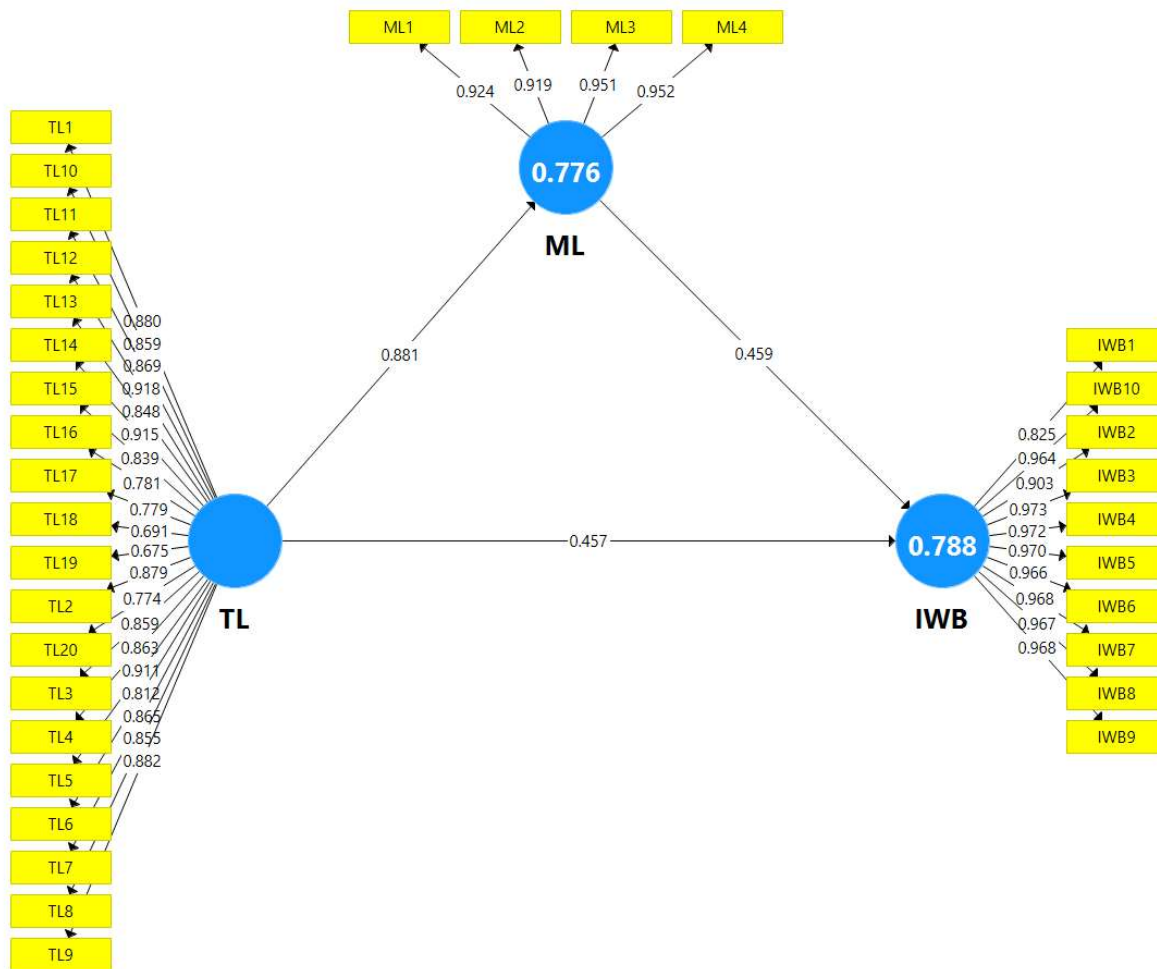


Figure 2. Valid Research Model
Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Table 1. Items Loadings, Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)	0.987	0.988	0.989	0.900
Motivation to Learn (ML)	0.954	0.954	0.966	0.878
Transformational Leadership (TL)	0.978	0.979	0.979	0.706

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variables	IWB	ML	TL
IWB	0.949		
ML	0.861	0.937	
TL	0.861	0.881	0.840

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Table 3. Collinearity (VIF)

Variables	IWB	ML	TL
IWB			
ML	2.456		
TL	2.456	1.000	

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Table 4. Nilai *R Square*

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
IWB	0.788	0.786
ML	0.776	0.775

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H1	TL -> IWB	0.457	0.466	0.081	5.644	0.000	Supported
H2	TL -> ML	0.881	0.883	0.018	49.746	0.000	Supported
H3	ML -> IWB	0.459	0.450	0.081	5.662	0.000	Supported
H4	TL -> ML -> IWB	0.404	0.397	0.071	5.715	0.000	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 Processing Results (2022)

Hypothesis testing in PLS is also known as inner model testing. This test includes a test of the significance of direct and indirect effects as well as measuring the magnitude of the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. To determine the effect of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior and support for motivation to learn, direct and indirect influence tests are needed. The effect test was carried out using the t-statistical test in the partial least squared (PLS) analysis model using the SmartPLS 3.0 software. With the bootstrapping technique, the R Square value and the significance test value were obtained in Table 4 and Table 5. The results are **all hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4) are supported.**

Discussion

The growing importance of innovative work behavior in all types of business organizations has prompted the authors to search for mechanisms that stimulate innovative work behavior among employees. There is a consistent gap in the literature on what constitutes a mediating effect on the process of predicting the innovative work behavior of employees through various antecedents. The current study investigates the process of promoting employee innovative work behavior through transformational leadership and motivation to learn. The author finds that transformational leadership substantially affects the innovative work behavior of employees. This finding is in line with previous studies that found a direct positive relationship between transformational leadership and work behavior innovation (Purwanto, Bernarto, et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2021; Suprpti et al., 2020). The results of this study reinforce the idea that

transformational leadership has a stronger influence on innovative work behavior when the learning motivation mediator is used alone to predict it (Masood & Afsar, 2017). The use of learning motivation as a mediator strengthens the predictability of transformational leadership to explain work behavior innovation from 0.776 (R²) to 0.788 (R²). From the principles of transformational leadership, it seems that leaders increase the motivation of followers to learn to enjoy and engage in the creative endeavors of the organization. The results of this study are in line with the results of Jyoti & Bhau's (2015) research which states that transformational leadership has a positive effect on learning motivation. Transformational leadership gives employees autonomy to learn and creates a conducive environment for individual learning. Asbari & Novitasari (2022) also found that learning motivation has a positive effect on employee creativity. Motivation acts as the process of moving one's actions to meet the needs or desired targets of success. Differences in individual learning motivation will play an important role in influencing employee creativity. When employees' cognitive abilities are high, these employees will have more resources to use to process information.

V. CONCLUSION

The research findings contribute to the existing literature in the following ways. First, despite the growing research on creative outcomes and innovation, there is little research focusing on innovative work behaviors (Masood & Afsar, 2017). The findings of this study can help advance knowledge about the interaction effect of motivation to learn through exploring the impact of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior. While previous studies have used more organizational interactionist perspectives such as organizational learning. Second, this study considers transformational leadership and innovative work behavior as multi-dimensional behavioral phenomena and investigates the impact of transformational leadership on the creative process. The findings justify the relevance of the multi-level analysis for investigating employee behavior from a holistic perspective, and we find that employees' innovative work behavior is the result of the interaction of individual factors and organizational factors.

In addition to theoretical contributions, this research offers practical implications for managers, individuals, and academics. Current research shows that innovative work behaviors in the workplace are less likely to emerge if organizations do not focus on developing transformational leadership among managers. The findings show that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employees' innovative work behavior. Therefore, managers can use the essence of transformational leadership to enhance employees' innovative work behavior in individual contexts. Transformational leaders, based on optimism and enthusiasm, provide intellectual material, make themselves available to support their followers, and encourage them to work more uniquely and tenaciously to carry out tasks. Managers must provide autonomy, growth opportunities, and a variety of skills in the workplace to intrinsically motivate employees to learn new things in the workplace, which will increase engagement in creative and innovative activities.

Despite the theoretical and practical significance of this study, it also has basic limitations, which point the way for further research in the same and different contexts. The sample used in this study consisted of employees working in manufacturing company organizations within the geographical boundaries of Indonesia and is relatively small which may limit the generalizability and external validity of the findings. So, future researchers need to use longitudinal or experimental research designs to address concerns about causality. The use of self-reported questionnaires may increase attention because informants are more likely to provide socially desirable answers than the most accurate responses. Finally, while this study takes into account transformational leadership as a facilitator of innovative work behavior, it cannot take into account various other leadership styles that have the potential to increase employees' innovative work behavior. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies examine how other leadership styles enhance innovative work behavior. In addition, follower empowerment has been highlighted as an important element for enhancing innovative work behavior, therefore, future research may consider the role of psychological empowerment.

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