

## SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF JOB AUTONOMY AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY: A STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Raja Abdul Wahid Amin**

Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir

**Dr Parvaiz Ahmed Shah**

Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir

### Abstract

There is a need to immediately shift our focus on emerging transformational leadership in higher education institutions. Transformational Leadership has been a real boost to education institutions to achieve mission and goals. Transformational Leadership calls for a causal relationship between Job Autonomy and Employee creativity. The objectives of the study clearly stated that there has been a positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Autonomy, Job Autonomy and Employee Creativity, Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity, and Job Autonomy positively mediating between the two variables. The systematic review has been done on 15 journals of Asian and Eastern countries. Different search engines were scrolled exhaustively to reach these clearly stated objectives of the study.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership; Job Autonomy; Employee Creativity.

### Introduction

Successful learning in higher education requires transformational leaders who build awareness among employees by voicing great ideals and morality as glory, solidarity, and humanity. Leaders in higher education should combine leadership and management to address challenges in education. Separating the two is counterproductive and fails the effort of repelling the negative impact of managerialism that exist in institutions. In a world that keeps changing effective leaders must be good for students and teachers (Kotter, 1996). In higher education, transformational leadership is required to obtain the necessary adaptations as a prerequisite for meeting the ever-evolving external and internal environment. The present scenario has called both scholars and practitioners to work for determining the predictors of creativity. Although there is found to exist a relationship between transformational leadership and follower creativity, there are many missing links such as under what boundary conditions (via what moderators) and explanatory mechanisms (via what mediators) creativity of the employees is affected (Newman & Hooke, 2013). Creativity is prominently well known and celebrated for the generation of novel and useful ideas for any organization that works for satisfying peoples' evolving needs, for that organization are in needs to form trustworthiness among the employees and indulge them in decision-making processes, appreciating the workers and establishing appropriate norms that employees deserve, in such environment, one can see creativity grow and eventually obtain benefits (Ohly, 2018). However, a transformational leader is advocated

as the entertainer of creativity and has grown its favourability over time (Ebrahimi et al., 2017). Yeh & Huan, (2017) explored the factors that influence creativity. They hypothesized that social support within an organization, resources, freedom, and regulations, strongly impact the creativity of employees. The concept of creativity is still lacking a clear understanding (Anderson et al., 2014). Hence, researchers have continued to examine the antecedents of employee creativity. Previous studies have provided empirical support for the interlink between creativity and several variables such as curiosity, conflict, leadership styles, positive mindset, culture, and organizational pride. However, previous creativity literature pays little attention to the relation of creativity with the dimensions of job characteristics (Cai et al et al., 2019). For organizational growth, creativity is considered a critical factor as the creative abilities of employees have very resilient effects on various organizational performance outcomes. Therefore, it is a need of the hour to explore some potential factors that can enhance employee creativity; transformational leadership in this regard is considered to be a very productive leadership style as a transformational leader can motivate employees to bring novel and unique ideas for better organizational performance. That is why researchers are now trying to investigate different mechanisms through which a transformational leader influences employees' creativity. In doing so, previous research only documented a few mechanisms like intrinsic motivation, creative process engagement, creative self-efficacy, etc. Though the finding of these researches is inspiring, there is a need for a more job-focused mechanism to advance this research on transformational leadership and employee creativity (Maria Saleem And Faisal Mahmood 2018). Hence, this research will aim to investigate a mechanism that explains the relationship between transformational leaders and employee creativity by incorporating the mediating role of job autonomy. Therefore, this research will contribute to bringing novelty to the existing body of literature by investigating a new mechanism that has not been tested so far.

### **Objectives**

- 1) To gauge the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity.
- 2) To assess the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Autonomy.
- 3) To evaluate the relationship between Job Autonomy and Employee Creativity.
- 4) To explore the mediating role of job autonomy between Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity.

### **Research Hypotheses:**

H1: Transformational Leadership is positively associated with Employee Creativity.

H2: Transformational Leadership is positively associated with Job Autonomy.

H3: Job Autonomy is positively associated with employee creativity.

H4: Job Autonomy mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity.

**Review of Literature:****Constructs Under Study:**

- Transformational Leadership(Independent Variable)
- Job Autonomy(Mediator)
- Employee Creativity(Dependable Variable)

**Conceptualization of Transformational Leadership:**

Transformational leadership has been conceptualized as comprising four dimensions (McCleskey, 2014):

- Idealized Influence(II): These ideal beliefs flow from leaders to their followers, who in turn, perceive them to be outstanding( Ozbag,2016). Furthermore, communicating confidence and charisma to followers is found to contribute to elevating their creative development and employee creativity process and pace.
- Motivational Inspiration (MI): This component contributes to cultivating a creative work environment, where followers are encouraged to take-in interpersonal risks, perform beyond usual expectations, and generate innovative content (Sirkwoo, 2015). This can certainly contribute to cultivating a creative problem-solving atmosphere at the workplace.
- Intellectual Stimulation (IS): Challenging and questioning followers' efforts and suggestions in a problem-solving context will ultimately lead them to reframing problems more accurately, targeting issues pragmatically, and approaching former situations innovatively ). This momentum stimulates employees to develop creative and generative thinking, due to the encouragement of their leaders to think 'out of the box' ( Martin, et al., 2016).
- Individualized Consideration(IC): IC focuses on how leaders pay attention to each employee's own needs for achievement and growth. Leaders, aware of each of their follower's individual uniqueness, talents, and capabilities, could better understand and appropriately categorize the suitable tasks and missions to be assigned to them accordingly (Anthony, 2017).

**Conceptualization of Job Autonomy:**

Job autonomy is different from freedom; the latter refers to people's opportunities to make judgments at work and to choose which tasks to accomplish( Rich et al.,2009).

Job autonomy is also recognized as an individual's preference, posing additional questions regarding whether workers view themselves as autonomous in moral decision-making (Abdolmaleki 2018). Still, when it comes to an organization's culture, autonomy is a role brooch, a pointer to the skill and accountability criteria of a job, and, perhaps, an opportunity for consistent and competent results (Ilyash, Yildirim, Capuk, & Bozgul, 2019).

The objections to liberally high freedom exist in the literature, which comprises a misconception of a person's identity, the disproof of fairness principles, unaccountability for rational actions of control, and no sensitivity to the importance of personal associations (Đerić, 2020).

**Conceptualization of Employee Creativity:**

Creativity has been treated with two dimensions Quality and Quantity. However, the definition of creativity opines that creativity is an approach to ideas that are novel in nature (Ohly, 2018). On the other hand, creativity in business settings is commonly perceived as the ability to come up with innovative products, novel approaches, and functional processes. It is therefore defined as employees' ability to generate original, improved, and innovative ideas, products, and procedures with high execution potential and performance-improving content in a structured process (Koseoglu et al., 2017).

Also, George and Zhou (2007) considered three alternative ways in which supervisors could enhance employee creativity:

- Providing Developmental Feedback: It instills a learning/improvement orientation that is vital for creativity.
- Displaying Interactional Justice: it ensures that subordinates will have the knowledge and information they need to be creative and will be treated with respect even if their ideas do not pan out;
- Being Trustworthy: It reassures them that their hard work and risk-taking are well worth the effort because supervisors have the competence and professionalism to follow through on creative ideas.

Therefore, it is important for all organizations to improve their employee's creativity, so managers must focus on identifying, understanding, and utilizing techniques and approaches that promote the creativity of their people.

### **Linkages:**

#### **Transformational Leadership and Job Autonomy:**

Leaders are an essential part of any organization, as they affect the self-respect and self-sufficiency of employees (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). Normally, when employees receive support and guidance, they become more conscious of their authority and competency with regard to a task's progression and outcome and thus develop an enhanced level of autonomy (Spreitzer, 1996). When subordinates are motivated intrinsically, they espouse corporate principles and guidelines (Gagne & Deci, 2005), feel they have the freedom to make decisions, and are acknowledged for their efforts (Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala, & Oakley, 2006), and believe they have competence and autonomy. Higher levels of autonomy can be achieved by inspiring followers to grow and learn in their positions and providing them opportunities for self-guidance (Manz & Sims, 2001). If leadership is considered a means of affecting people's beliefs and behaviors (Yukl, 1989), transformational leaders can be said to be equipped to provide followers with a higher degree of autonomy (Bass & Avolio, 1990) so that they can become their leaders (Yammarino, 1994). Indeed, experimental studies have demonstrated this causal relationship between transformational leadership and autonomy (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Rich et al., 2010).

#### **Job Autonomy and Employee Creativity:**

Complex jobs that provide job incumbents with autonomy demand creative outcomes by encouraging employees to focus simultaneously on multiple dimensions of their work, whereas

highly simple or routine jobs may inhibit such a focus (Oldham and Cummings 1996). Individuals are likely to be excited about their work activities and interested in completing these activities in the absence of external controls or constraints (Baer, Oldham, and Cummings 2003; Hackman and Oldham 1980; Oldham and Cummings 1996; Shalley and Gilson 2004). When individuals are intrinsically involved in their work, all of their attention and effort is focused on their jobs, making them more persistent and more likely to consider different alternatives, which should lead to higher levels of creativity (Amabile 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Parker, Wall, and Cordery 2001; Shalley, Gilson, and Blum 2000, 2009).

### **Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity:**

Studies reported that transformational leaders emphasize the alignment of employee visions and objectives with their leaders' and organizations' visions and objectives, which consequently develops intrinsic motivation among employees and encourages them to get involved in creative work processes (Gardner and Avolio, 1998). Leaders can enhance followers' creativity through their manipulations of the organizational learning culture (Phipps et al., 2012). Transformational leadership orients followers by sharing information, and enhancing employees' visions, knowledge, competencies, and commitments to learning, which ultimately results in enhanced creativity. Furthermore, transformational leaders welcome and promote new ideas, as well as share knowledge with their followers, and encourage them to think unconventionally when searching for solutions to problems. Leaders provide critical support for the learning and development of followers. They ensure the dissemination of knowledge and learning by modeling learning behavior and encouraging people to contribute new ideas (Gephart et al., 1996). They encourage the procurement and circulation of information and the shared use of learning that helps to boost creativity. Transformational leaders are also able to motivate their followers intrinsically (Joo and Lim, 2009) toward learning new concepts, ideas, and technologies, which each result in creative behavior.

### **Job Autonomy as a Mediator:**

Job autonomy could sometimes be used as a decentralization mechanism generally by management who seek to spread decision-making and actualization authority to employees (Alpkan et al., 2010). According to Alpkan et al. (2010), autonomy in one's job provides the essential freedom and empowerment to be innovative possibly because autonomy adds a feeling of empowerment to employees and creates in them a feeling needed for creativity (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). Research suggests that when management provides employees the required autonomy, employees obtain the decision latitude to develop novel ideas presumably because autonomy also creates a feeling of responsibility and ownership (Alpkan et al., 2010) and increases one's intrinsic motivational state (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010; Shalley et al., 2000). Transformational leaders may also provide employees with autonomy as a means of empowering and mentoring employees to be responsible and accountable in their decision-making. Additionally, transformational leaders by intellectually stimulating employee creativity may provide employees with the requisite space and authority necessary to create new ideas.

### Methodology and Analysis:

The review study on the literature on job autonomy as a mediator between transformational leadership and employee creativity proceeds in the following databases: Emerald insight, Elsevier, Research gate, and Google Scholar were used as research engines. By adopting the systematic way for literature review, we find out that many research articles were published from 2014 to 2021 on the topic that we choose for review. After a thorough study of these research articles, we selected 15 articles because the main topic is similar/same to our research area.

**Table 1:**

**List of Journals:**

Sr.No	Journal	No. of Articles
1	Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences	2
2	Sustainability 2020	1
3	Canadian Social Science	1
4	Leadership & Organization Development Journal	1
5	International Journal of Business and Management	1
6	International Journal of Supply Chain Management	1
7	International Journal of Applied Exercise Physiology	1
8	Human Resource Development International	1
9	Journal of Management and Research	1
10	International Journal of Social Sciences	1
11	Journal of Asia Business Studies	1
12	International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research	1
13	Advances in Economics, Business, and Management Research	1
14	Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance in Western & Non-Western Context: Systematic Review of 2019	1

**Table 2**

depicts the complete list, which represents the methodology, researcher good names, region, and theories used to publish these research articles.

**Table 2: List of reviewed papers**

Sr.No	Article	Region	Methodology	Theory
1	Izlem Gozukara and Omer Faruk Simsek	Turkey	Structural Equation Modelling	Transformational Leadership
2	Nadezda Jankelova et al	Slovakia	Internal Reliability	Transformational Leadership and Job



				Characteristic Model
3	Huang Youli et al	China	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Transformational Leadership and Social Informational Processing model
4	Albert Amankwaa et al	Ghana	Structural Equation Modelling	Transformational Leadership and Work Innovative Behavior
5	Izlem Gozukara and Omer Faruk Simsek	Turkey	Structural Equation Modelling	Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement
6	Tamer M. Alkadash et al	Palestine	Mediation Analysis	Charismatic Leadership theory
7	Back-Kyoo et al	Korea	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Creativity Theories and Models
8	Maria Saleem and Faisal Mahmood	Pakistan	Internal Reliability	Transformational Leadership
9	Hulya Gunduz and Gonul Kaya	Turkey	Exploratory Factor Analysis	Transformational Leadership
10	Sarfilianty Anggaini	Indonesia	Structural Equation Modelling	Employee Creativity
11	Jeevan Jyoti and Manisha Dev	India	Structural Equation Modelling	Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity
12	Samyia Safdar and Shimin Liu	Pakistan	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Transformational Leadership
13	Fullchis Nurtjahjani et al;	Indonesia	Descriptive Analysis	Transformational Leadership
14	Sadaf Razzaq et al;	Pakistan	Descriptive Analysis	Transformational Leadership
15	Seyed Hossein Alavi	Iran	Structural Equation Modelling	Job Characteristic Model

Some researchers used questionnaires, surveys, and in-depth interviews. Some conducted an online survey for data collection. The research papers were published in Indonesia, Turkey, India, Pakistan, China, and Ghana. Different theories were used by different scholars to enhance the quality of research papers. Transformational Leadership Theory, Job Characteristic Model, and Employee Creativity theories were mainly used to justify the positive relationship among these variables.

**Table 3:**

Number of papers by methodology

Sr.no	Methodology	No. of papers
1	Structural Equation Modelling	6
2	Exploratory Factor Analysis	1
3	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	3
4	Mediation Analysis	1
5	Internal Reliability	2
6	Descriptive Analysis	2

Table 3 shows that after the collection of data the researcher adopted different statistical tools for analysing data. Different scholars have used different methodologies like CFA, EFA, Mediation Analysis, etc to find out regression and correlation. This study reveals that correlation and regression analysis have been mostly used for data analysis. The findings reveal that there is a positive relation between TL and JA, JA and EC, and TL and EC. Thus Job Autonomy positively mediates between Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity.

**Findings:**

The results indicated that the mediation model in which the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement was fully mediated by job autonomy. The results indicated that 26% of the variance in work engagement was accounted for by job autonomy while 36% of the variance in job autonomy by transformational leadership. The study verified that there was a positive association between transformational leadership and business performance which is mediated by job autonomy and job satisfaction. The research results have proven that transformational leadership has a positive effect on agribusiness performance mediated through job autonomy and job satisfaction. Using survey data collected from 525 employees in China the researchers empirically examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee’s pro-social rule breaking and mediating role of job autonomy. Results indicate that transformational leadership is positively related to pro-social rule breaking, and job autonomy fully mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee pro-social rule breaking. The study revealed that autonomy and supportive management rather than affective commitment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and IWB. Transformational leadership positively relates to job autonomy, affective commitment, supportive management, and IWB. The results supported the study hypotheses, demonstrating that transformational leadership had a positive effect on job autonomy and work engagement and organizational identification fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. The findings of this research specifically highlighted the impact of job autonomy and organizational identification on work engagement within the context of leadership. The main findings revealed that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance via job autonomy as a mediator partly influenced the mediation model. Contrary to the general belief and previous research (Shalley and Gilson 2004), the link between job autonomy and employee creativity was significant but



mediocre in these Korean firms. For some possible reasons, first, as most of the respondents were highly educated employees at an entry-level or a junior managerial level, they have only limited autonomy. Therefore, a range restriction could affect the results. More in-depth studies are needed in the future. Job autonomy has an economically significant positive mediating impact on individual creativity. Although job autonomy has an economically significant impact, it remains statistically insignificant. The study also analysed that the relationship between transformational leadership and individual creativity helps leaders to develop and cultivate employees' capacity for creativity. The sample of 275 respondents showed a positive link between four dimensions of Transformational Leadership and individual creativity. Based on the descriptive statistics, transformational leadership can influence employee perception in establishing a good and effective relationship between leaders and employees to effective creative attitudes as well as behaviour; and Employee has great creativity to bring a new idea and creative behaviour to deliver the best service quality. Our results demonstrated that transformational leadership is positively related to employee creativity. This finding is consistent with the results of Shin and Zhou (2003), who suggested that followers are prone to remain loyal and rely strongly on a transformational leader to encourage and guide them to a new work frontier. This study aims to investigate the effect of transformational leaders on employee creativity in Pakistan organizational contexts. Data from 253 employees of a commercial bank in Pakistan revealed that transformational leadership is positively related to employee creativity.

### **Conclusion:**

The review of the literature shows that transformational leadership plays a key role in bringing the novelty of ideas and their execution to full potential in higher education institutions. Employee creativity is enhanced by transformational leadership and by adding job autonomy as a mediator does wonders to the organization. The relation between the variables is positively significant. Transformational leadership is an antecedent to both job autonomy and employee creativity. Transformational Leadership to bring such novel processes and novel approaches to higher education need job autonomy to intervene as an important mechanism.

### **Research Gaps:**

1: Despite the continuous research to identify the factors to foster employee creativity (To & Chiu, 2018), the existing stream of research remains deficient to finalize the determinants of employee creativity. Thus, there is a need to find some other factors on a broader spectrum that can enhance employee creativity other than already identified factors. In order to fulfil this gap, this study incorporates Job Autonomy as a mediator.

2: Although existing literature has documented the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Creativity a great deal (Mittal and Dhar 2015) no final consensus has been established so far in this regard (Schippers & Stam 2010). To reach this consensus Job Autonomy will act as a mediator and will enhance the existing literature.

3: Studies have suggested inconsistent effects of Leadership on employee outcomes, which implies a curvilinear pattern (Lee et al, 2017). Specifically, too much or too little

Transformational Leadership may be inefficient in motivating employee creative performance. (Ma and Jaing,2018). However, to reach this consensus job autonomy will contribute to the existing body of knowledge pertinent to the undertaken research topic.

4: In literature, the research that examines the link between job characteristics and creativity is still scarce and done mostly in the European context (e.g.Cai et al.,2019). The present study is a moderate effort to explore this relation in-depth within the Indian context specifically in the UT of Jammu And Kashmir. Fundamentally this research addresses the following research question: Does job autonomy influence employees' creativity in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir specifically in higher education institutions?

### References:

- 1) Ozlem Gozukuraa and Omer Faruk Simsek ."Linking Transformational Leadership to Work Engagement and the Mediator Effect of Job Autonomy: A Study in a Turkish Private Non-Profit University". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 195 ( 2015 ) 963 – 971.
- 2) Hulya Gunduz Cekmecelioglua and Gonul Kaya Ozbag. "Leadership and Creativity: The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Individual Creativity". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 235 ( 2016 ) 243 – 249.
- 3) Samyia Safdar and Shimin Liu. "Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity through Organizational Commitment". *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research (IJMSR)*. Volume 6, Issue 1, January 2018, PP 61-67.
- 4) Sarfilianty Anggiani. "EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY: PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT MEDIATOR (STUDY EMPIRIC AT FIVE-STAR HOTELS IN JAKARTA)" .*International Journal of Social Sciences*. Volume 4 Issue 3, pp. 1862-1875.
- 5) Baik-Kyoo (Brian) Jooa ,Baiyin Yangb and Gary N. McLean. "Employee creativity: the effects of perceived learning culture, leader– member exchange quality, job autonomy, and proactivity". *Human Resource Development International*, 2014.
- 6) Maria Saleem and Faisal Mahmood ."Transformational Leadership and Employees' Creativity: A Multi-Mediation Model". *Journal of Management and Research (JMR)*. Volume 5(1): 2018.
- 7) Albert Amankwaa, Michael Asiedu Gyensare and Pattanee Susomrith. Transformational leadership with innovative behaviour Examining multiple mediating paths with PLS-SEM. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*,2019.
- 8) HUANG Youli, LU Xixi, and WANG Xi. The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Employee's Pro-social Rule Breaking. *Canadian Social Science* Vol. 10, No. 1, 2014, pp. 128-134.
- 9) Fullchis Nurtjahjani , Noermijati Noermijati, Djumilah Hadiwidjojo and Dodi Wirawan. "Transformational Leadership in Higher Education: A Study in Indonesian Universities". *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, volume 135.
- 10) Nadežda Jankelová , Zuzana Joniaková , Ildikó Némethová and Jana Blštáková. "How to Support the Effect of Transformational Leadership on Performance in Agricultural

Enterprises”. Sustainability 2020,

- 11) Jeevan Jyoti and Manisha Dev. “The impact of transformational leadership on employee creativity: the role of learning orientation”. Journal of Asia Business Studies 2014.
- 12) Seyed Hossein Alavi , Farzam Farzan , Morteza Dousti and Mohsen Loghmani. “Designing the organizational creativity based on job characteristics and job involvement among physical education units’ employees of Technology University”. International Journal of Applied Exercise Physiology 2322-3537.
- 13) Tamer M. Alkadash, Qais Almaamari ,Mujeeb Saif Al-Absy, and Valliappan Raju. “Theory of Transformational Leadership towards Employee Performance as Sequence of Supply Chain Model: The Mediating Effect of Job Autonomy in Palestine Banks during COVID-19 Pandemic”. International Journal of Supply Chain Management. Vol. 9, No. 5, October 2020.
- 14) Izlem Gozukara and Omer Faruk Simsek. “Role of Leadership in Employees’ Work Engagement: Organizational Identification and Job Autonomy”. International Journal of Business and Management; Vol. 11, No. 1; 2016.
- 15) Sadaf Razzaq , Abdul Sami, Sib-tul-Manum and Muhammad Hammad.” Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance in Western & Non-Western Context: Systematic Review of 2019”. International Journal of Entrepreneurial Research. Volume. 3, No. 3, 2020, pp 58 – 60.