



From Mundane to Marvelous: How Transformational Leadership Boosts Front Office Employees' Creativity

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Abstract:

The primary objective of this study is to explore the impact of transformational leadership on the creativity of front-office employees. The central premise is that transformational leaders can inspire positive transformations in their followers, enhancing task performance and supportive behaviors. Using a quantitative research approach, data was collected through surveys from employees working in the front office in hotels with four and five-star ratings in Cairo. Using a stratified random sampling method, a sample of 18 hotels was chosen, encompassing 300 employees. This sample represented approximately 33.3% of the total population of 54 hotels, with a robust response rate of 60.3%, comprising 181 employees. The study employed structural equation modeling, specifically Smart PLS 4, to evaluate the proposed model. It sought to assess the impact of transformational leadership on employees' satisfaction while also exploring its direct influence on employees' creativity. The research results indicate that transformational leadership has the potential to enhance the creativity of front-office employees. This improvement occurs through the mediating role of job satisfaction, leading to increased productivity and innovation among employees. Moreover, the study offers practical implications for the hotel industry. It underscores the importance of cultivating an innovation-friendly environment to stimulate employee creativity and enhance organizational performance. To support this endeavor, hotels are strongly encouraged to consider investing in transformational leadership training programs for their supervisors and team leaders. Additionally, the study recommends using rigorous hiring criteria to identify high-caliber candidates who are more likely to exhibit creativity in their roles. While this research provides valuable insights, it has limitations, which could serve as potential avenues for future investigation.

Key Words: Transformational leadership, creativity, job satisfaction, front office employees

1. Introduction

In the contemporary landscape, leadership has assumed an increasingly pivotal role, driven by globalization, technological advancements, global economic turmoil, pandemics, and intensified competition. These dynamic factors have collectively rendered the hospitality

industry's environment uncertain and unpredictable, as evident in the works (Sulasmı et al., 2020; Figueiredo & Sousa, 2016; Ratina et al., 2021). In response to these challenges, organizations within this sector must harness their creative and innovative

capacities and leverage cutting-edge technology. These measures are imperative for their survival, competitive prowess, sustained growth, and capacity to lead in this ever-evolving landscape. Hence, innovation stands as a critical factor for the continued existence and prosperity of organizations, and it can manifest in various forms, ranging from enhancements to customer service to the introduction of new features in existing products. Transformational leadership has the potential to stimulate creativity by emphasizing the significance of a promotion focus and active engagement in the creative process, as indicated by Potočnik and Zhou (2014). Gaining insight into the correlation between transformational leadership and creativity equips supervisors with the knowledge to cultivate a work setting that nurtures and encourages employee creativity. Remaining competitive hinges on the ongoing generation of innovative ideas, a process inherently fueled by an inspired and creative team (Politis, 2004). Companies have increasingly recognized transformational leadership as a leadership approach capable of eliciting elevated levels of organizational performance, as observed in the study by Rawashdeh et al. (2021). In today's dynamic world of global competition, organizational growth and development depend on the ability. In the contemporary and ever-evolving landscape of the business world, the role of employees' creativity assumes paramount significance, as underscored by numerous studies (Zhu et al., 2018; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Liu et al., 2016; Anderson et al., 2014). Creative employees hold the capacity to generate novel and pragmatic ideas spanning various domains, encompassing products, services, procedures, and processes within their respective organizations. These ideas, once harnessed, empower companies to adapt to market shifts effectively, meet evolving customer needs, and seize emerging market opportunities (Alikaj et al., 2021). It is well-established through empirical research that the extent of employees' involvement in creative endeavors serves as a critical determinant of organizational success (Anderson et al., 2014).

Consequently, given the escalating significance and the growing demand for creativity within the workplace, an array of organizations has initiated interventions to cultivate and nurture employee creativity, as indicated by researchers (Malik et al., 2015; Sears et al., 2018). Even with these endeavors, specific unresolved issues persist in creativity. One such enigma pertains to discerning the precise mechanisms underpinning the influence of personality traits on an individual's creative capabilities, necessitating further investigation to offer clarity and insights.

Front-office employees can be crucial to an organization's innovativeness, especially in the service industry, where customer needs are heterogeneous. Addressing customers' unique needs requires front-line employees to be creative and innovative. Front office managers significantly impact productivity, employee engagement, attrition, and customer satisfaction. Effective development of front office managers requires a new approach. Front-line leaders are often overlooked in leadership training and development planning despite their power to implement change efforts. Empowering front-line workers with people-first technology can help them meet their unique needs and improve performance (Coelho et al., 2010).

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by supervisors as perceived by employees. Furthermore, the research endeavors to scrutinize the impact of these transformational leadership behaviors on the creativity of front-office employees in the hotel industry. Specifically, the study examines how transformational leadership behaviors, such as providing inspiration and motivation, fostering an innovative culture, and supporting employees' personal and professional growth, can enhance the creative capabilities of front-office employees. The ultimate goal of the research is to provide insights that can help organizations develop effective leadership strategies that promote creativity, innovation, and overall organizational success.

In summary, the current research can contribute to theory and practice. The study's findings could have practical implications for organizations seeking to enhance the creativity of their front-office employees by identifying specific transformational leadership behaviors that can boost creativity. The research could also advance our understanding of creativity in the workplace by exploring the role of transformational leadership in enhancing creativity and providing insights into the mechanisms through which organizations can promote creativity among their employees. Furthermore, the study could contribute to the existing literature on transformational leadership and creativity by profoundly understanding how transformational leadership can impact creativity in a specific context. Overall, the research has the potential to make significant contributions to organizational success and innovation.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Defining and Understanding Transformational Leadership:

In leadership theory and research, various scholars have offered distinct yet interrelated definitions of transformational leadership, shedding light on its core characteristics and underlying principles. Bass (2000) defines transformational leadership as the ability to inspire followers to surpass performance expectations by instigating changes in their attitudes, beliefs, and values. According to Tracey and Hinkin (1994), transformational leadership pertains to the influence that leads to significant shifts in the fundamental assumptions and commitment of organizational members toward the organization's mission or goals.

Yukl (2002) offers a similar perspective, defining transformational leadership as a process aimed at empowering and uniting individuals to achieve an organization's objectives. Mozhdeh et al. (2011) emphasize the relevance of transformational leadership in contemporary organizations, particularly in delivering exceptional products and services

within a rapidly evolving societal context. Larson (2009) underscores the motivational aspect of transformational leaders, highlighting their role in inspiring individuals to strive for higher performance levels aligned with the organization's mission, ultimately fostering satisfaction and surpassing expectations. He further emphasizes the capacity of transformational leaders to address individual needs by harmonizing personal goals, objectives, and values with those of the organization.

2.2 Transformational Leaders:

Transformational leadership involves motivating subordinates to transcend self-interest and commit to advancing the organization's goals by instilling a sense of pride in their roles and a proactive willingness to exceed expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Gu et al., 2017). They provide constructive feedback to motivate extra effort and encourage innovative thinking about complex issues. Transformational leaders persuade managers and employees to work in new ways, creating change and enhancing productivity by presenting an inspiring vision. They raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality by providing encouragement, clear goals, recognition, support, and modeling fairness and integrity (Bakker et al., 2022). Transformational leadership involves articulating and developing a shared vision, cultivating an environment of mutual trust and loyalty, and boosting staff motivation, performance, and morale (Bakker et al., 2022).

2.3 The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employees' Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction is a commonly researched topic in organizational behavior due to its positive impact on organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Heimerl et al., 2020). As Rodríguez and García (2021) stated, job satisfaction in hospitality is an employee's contentment with their job and feelings of enjoyment or fulfillment. It has behavioral, cognitive, and affective aspects and can be separated into intrinsic and extrinsic

satisfaction. Research shows that various factors influence hospitality job satisfaction. A 345-employee study found that the supervisor relationship, roster adherence, and development opportunities most impact satisfaction. Other studies by Gallardo et al. (2021) revealed compensation as an essential satisfaction factor in hospitality (Heimerl et al., 2020).

Transformational leaders foster a culture of engagement leading to higher job satisfaction and commitment by inspiring employee creativity, innovation, and productivity (Kim & Kim, 2019). They build trust, assign meaningful tasks, provide focused resources, and acknowledge contributions. Transformational leaders develop employee abilities and help them reach their full potential (El-Sayed & El-Sayed, 2021; Escortell et al., 2019; Al-Hawari & Al-Swidi, 2018). Research on transformational leadership's impact on front-office employee satisfaction positively influenced satisfaction and commitment (Fayed & Fathy, 2022). In hospitality, transformational leadership is considered a highly effective management technique. Supervisors exhibiting transformational leadership positively impact front desk performance (El-Sayed & El-Sayed, 2019). Transformational leadership encompasses individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, infusing inspirational motivation, and embodying idealized influence, significantly impacting employee satisfaction. Employees with high perceived commitment and satisfaction provide exceptional customer service. Transformational leadership significantly impacts front-office employee satisfaction (Fayed & Fathy, 2022).

The correlation between front-office employee satisfaction and implementing transformational leadership in upscale hotels was a predictable outcome. Therefore, we developed the following hypothesis, shown in Figure 1:

H1: Implementing transformational leadership affects front-office employee satisfaction.

2.4 The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employees' Creativity:

Amabile (1998) delved into the intricacies of creative thinking, elucidating how it manifests as a result of an individual's acquired creative thinking skills and expertise, which are rooted in past experiences. He also highlights the importance of motivation in mobilizing an individual's creative efforts. Creating an organizational environment that fosters creativity is more effective than expecting individuals to increase their intellectual capacity and creative thinking skills. Politis (2005) concludes that providing a supportive process and environment is necessary for employees to be creative in their work, which is why this topic has gained increasing attention from practitioners and scholars. Expanding on previous research, Chen et al. (2008) elucidate that transformational leadership influences employees' creativity by fostering creative thinking and intrinsic motivation among all vital organizational stakeholders.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that numerous organizations place substantial reliance on employee creativity, viewing it as a cornerstone for attaining competitive advantages, adaptability, and long-term survival, as observed by Zhou (2003). Unsurprisingly, comprehending the dynamics of creativity within organizational contexts is a prominent research priority within organizational behavior (Zhou & Shalley, 2008). Building upon prior research, Chen et al. (2008) extended the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating that transformational leadership influences employee creativity, mediated by the interplay of creative thinking and intrinsic motivation among all organizational pivotal members.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that numerous organizations rely on the creative abilities of their employees in order to gain a competitive edge, adapt to changing circumstances, and ensure their continued existence (Zhou, 2003). Therefore, comprehending the intricacies of organizational creativity is a primary focus of research in organizational behavior (Zhou & Shalley, 2008).

Frontline employees can be crucial in driving innovation within an organization, particularly in the service industry where customer needs are diverse, which requires creative behaviors from frontline employees. Thus, it enables them to discover the customers' needs and meet them, resulting in increased productivity and financial returns. (Coelho et al., 2010).

Amabile (2016) states that certain personality traits can help individuals increase their creativity skills. These characteristics encompass receptiveness to new experiences, belief in abilities, and determination. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can mediate the relationship between these personality traits and creativity. Boredom can also lead to greater creativity by giving people time to daydream. Walking is another activity that can foster creativity.

Leaders can play a pivotal role in nurturing creativity among their subordinates by creating an environment where individuals feel secure in experimenting with innovative approaches, free from the fear of punitive consequences for potential failures, as posited by Amabile (1998). Transformational leaders, in particular, tend to cultivate environments conducive to creativity, facilitated mainly by intellectual stimulation (Sosik et al., 1998). This essential trait of transformational leadership fosters creativity by encouraging followers to think divergently, promoting generative and exploratory thinking. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to approach existing problems from fresh perspectives, challenging their values, traditions, beliefs, and even the assumptions held by the leader (Allameh et al., 2012; Iwuh, 2010).

For example, during brainstorming sessions aimed at generating creative solutions, the intellectually stimulating behaviors, statements, and attitudes exhibited by a transformational leader can enhance subordinates' capacity to dedicate more time to devising unconventional ideas and lessen their apprehension about evaluation, thus bolstering overall creativity (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2016). Moreover, Bass (1990) suggested that transformational leaders can reframe obstacles and crises as developmental opportunities or

challenges. This approach empowers individuals to engage in creative problem-solving and find innovative solutions rather than resorting to defensive responses that may hinder personal growth and mastery.

The study by Iwuh (2010) clarifies that transformational leaders play an essential role in organizational transformation through intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders stimulate employee efforts regarding innovation and creativity, encourage re-examining existing assumptions, push for changing how problems are approached, advocate using analogies and metaphors, etc. Through this dimension, transformational leaders envision exciting possibilities, prompt rethinking of unquestioned ideas, seek different perspectives when problem-solving, provide continuous encouragement, suggest new ways of approaching work, get employees to examine problems from many angles, encourage non-traditional thinking about traditional problems, and promote risk-taking and new approaches. In summary, transformational leaders use intellectual stimulation to foster employee innovativeness, creativity, and new perspectives on existing assumptions and problems.

Amabile (1998) suggests that environmental conditions created by managers can actively induce creativity in groups and organizations. He proposed that managers can create an environment that encourages creativity by allowing employees to try innovative approaches without fearing punishment for failure. Transformational leaders can also create a supportive climate that promotes creativity by stimulating their followers to think about old problems in nontraditional thinking, fantasize, and transpose figures and ground when they engage in brainstorming activities (Sosik et al., 1998).

Transformational leadership behaviors are closely aligned with the factors that drive innovation and creativity in the workplace. These include visionary leadership, fostering a supportive environment for innovation, granting autonomy, offering encouragement, providing recognition, and presenting challenges (Elkins & Keller, 2003). These

leadership behaviors essentially function as catalysts for creativity: individualized consideration acts as a form of reward by acknowledging and motivating employees; intellectual stimulation fosters exploratory thinking through support for innovation, autonomy, and challenges; and inspirational motivation ignites the idea-generation process by inspiring followers toward the organization's vision (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The resulting intrinsic motivation experienced by followers is a crucial source of creativity (Sosik et al., 1998). Research studies, such as those conducted by Jaiswal and Dhar (2015), indicate a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity, with this link being mediated by the presence of an innovation-friendly climate. Furthermore, Mittal and Dhar (2015) find that creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity. Chaubey et al. (2019) provide evidence supporting the idea that creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity. These findings collectively emphasize the integral role of transformational leadership in fostering creativity and innovation within organizations.

The correlation between the innovative abilities of front-office Employees and the implementation of transformational leadership practices in upscale hotels was a predictable outcome. As a result, we have developed the following research hypothesis, as shown in Figure 1.

H2: Implementing the transformational leadership style affects the creativity of front-office employees.

2.5 The Job Satisfaction Meditate the Relationship Between the Transformational Leadership and Employees' Creativity:

The hospitality industry is a dynamic and ever-changing field that requires creativity and innovation to stay ahead of the competition. Transformational leadership has been identified as a critical factor in promoting creativity among employees. This is because transformational leaders inspire and motivate

their employees to think outside the box and develop new and innovative ideas. However, the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity is complex and is often mediated by other factors (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Similarly, Kim and Lee's (2011) study conducted in the semiconductor industry in Korea found that the correlation between leadership and employees' creative behavior is a complex causal relationship. Instead, they suggest that transformational leadership indirectly affects creative behavior through mediating variables such as work motivation and job satisfaction, both individual and work-related factors.

One such factor is job satisfaction. Research has shown that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity in the hospitality industry. When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work, leading to greater creativity and innovation. Overall, the literature suggests that job satisfaction is an essential mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity in the hospitality industry. By promoting job satisfaction, transformational leaders can create a work environment that fosters creativity and innovation, which is essential for success in the highly competitive hospitality industry (Ilyas et al., 2021; Ansong et al., 2022).

Job satisfaction is a prerequisite for the correlation between the creativity of front-office employees and transformational leadership practices in upscale hotels. As a result, we have developed the following research hypothesis, as shown in Figure 1. H3: The job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the transformational leadership and creativity of Front office employees.

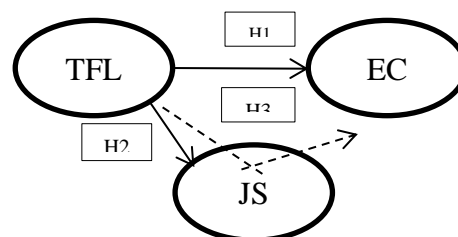


Fig 1: Cconceptual Model

Notes: TFL: Transformational Leadership; JS: job satisfaction; EC: Employees' creativity
Arrow: Direct effect; and Dashed Arrow: Indirect Effect (Mediation role).

3. Methodology:

3.1 The Research Sampling Technique:

The population for this study was defined based on the 32nd edition of the Egyptian Hotel Guide, published by the Egyptian Hotel Association in 2012. Specifically, the study focused on front-office employees working in 4 and 5-star hotels in Cairo. To compile the population frame, the researcher utilized information from the Egyptian Hotel Guide (EHA, 2011) to create a comprehensive list of 4- and 5-star hotels in Cairo, Egypt. The rationale for selecting front office employees in these higher-star-rated hotels was their greater likelihood of being exposed to and adopting new leadership concepts than their counterparts in lower-rated establishments.

Front office employees were chosen since they are directly accountable for customer service, quality, and satisfaction, can shape guest impressions of the hotel, and need effective leadership to enhance performance and productivity.

Stratified random sampling was used to guarantee that each population element had a known, equal chance of selection, reducing bias and increasing generalizability and representativeness (Lohr, 2009; Sardana & Bergstrom, 2011). Per Bryman (2004), stratification by a criterion ensures that the sample distribution matches the population based on that criterion. Increasing the sample size reduces sampling error. A stratified random sample of 18 hotels, which had a total of 181 employees, was chosen. This sample represents 33.3% of the total population of 54 hotels. Questionnaires were distributed based on staff numbers. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed (189 to 5-star, 111 to 4-star hotels). One hundred eighty-one valid questionnaires were returned for analysis (108 from 5-star, 73 from 4-star) - a 60.3% response rate.

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

Survey research was used for data collection as it is a valuable tool for studying front-office employees' sensitive opinions, attitudes, preferences, and behaviors.

An extensive literature review was initially conducted to gather relevant questions for the selected study variables. Likert's (1967) procedures were followed to develop the transformational leadership scale for 4- and 5-star Cairo hotels. Survey items were Likert-type with values: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

The first step identified and generated study variables by reviewing the literature on transformational leadership and job creativity. The second step was item generation to ensure content validity and capture the specific domains without extraneous content (Hinkin et al., 1997). Statements for each variable were formulated based on the previous step. MLQ-Form 5X assessed employees' perceptions of their manager's transformational style (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Tracey & Hinkin, 1994; Brown, 2008; Gill et al., 2010; Elazmy, 2006). Section two measured employee creativity using their views on transformational leadership's impact on their creativity. Six items were selected based on Elazmy, 2006 and Jyoti & Dev, 2015.

A two-stage pretesting process followed questionnaire development. Academic consultants first reviewed it for clarity, content, completion time, ambiguity, suggested rectifications, and general comments.

A pilot study ensured a well-designed, easily understood survey with reliable, valid results. It allowed respondent comments/questions on the instrument and confirmed that all questions were answerable (Dillman, 2000). Shortcomings could be addressed before expending significant effort. Twenty front office employees from 4 and 5-star hotels piloted the questionnaire.

4. Findings:

The present research utilized descriptive and inferential data analysis using Statistical Smart (PLS_SEM), Version 4, to test the research hypotheses. The structural equation model tested the research hypotheses for the direct effect of transformational leadership on employees' satisfaction and the indirect effect and the mediation role of employees' satisfaction between transformational leadership and employees' creativity.

4.1 Measurement model:

By established methodologies, the factor loadings in Table 1 were found to surpass or closely approximate 0.70, and both the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values were observed to exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, as stated by Hair et al. (2021). The average variance extracted (AVE) scores were uniformly above the established criterion of 0.50, thus supporting the notion of convergent validity, as per Hair et al. (2021). As per the criteria delineated by Fornell and Larcker (1981), it was observed that the square roots of the AVE values consistently exceeded the inter-latent variable correlations, as depicted in Table 2. Moreover, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was below the critical threshold of 0.90, as Henseler et al. (2016) recommended. Consequently, the outcomes substantiated satisfactory validity and reliability in the examined data.

Table (1). Factor loadings and convergent validity for the latent variables

Constructs, dimensions and items	FL	P	AVE	a	C.R
TFL			0.656	0.965	.968
TFL(Q1)	.849	***			
TFL(Q2)	.841	***			
TFL(Q3)	.824	***			
TFL(Q4)	.844	***			
TFL(Q5)	.810	***			
TFL(Q6)	.803	***			
TFL(Q7)	.864	***			
TFL(Q8)	.754	***			
TFL(Q9)	.745	***			

TFL(Q10)	.849	***			
TFL(Q11)	.824	***			
TFL(Q12)	.791	***			
TFL(Q13)	.758	***			
TFL(Q14)	.770	***			
TFL(Q15)	.816	***			
TFL(Q16)	.794	***			
JS			.555	.920	.932
JSQ17	.730	***			
JSQ18	.713	***			
JSQ19	.753	***			
JSQ20	.766	***			
JSQ21	.701	***			
JSQ22	.711	***			
JSQ23	.771	***			
JSQ24	.729	***			
JSQ25	.810	***			
JSQ26	.775	***			
JSQ27	.730	***			
EC	.564		.693	.911	.931
ECQ28	.817	***			
ECQ29	.825	***			
ECQ30	.857	***			
ECQ31	.844	***			
ECQ32	.806	***			
ECQ33	.844	***			

Notes: TFL: Transformational Leadership; JS: job satisfaction; EC: Employees' creativity
 FL: factor loadings; a: Cronbach's alpha; CR: composite reliability; and AVE: average variance extracted.

Note: ***p < 0.001

Table (2): Discriminant validity. Heterotrait – Momotrait Ratio

Table 2: Discriminant validity. Heterotrait – Momotrait Ratio			
Variables	TFL	JS	EC
TFL	-		
JS	.789**	-	
EC	.678**	.857**	-

Notes: TFL: Transformational Leadership; JS: job satisfaction; and EC: Employees' creativity

4.2 Common method variance:

Two distinct techniques were employed to assess the potential presence of standard method variance. Firstly, Harman's one-factor test was administered by conducting an exploratory factor analysis utilizing an unrotated principal components factor analysis. This test aimed to extract a single factor and evaluate whether the resultant factor accounted for less than the predefined

threshold of 50%, as prescribed by Podsakoff et al. (2003). The outcomes revealed that a sole factor explained 38.09% of the total variance, falling below the designated 50% threshold. Secondly, examining variance inflation factors (VIFs) was employed to evaluate multicollinearity across all constructs and items. For the inner models, the VIFs were found to be below 5.0, except four items in the outer model, which remained within the recommended cutoff threshold of 5.0, as suggested by Hair et al. (2016). Consequently, standard method variance did not present a significant concern within the scope of this study.

4.3 Structural model:

This study employed a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. PLS-SEM offers distinct advantages over covariance-based SEM, such as enhanced sample size flexibility and the ability to assess the influence of reflective and formative constructs, as highlighted by Hair et al. (2016). Before embarking on path analysis, the overall model's plausibility was diligently examined. The coefficient of determination (R2) notably exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.20, by the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2021).

To gauge the model's out-of-sample predictive power, the Stone-Gaiser's Q2 value was employed. This study's Q2 values for all endogenous constructs were more significant than zero, indicating the structural model's robust predictive accuracy.

The approximate model fit was evaluated using the standardized root mean residual (SRMR), documented to be less than 0.08 (precisely, SRMR employees = 0.075), as indicated in Table 3. This result conformed to the recommended threshold for PLS path models, as advocated by Henseler et al. (2016).

Table (3): Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.075	0.075
d_ ULS	3.139	3.139
d_ G	2.469	2.469
Chi-square	1,125.969	1,125.969

Note: SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

4.4 Testing relationships:

4.4.1 Estimation of direct effect:

The model and hypotheses were analyzed with a bootstrapping technique involving 5,000 resamples. The findings of the hypotheses test are presented in Table 4 and Figure 2. The findings demonstrated a significant beneficial impact of transformative leadership ($\beta = 0.696$, $t = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$) on work satisfaction. Therefore, H1 Was supported. The effect of transformational leadership on employees' creativity ($\beta = 0.087$, $t = 1.213$, $p = 0.540$) was non-significant. Thus, the H2 was rejected. New results prove that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employees' creativity ($t = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$), which this study did not examine or analyze.

4.4.2 Estimation of mediation effects:

To assess the mediating influence of job satisfaction, bootstrap methods were applied, following the established procedure delineated by Preacher and Hayes in 2008. The statistical significance of this mediating effect was determined by examining a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect. In addition to analyzing the mediating role, the study also investigated the total and direct effects within the research framework.

As displayed in Table 4, all indirect effects were statistically significant, except for the direct effect of transformational leadership on employees' creativity. This finding supports the notion that job satisfaction is crucial in mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' creativity. Specifically, job satisfaction was identified as a mediator between transformational leadership and employees' creativity ($\beta = 0.663$, $t = 5.915$, $p < 0.001$). Consequently, this supports the validity of Hypothesis 3 (H3).

Table 4: The Direct Effect and Indirect Effects, Mean, STDEV, T Value, P Value

Table 4: The Direct Effect and Indirect Effects, Mean, STDEV, T Value, P Value						
Hypotheses	Variables	Mean	STDEV	T Value	P Value	Results
1	TFL → JS	.835	.032	26.263	0.000 ***	supported
2	TFL → EC	.087	.141	0.612	0.540	Reject
-	JS → EC	.663	.114	5.810	0.000 ***	New results
Indirect Effects (Mediation Role)						
3	TFL → JS → EC	.553	.094	5.915	0.000 ***	supported

Note: STDEV: Standard deviation; TFL: Transformational Leadership; JS: job satisfaction; and EC: Employees' Creativity. *** $P < 0.001$; ** $P < 0.01$; * $P < 0.05$

The enhancement of creativity among front-office employees is intricately linked to the improvement in their perceived degree of transformational leadership through the conduit of job satisfaction. In essence, the increase in front-office employees' creativity can be expressed as a function of their perceived level of transformational leadership, which is mediated by their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the positive correlation observed in this context may be attributed to front office managers who recognize the significance of implementing transformational leadership practices in fostering job satisfaction, consequently contributing to the enhanced creativity of employees within the realm of hospitality operations.

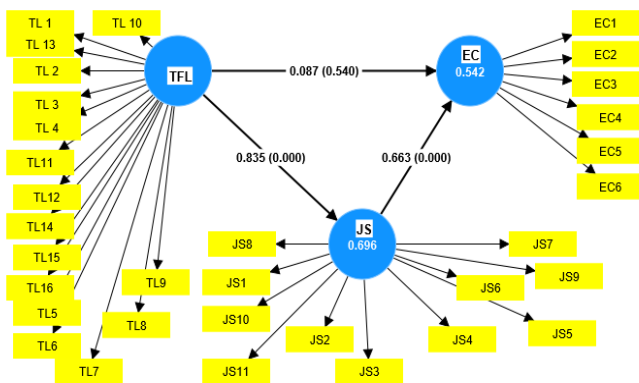


Fig2: Conceptual Model

Notes: STDEV: standard Deviation; TFL: Transformational Leadership; JS: job satisfaction; and EC: Employees' Creativity. *** $P < 0.001$; ** $P < 0.01$; * $P < 0.05$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study's results support the positive and significant effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction among front-office employees. This finding is consistent with Kim and Lee (2011), who have highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in promoting job satisfaction and enhancing employee motivation, which gives group members a strong intrinsic motivation to exhibit more creative behavior and psychological empowerment to attach employees to events in their organizations affect their motivation to generate new ideas. The findings clearly showed that transformational leadership impacts front-office job satisfaction, increasing employees' creativity in tasks. The study also found that transformational leadership enhances employee creativity by mediating job satisfaction. This suggests that job satisfaction is an essential mediator between transformational leadership and employee creativity (Kim & Lee, 2011).

It is worth noting that transformational leadership had no direct effects on employee creativity in this study. This finding aligns with previous research (Kim & Lee, 2011), which has suggested that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity is indirect and mediated by other factors, such as job satisfaction and motivation. This highlights the importance of considering leadership's complex and multifaceted nature in understanding its impact on employee outcomes.

The findings of this study have important implications for organizations that seek to enhance employee creativity and job satisfaction. By adopting transformational leadership practices, organizations can create a work environment that fosters creativity and innovation while promoting job satisfaction and employee well-being. Managers and leaders can focus on developing their transformational leadership skills by engaging in training and development programs and seeking feedback from employees and peers.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical support for transformational leadership's vivacious and significant effect on job satisfaction among front-office employees. The study also demonstrates that transformational leadership enhances employee creativity by mediating job satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of transformational leadership in promoting positive employee outcomes. They suggest that organizations develop their leaders' transformational leadership skills to foster a creative and satisfying work environment. Future research could explore other potential mediators in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity and the impact of transformational leadership on other critical organizational outcomes.

Finally, the hospitality industry is characterized by an intensive labor industry; the workforce is the greatest asset in the hospitality industry. Thus, it should use a people-oriented strategy such as transformational leadership. Moreover, it is characterized by a rapidly changing business environment, competitive challenges, and increasing guest demands that require a change-oriented. Thus, it increases management's need to implement a moral leadership style to improve the employees' creativity and provide innovative products and services to gratify the changing and endless customers' needs and demands to survive in the market. Transformational leaders stimulate their subordinates to develop new creative ideas to enhance performance, plan to implement the innovative style to perform their tasks, rethink old problems in new ways, look at them from different perspectives, think unconventional and innovative in problem-solving without the fear of punishment for failure, to make decisions. However, they also hold them accountable for completing their work. In other words, the transformational leader plays a significant role in establishing an organizational environment where creativity can be fostered, which may be a better strategy to induce innovation in an organization.

6. Implications:

6.1 Theoretical implications:

The findings of this study have several theoretical implications for the literature on transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee creativity. Firstly, the study provides further support for the positive impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, which has been well-established in previous research. This study adds to the existing literature by demonstrating that transformational leadership can enhance job satisfaction among front-office employees, which is a group that has received relatively less attention in previous studies.

Secondly, the study contributes to the literature on employee creativity by highlighting the importance of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity. This finding is consistent with previous research that has suggested that job satisfaction is an essential factor in promoting employee creativity and that transformational leadership can enhance creativity indirectly through its impact on job satisfaction.

Thirdly, the study suggests that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity is complex and multifaceted, and transformational leadership has no direct effects on creativity. This finding aligns with recent theoretical developments in the literature on leadership and creativity, emphasizing the importance of considering the multiple pathways through which leadership can impact creativity.

Overall, the findings of this study have important theoretical implications for our understanding of the role of leadership in promoting positive employee outcomes and suggest that future research should continue to explore the complex and nuanced relationships between leadership, job satisfaction, and employee creativity.

6.2 Practical implications:

The findings derived from this study hold significant practical implications for

organizations and their managerial strategies. Firstly, the study underscores that implementing transformational leadership practices can effectively augment job satisfaction levels among front-office employees. This insight is precious for organizations aiming to prioritize employee well-being and mitigate turnover rates, as prior research has consistently associated job satisfaction with these desired outcomes.

Secondly, the study accentuates the pivotal role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the linkage between transformational leadership and employee creativity. Consequently, managers and leaders are encouraged to foster a work environment conducive to job satisfaction, facilitating an environment conducive to heightened employee creativity. Enhancing job satisfaction may include employee development and growth opportunities, acknowledging and rewarding employee contributions, and nurturing a positive and supportive organizational culture.

Thirdly, the study suggests that transformational leadership has no direct effects on employee creativity and that the relationship between these variables is complex and mediated by other factors. This has important implications for managers and leaders seeking to promote employee creativity. Rather than focusing solely on leadership behaviors, managers and leaders should also consider the broader organizational context, including factors such as job design, organizational culture, and resources that can impact employee creativity. Transformational leaders play a pivotal role in fostering their followers' creativity by enhancing employee satisfaction. Consequently, management can benefit substantially by investing in transformational leadership training for supervisors and team leaders. Alternatively, they may consider employing personality testing to screen high-potential candidates who exhibit the traits conducive to effective transformational leadership. In this context, team leaders need to emphasize the motivation of their employees, mainly when working with disabled individuals, to introduce innovative

and meaningful strategies into their work, thus fostering creativity (Fathy, Fouad, 2022).

Furthermore, team leaders should actively promote a learning-oriented environment by encouraging the exploration of fresh approaches to completing tasks and facilitating employee strength development. This proactive approach can significantly contribute to cultivating a creative and productive workforce.

Finally, the current study suggests that human resources can develop regulations, rules, and policies that govern managers and supervisors to manage their subordinates according to transformational leadership characteristics, as proposed by Mathende and Yousefi (2021).

7. Limitations and Further Research:

Future research in leadership and its impact on the hospitality industry offers promising avenues for advancing our understanding of organizational leadership and its consequences. One critical area of investigation is experimental approaches to assess the effects of implemented transformational leadership programs on the creativity of front-office employees. Experimental designs can provide valuable insights into the causal relationships and mechanisms in the leadership-creativity dynamic.

Furthermore, future research must explore the potential mediating influence of structural empowerment in the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. This proposition finds support in prior studies, including those by Amor et al. (2020) and Kelemen et al. (2020). Comprehensive comprehension of the pathways through which leadership exerts its impact on employee engagement is of paramount significance for the optimization of workplace dynamics (Amor et al., 2020; Kelemen et al., 2020).

The emphasis on sustainability within the hospitality industry is gaining prominence, and future research endeavors may benefit from exploring the ramifications of green transformational leadership on the ecological performance of restaurant employees,

specifically within the framework of the Egyptian hospitality sector. Such an inquiry holds the potential to make substantial contributions to sustainability initiatives within this particular industry.

Another critical dimension to investigate is the attitude of top management towards environmental practices and its impact on subordinates' commitment to environmental practices, as Fathy (2018) suggested. This line of inquiry can provide insights into sustainable practices and corporate responsibility in the industry.

Food safety practices are paramount in the hospitality sector. Given the findings of Abdel Rassoul and Fathy (2019), further research could explore the role of transformational leadership in enhancing food safety practices, especially among temporary chefs. As Nassar and Fouad (2022) found, customers' intentions to purchase 3D-printed food can depend on factors like food neophobia levels. Further research could examine how transformational leaders in the hospitality industry can leverage 3D-food printing technology to spark creativity and innovation among culinary staff, potentially leading to more appealing and customized 3D printed food options that encourage greater consumer acceptance.

Leadership styles are pivotal in shaping organizational processes, and research exploring the connection between leadership styles and knowledge management, as illuminated by Fathy (2018), presents a promising avenue to gain insights into the impact of leadership on knowledge sharing and utilization within the industry.

Gender diversity and the promotion of women in leadership roles are essential considerations in contemporary organizations. Research on the relationship between transformational leadership and glass ceiling beliefs, as Fathy and Zidan (2020) recommended, can provide insights into strategies to promote gender diversity and overcome barriers to women's advancement in Egyptian society.

Furthermore, exploring the effects of transformational leadership positivity on employee satisfaction and commitment, as indicated by Fayed and Fathy (2022), can help

uncover the complex interplay between leadership style and employee outcomes, particularly relevant in the hospitality industry, where employee satisfaction is crucial.

Understanding the moderating role of employee satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity is an intriguing avenue for future research. This approach can provide nuanced insights into how leadership impacts creativity.

Finally, research into the impact of transformational leadership on employees' inventiveness, its implications for hotel innovation, and its effect on the efficiency of loyalty programs in the hospitality and tourism sector can contribute to industry competitiveness and customer loyalty.

These diverse research directions have the potential to enhance the knowledge base within the hospitality industry and lead to practical implications for organizations and their employees, ultimately fostering growth and innovation in the sector.

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