

THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY THROUGH PROMOTION FOCUS AND CREATIVE PROCESS ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATING VARIABLES

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THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY THROUGH PROMOTION FOCUS AND CREATIVE PROCESS ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATING VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT

Human resources are essential, therefore, the company should have a leader who is able to provide trust, direction, and motivation (transformational leadership). Thus, the employees are more focused on achieving achievement (promotion focus). To achieve performance, employees must be able to identify problems, find information, and generate ideas to solve problems with different ideas (creative process engagement). It makes employees are able to apply ideas on themselves (employee creativity). This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity through promotion focus and creative process engagement as the mediating variables. This study used a quantitative approach. The technique of data collection was done by distributing questionnaires. The population of this study was 140 employees. The sample was obtained by the census method. The data testing technique used was PLS 2.0. The result of this study indicates that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee creativity through promotion focus and creative process engagement as mediating variables with a significance level of 0.645 in the strong category (substantial). Transformational Leadership has a good impact on providing motivation, trust, and challenges to employees so that they are able to increase creativity and ultimately achieve the targets set by the company.

Key words: Creative Process Engagement, Employee Creativity, PLS, Promotion Focus, Transformational Leadership

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1. INTRODUCTION

The complex and competitive development of a corporate environment requires each organization and company to be more responsive to survive and continue to grow. To support the development of the organization, it is necessary to have changes in individuals or human resources. As a result of the changes, individuals or human resources are able to realize excellence in competition, therefore a good company should develop the organization based on innovation. The success of a company depends on its ability to innovate which begins with creativity (Sarooghi, H., 2015). The source of organizational innovation comes from the capacity of its employee creativity (Tan, 2007).

In the current competitive atmosphere, organizations must be able to survive, one of them by increasing employee creativity (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010). Organizations or companies must improve their employee creativity in order to remain competitive (Amabile et al., 1999; Horng et al., 2016). One example is what the Mitsubishi Electric Corporation did by inviting all employees in the research, marketing, and engineering departments to participate in providing input in the process of finding refrigerators (Xiao, 2020; Tan, 2007). Creativity is not only resulted from the company's overall strategy and resources but more basically from the individual thoughts of employees or with others in carrying out the organized work every day. Creativity can be interpreted as a thought process and way of looking at a problem to get a solution by creating new ideas based on information, knowledge, and experience.

The phenomena of leadership style in Indonesia become an interesting problem and has a big influence on the development of the business world. In the business, leadership style is very influential to the course of the organization and its operational continuity. The leadership role is very strategic and important in an organization as one of the determinants of success in achieving the organization's vision and goals. Leadership is the ability of individuals to influence, motivate, and make others able to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organization (Akbar & Murtalaksono, 2020; Yukl, 2009).

As the company expects to grow and survive in the competition, a transformational leadership style is needed. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that makes followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for leaders. It transforms and motivates followers by making employees more aware of the importance of task results and inviting employees to prioritize the interests of the organization team rather than personal interests (Bass, 1985). Based on the above definition, it can be understood that transformational leadership creates a supportive atmosphere for creativity (Sarros et al., 2008). Employees can perform their creativity without feeling fear of failure. Transformational leadership encourages employees to fight failure and to try new approaches that develop employee creativity (Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Haseeb et al., 2020; Shin and Zhou, 2003).

Transformational Leadership involves behavior that encourages employees to take different views on how to do work and challenges them to try new approaches (Podsakoff et al., 1990). The objectives achievement regarding people's perceptions in decision making is one of them using the theory of regulatory focus (RFT). The theory examines the relationship between individual motivation and the way in achieving goals. When someone believes that there is a match, he/she will be more deeply involved and feel right about it, yet he/she must

get a guarantee in reacting to the object or event (Higgins, 1997; Roespinoedji et al., 2019). Regulatory focus theory distinguishes two different focuses that form the needs of employees who try to satisfy the goals to be achieved (Brockner and Higgins, 2001). Furthermore, it explains that leaders influence employee behavior by encouraging a promotion or prevention focus (Brockner and Higgins, 2001; Neubert et al., 2008).

Promotion focus is one of the two regulatory foci of the regulatory focus theory. According to the theory, individuals can adopt either prevention or promotion focus to achieve desired goals, for example, reducing differences. Promotion focus is associated with motivation to achieve desired goals, while prevention focus is related to motivation to avoid undesirable goals (Higgins, 1997). Both foci refer to the behavior and applied self-concept of conformity with the appropriate goals or standards (Higgins, 1997; Kark and Van Dijk, 2007).

The creative process includes every problem-solving approach that individuals use to search for thought in environments with different alternatives and produce responses (Amabile, 1983; Perry-Smith, 2006). The process involves three stages: (1) problem identification, (2) information search and encoding (3) idea generation (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). The creative process begins with problem identification (Davis, 2009; Zhang and Bartol, 2010). At this stage, the employees define the problem (Mumford, 2000). Employees must structure the problem and have identified objectives, procedures, restrictions, and information relevant to the solution to the problem (Reiter-Palmon and Illies, 2004). After problems are identified, individuals move towards relevant information search and encoding (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). This second stage involves searching for information and concepts that are relevant for further understanding of the identified problems (Mumford, 2000). The stage of information search and encoding involves both consideration of existing concepts and the development of new concepts using information from memory and external sources (Illies and Reiter-Palmon, 2004).

Considering and developing concepts related to problems, and integrating relevant information leads to the final stage of the idea generation creative process (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). Combining and reorganizing the collected information, exploring the application, and implicating new understanding leads to a series of new ideas (Mumford, 2000). Therefore, when employees focus on Promotion Focus, they must improve their ways to solve problems by generating new variety and different ideas. This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity through promotion focus and creative process engagement as mediating variables

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used an explanatory quantitative approach with a population of all marketing employees of 140 people. The research sample was taken using purposive sampling technique. The independent variable in this study was transformational leadership, while the dependent variable in this study was employee creativity and mediation. The mediating variables in this study were promotion focus and creative process engagement.

Indicators of independent variables include when leaders often put the needs of employees before their needs; trust the leader; leaders are consistent in ethics and accordance with the principles and their values; leaders emphasize the importance of having a sense of togetherness in the mission of the organization; leaders behavior uplifts employees spirit; leader behavior is able to motivate the employees by giving meaning and challenges at work; leaders stimulate the employees to be more innovative and creative by asking for opinions about understanding the problems that occur and teaching new ways to solve problems; leaders use different points of view when solving problems; leaders show new ways of working with different perspectives; leaders recognize individual differences in terms of

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needs and wants; leaders help develop employees abilities; leaders pay attention to the needs of employees to excel and develop by acting as a coach or mentor.

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 Indicators of the dependent variable include employees suggesting new ways to achieve goals or objectives; creating new and practical ideas for improving performance; finding solutions to technology, processes, techniques, ideas or products problems; proposing new ways to improve the quality of solutions to problems; good source creative ideas; not afraid to take risks; showing creativity at work when given the opportunity; developing an adequate plan and schedule for implementing new ideas; having new and innovative ideas; having a new approach to problems; suggesting new ways of doing work assignments.

This research is original and following the ethical principles of nonmaleficence and confidentiality. It has never been published before and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The parameter observed in this study is the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity with promotion focus and creative process engagement as mediating variables. This study used PLS 2.0-based Structural Equation Model to analyze the data

3. RESULTS

3.1. Transformational Leadership Analysis

Table 1 Description of Respondents' Responses to Transformational Leadership

Indicator	Questions	Mean
TL1	I feel that leaders often put employees' needs before theirs	4,17
TL2	I trust my leader	4,14
TL3	My leader is consistent in ethical and consistent with the principles and values	3,96
TL4	The leader emphasizes the importance of having a sense of togetherness in the organization mission	4,17
TL5	The leader's behavior can always uplift my spirit	4,15
TL6	The leader's leadership attitude can motivate me by giving meaning and challenge in working	4,17
TL7	The leader stimulates to be more innovative and creative by asking opinions about understanding the problems that occur and teaching new ways to solve the problem	4,12
TL8	The leader uses different point of views when solving problems	4,05
TL9	The leader shows new ways of working with a different perspective	4,00
TL10	The leader recognizes individual differences in terms of needs and desire	4,04
TL11	The leader helps to develop my abilities	3,83
TL12	The leader pays attention to my need to excel and develop by acting as a coach or a mentor	4,04
The Average of Transformational Leadership variable		4,07

Based on Table 1, the overall average value of transformational leadership variables analysis is 4,07.

3.2. Promotion Focus Analysis of respondents' Responses to Promotion F

Table 2 Description of Promotion Focus Variables

Indicator	Questions	Mean
PF1	Work motivates me in achieving goals and aspirations	4,21
PF2	For me, an essential factor in finding a job is the potential for developing	4,12
PF3	I take part in a risky and useful project	4,10
PF4	I focused on the task which contributes to the development of work	3,99
PF5	I need much time to imagine in achieving aspirations	4,05
PF6	At work, I tend to take risks for success	4,06
PF8	For me, a career is a clear view of achieving goals	4,04
The average of <i>Promotion Focus Variable</i>		4,08

Based on table 2, the overall average value of promotion focus variables analysis is 4,08.

Table 3 Description of Respondents' Responses to Problem Identification

Indicator	Questions	Mean
CPE1.1	I spare enough time to try to understand the nature of the problem	4,20
CPE1.2	I tried to think of a problem from various perspectives.	3,88
CPE1.3	I group difficult problems or tasks into parts to get a better understanding	3,79
The average of <i>Problem Identification Variable</i>		3,95

Based on table 3, the overall average value of problem identification variables analysis is 3,95.

Table 4 Description of Respondents' Responses to Information Search and Encoding

Indicator	Questions	Mean
CPE2.1	I look for solutions from various information	4,10
CPE2.2	I seek information from various sources (for example, personal experiences, experiences of others, documentation, the Internet, and many others)	4,19
CPE2.3	I use detailed information in various area of expertise for future use	4,07
The average of <i>Information search and encoding variable</i>		4,12

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Based on table 4, the overall average value of information search and encoding variable analysis is 4,12.

Table 5 Description of Respondents' Responses to Idea Generation

Indicator	Questions	Mean
CPE3.1	For me, information sources can generate new ideas	4,00
CPE3.2	I am look for a solution that can be used in various fields.	3,81
CPE3.3	I find several alternatives for the same problem before choosing a final solution	3,69
CPE3.4	I'm trying to make some different solutions to solve the problem.	4,12
CPE3.5	I spend enough time on that collected information to help generate new ideas	4,01
The average of <i>Idea Generation</i> Variable		3,92

Based on table 5, the overall average value of Idea Generation variable analysis is 3,92.

Table 7 Description of Respondents' Responses to Employee Creativity

Indikator	Pertanyaan	Mean
EC1	I suggested new ways of achieving goals	4,18
EC2	I create new and practical ideas to improve performance	3,96
EC3	I am looking for solutions to technology, process, technique, idea or product problems	4,16
EC4	I propose new ways to improve the quality of the proble	4,08
EC5	For me, creative ideas are good source	4,36
EC6	I am not afraid of taking a risk	4,00
EC7	I show creativity at work when given the opportunity	4,04
EC8	I developed an adequate and scheduled plan for the implementation of new ideas	4,14
EC9	I have new ideas and innovative	4,20
EC10	I have a new approach to the problem	4,17
EC11	I suggest new ways of doing jobs' assignments	4,17
The average of <i>Employee Creativity</i> variable		4,13

Based on table 7, the overall average value of Employee Creativity variable analysis is 4,13.

4. DISCUSSION

The discussion of this study refers to the results of the analysis output by using partial least square (PLS) to test the hypothesis so that it can find out positive or negative influences between variables and significant or insignificant influence between variables in a study. This study shows that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity. Thus the hypothesis stating that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity is accepted. There is a positive and significant relationship in previous research between Transformational Leadership and employee

creativity (Henker et al., 2015). Other studies emphasize the importance of leadership styles for employee creativity, primarily transformational leadership (Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Shin and Zhou, 2003; Tierney et al., 1999). Based on the results of this study, it shows that the promotion focus has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity. Thus the hypothesis stating that promotion focus has a positive and significant effect on employee creativity is accepted. There is a positive and significant relationship between promotion focus on employee creativity (Henker et al., 2015). Promotion focus is associated with developmental needs and goals related to a person. Promotion focus has been proven to be useful for employee creativity (Brockner and Higgins, 2001; Friedman and Förster, 2001)

The results indicated that with the Promotion Focus was relevant with enthusiasm and risk-taking, and thus beneficial to improve employee creativity. This was supported by the respondent's answer to the promotion focus variable that there was an indicator with a very high answer category "the job motivates employees in achieving their hopes and aspirations". This showed that every job they received emerged employee's hopes and aspirations. In line with that, employees worked with enthusiasm and dared to take risks, which was useful for their creativity. Furthermore, the leadership of the company (Sales manager) provided flexibility for employees in order to carry out promotion focus. Without abusing any right, it would be useful for marketing employees to create creative ideas, so that the company goals could be achieved effectively and efficiently.

Based on the results of research that had been done, transformational leadership had a positive and significant effects on employee creativity, as well as the relationship between promotion focus on employee creativity. These results indicated that hypothesis three that stated that transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on employee creativity with mediation of promotion focus can be accepted. Based on the results of research, there was estimated results between transformational leadership and promotion focus, and also between promotion focus on employee creativity. Thus, the requirements of the promotion focus variable as a mediating variable had been fulfilled. The amount of indirect effect between transformational leadership on employee creativity through promotion focus was 0.38695.

Transformational leadership encouraged employee growth and development, and qualified to drive the focus of promotion (Kark and Van Dijk, 2007). Employees who shared a common vision with leaders were more likely to make individual idealists, and employees with transformational leaders were assumed to focus more strongly on results (Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Stam et al., 2010). The results shown in the statistical analysis results were in line with previous research that stated that the relationship of the three variables was partial mediation (Henker et al., 2015). Transformational leadership could affect employee creativity both in direct way and through promotion focus as the media.

This indicated that there was no close relationship between transformational leadership and promotion focus. This showed that transformational leaders in this study did not influence their employees by using their role effectively, making positive results more prominent, and encouraging promotion focus. However, in this case, the mean value of respondents' answers regarding the promotion focus variable was considered high with a value of 4.08. One of the indicators had a very high category value which was "The job motivates me to achieve expectations and aspirations". This showed that employees had high motivation in completing their task. This should lead the managers to be more active in the role of promotion focus, so that employees easily expressed creative ideas.

Based on the results of statistical tests, there was a positive and insignificant relationship of the promotion focus variable on employee creativity through problem identification as a mediating variable. This showed that the problem identification variable could not mediate the

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relationship between promotion focus on employee creativity. These results were different from previous research which stated that the relationship of the three variables was partial mediation (Henker et al., 2015). Promotion focus was able to directly influence Employee Creativity without going through problem identification. The results of the study indicated that companies must implement problem identification that enabled employees to develop more accurate representations of problems in order to obtain solutions. In this case, it can be seen based on the respondents' answer from the problem identification variable that there was one indicator that had a high category mean value of 3.79, but has the smallest value. The indicator was "employees classify problems or difficult tasks into parts to gain greater understanding".

Based on the results of statistical tests, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between promotion focus on employee creativity. It was with condition of the original sample multiplication value between promotion focus and employee creativity through information search and encoding smaller than the original sample between promotion focus and employee creativity. This indicated that the variable information search and encoding partially mediated the relationship between promotion focus and employee creativity. This indicated that the promotion focus variable was able to directly influence employee creativity without going through information search and encoding.

The result was different from previous research which stated that promotion focus could not affect employee creativity indirectly and was not significant through mediating information search and encoding (Henker et al., 2015). This finding contradicted previous research which found that Information Search and encoding produced a more precise and more original solution (Illies and Reiter-Palmon, 2004). The missing findings from information search and encoding was probably because it was difficult to describe the identification of problems and idea generation on one hand. It was because the creative process was not isolated sequentially, the process of finding information and coding might begin before the problem was actually identified and idea generation could be triggered during the process information seeking and coding that still occurred (Reiter-Palmon and Illies, 2004).

Based on the similarities and differences in the findings, this study assessed that promotion focus on employees was more likely to see the true value of information and provided further consideration during the process of finding information and coding. Information search and coding might be beneficial for creativity as a result of the identification process problem and idea making. This case could be seen based on respondents' answers from the variable information search and encoding. There was one indicator that had the highest mean value and included in the high category that was "employees looks for information from various sources (for example: personal experience, experience of others, documentation and the internet)". In addition, the respondents' answer from the Information Search and encoding variable was supported by the answer from the employee creativity variable. In line with that, there was one indicator that was included in the very high category of "for employees good creative source ideas". This showed that employees had a high level of concern in the process of finding information in order to create new ideas for the work they do. In addition, employees also considered that information sources could create creative ideas.

Based on the results of statistical tests, it was found that there was a positive and insignificant relationship on the variable promotion focus on employee creativity through idea generation as a mediating variable. This showed that the idea generation variable could not mediate the relationship between promotion focus on employee creativity. These results were different from previous research which stated that the relationship of the three variables was

partial mediation (Henker et al., 2015). Promotion focus was able to directly influence employee creativity without going through idea generation.

The results of the study showed that when employees focused on promotion, they must increase the possibility of solving problems by creating a variety of different ideas. Employees who focused on promotion showed higher involvement in the idea generation stage which involved different solutions and alternatives, and thereby increasing involvement in higher creative outcomes (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). However, the involvement of idea generation in this research was very low which had been stated on statistical results. In this study, employees related to the idea of generation did not respond. This was supported by respondents' answers from the idea generation variable which showed that there was one indicator that had the lowest mean value of 3.69, namely "employees produce a number of alternatives for the same problem before choosing the final solution". This showed that the employees lacked in generating alternatives for each problem. Thus, it was hard for them to get new ideas when hard problems came.

5. CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee creativity and promotion focus. Promotion focus had a positive and significant effect on employee creativity with problem identification as a mediator. Promotion focus had a positive and significant effect on employee creativity with information search and encoding as a mediator. Promotion focus had a positive and significant effect on employee creativity with idea generation as a mediator. It is expected that in the context of Transformational Leadership, the managers should continue to provide motivation, trust, and challenges to the employees in order to achieve company targets

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