

The Influence of Proactive Personality and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Proactive Personality and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity among civil servants at the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs in Pekalongan City. The study was motivated by the low level of innovation among employees, which is suspected to be influenced by passive work culture and a lack of inspiring leadership. The novelty of this research lies in examining these two variables within the public sector context, which remains underexplored in Indonesian human resource management studies. A quantitative method was applied using a structured questionnaire distributed to 58 respondents. The instrument used a 5-point Likert scale and was tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression using the SPSS version 26 program. The results showed that Proactive Personality and Transformational Leadership significantly and positively affect Employee Creativity, with significance levels of 0.034 and 0.002, respectively. This study underscores the importance of nurturing proactive traits and transformational leadership to stimulate employee creativity in public organizations, contributing to bureaucratic reform and service innovation.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and technological disruption, the challenges faced by organizations both in the private and public sectors are becoming increasingly complex. Organizations are required not only to operate efficiently but also to continuously innovate to adapt to rapid changes. Employee creativity is a critical component in achieving a competitive advantage (Florida, 2002). In the public sector, creativity impacts not only internal efficiency but also plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality and responsiveness of public services (Hartley, 2005).

However, many public organizations in Indonesia continue to struggle with a bureaucratic and procedural work culture that leaves little room for innovation. Hierarchical structures and rule-oriented work environments often hinder the generation of creative ideas among employees (Dwiyanto, 2018). This issue is exacerbated by employees' dependence on top-down directives, which discourages them from proposing ideas or alternative solutions (Sopiah, 2008).

Preliminary observations at the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs in Pekalongan City show that most employees perform their tasks strictly according to their job descriptions, with little to no encouragement to innovate. Informal discussions with several employees revealed that they tend to focus on routine activities and do not perceive the creation of new ideas as part of their responsibility. This reflects a low level of employee creativity, which ultimately contributes to organizational stagnation (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

To address these challenges, a deeper understanding of internal factors that influence employee creativity is necessary. One such factor is Proactive Personality, where individuals exhibit a strong internal drive to proactively shape their work environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). These individuals tend not to wait for instructions but rather seek and create opportunities for change (Crant, 2000).

In addition to individual traits, Transformational Leadership is another critical factor. This leadership style has been proven effective in encouraging innovation by offering inspiration, personalized attention, and intellectual stimulation to subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders foster independent thinking, challenge conventional practices, and motivate employees to develop creative solutions (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

Although the influence of proactive personality and transformational leadership on creativity has been widely studied, most existing research has focused on the private sector or creative industries (Astuti & Purnomo, 2020). Yet, enhancing creativity among civil servants is crucial for supporting bureaucratic reform and improving sustainable public service performance (Bakti & Syaifuddin, 2022). Empirical studies in the Indonesian public sector remain limited, and the existing findings are often contradictory. Some studies (Sukmajati & Suharnomo, 2022; Agustina & Maisara, 2022) report a significant positive influence, while others (Rawung et al., 2015; Dewi, 2017) find no significant relationship.

This study seeks to fill that research gap by providing empirical evidence on how proactive personality and transformational leadership influence employee creativity within a local government setting. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative perspective combining psychological traits (internal “push” motivation) and leadership support (external “pull” motivation) into a dual-factor framework for understanding creativity in the public sector. This approach not only extends previous theoretical models, which often emphasize a single dimension, but also contributes to the policy discourse on fostering innovation under bureaucratic constraints.

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the influence of proactive personality and transformational leadership on employee creativity in the context of the Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs Office of Pekalongan City. In alignment with Indonesia’s public service reform agenda, which emphasizes adaptive governance and innovation, the findings of this study can inform leadership development initiatives and human resource strategies aimed at enhancing creative problem-solving and innovation capacity among civil servants.

2. Literature Review

Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior According to Ajzen (1991), intention generally depends on attitudes toward behavior, prevailing subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes toward the behavior reflect an individual's assessment of their personal desire to create a new business. Subjective norms reflect an individual's perception of what important people in their lives think about creating a

business. Perceived behavioral control reflects an individual's perception of one's capabilities in starting a new business successfully.

Employee Creativity

According to Hong, Hou, Zhu and Marinova (2018) is the ability of employees to create new useful ideas where the ideas arise depending on the cognitive characteristics of each employee and the level of creativity possessed by employees can be guided and developed with the context of the organization and culture that individuals or employees live. Employee creativity according to Wirawan (2016) is defined as a series of observable and unobservable activities, dependencies that occur when responding to non-algorithmic tasks, are creative products, meaning ideas, prototypes that are appropriate and can be assessed by stakeholders to become something new and useful. Based on the understanding above, it can be concluded that employee creativity is the value of employee creativity in working (Agustina & Maisara, 2022). According to Farmer et al (2003) there are 5 indicators of employee creativity. These 5 indicators reflect the problems in the research object, namely: 1. Employees try new ideas and methods 2. Employees can solve problems 3. Employees produce new breakthroughs 4. Employees find new uses 5. Employees identify new opportunities.

Proactive Personality

Proactive personality can be defined as an action in taking the initiative to improve the surrounding environment or create a new environment that is better in its own way but does not deviate from a rule, so that individuals do not passively accept the conditions or rules that have been set but rather seek actions that are felt to be best for them (Crant, 2000). Characteristics Proactive personality displays an active individual, full of initiative, able to identify opportunities and act to take advantage of those opportunities to change conditions into something that is intended. Individuals with a proactive personality will carry out activities that are directly able to change the surrounding environment (Qazi et al., 2020).

Proactive personality making an impact on oneself and the environment. Individuals with this personality are always oriented and focused on the future and like change. While individuals who are less proactive enjoy their comfort zone more and choose to adapt to the environment rather than change and take advantage of an opportunity (Travis & Freeman, 2017). Proactive personality enable individuals to identify opportunities and contribute to activities related to the opportunity. Proactive personality in this study adapts the proactive personality instrument from Bateman & Crant (1993) to measure variables, where Bateman & Crant (1993) divide four indicators consisting of seven statement items that are able to measure variables. Proactive personality includes the ability to see opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership style that tends to motivate subordinates. According to Burns (1978), in this type of leadership the organization is organized to achieve goals by changing, inspiring, and raising employee aspirations. Transformational leaders motivate subordinates to work longer and produce results beyond expectations (Bass, 1985). They treat their subordinates in a paternalistic manner, guide in all situations, help whenever their subordinates need it, provide the knowledge they have, hone skills and treat subordinates fairly and equally (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). There are six indicators Transformational Leadership menurut Bass, B., & Riggio, R. E. (2006) are: 1) Idealized Influence, 2) Inspirational Motivation, 3) Intellectual Stimulation, 4) Individual Consideration.

Hypothesis Development

Influence Proactive Personality on Employee Creativity

Proactive personality refers to an individual's tendency to take initiative, identify opportunities, and instigate change within their environment, even in the face of obstacles (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). Kim (2009) notes that proactive individuals often seek out creative solutions to improve work performance, indicating a close link between proactive traits and creativity. Creativity, in this context, is not just an innate ability but a behavioral response to work challenges initiated by proactive tendencies.

This relationship can also be better understood through the Push-Pull Motivation Theory (Dann, 1977), where proactive personality functions as a "push" factor. It represents internal motivators such as personal growth, achievement, and self-efficacy that drive individuals to engage in creative behaviors regardless of external rewards. This perspective is particularly relevant in bureaucratic public sector environments, where formal structures may not actively promote innovation.

Empirical evidence supports this connection. Studies by Sukmajati & Suharnomo (2022), Agustina & Maisara (2022), and Callea et al. (2022) affirm that proactive personality positively influences employee creativity. However, these studies primarily focus on private or semi-autonomous sectors. This research aims to expand the scope by exploring whether the same applies in rigid public institutions.

H1: Proactive Personality has a positive and significant effect on Employee Creativity.

Influence Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

Transformational leadership, as defined by Bass (1985) and later refined by Bass & Riggio (2006), emphasizes motivating followers through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders are known to encourage employees to question assumptions, explore new ideas, and take calculated risks (Shafi et al., 2020).

From a motivational standpoint, this leadership style can be seen as a "pull" factor in the Push-Pull Motivation Theory (Dann, 1977), offering external stimuli—such as inspiration, emotional support, and recognition—that attract individuals toward creative engagement. When coupled with internally driven proactive traits, transformational leadership can significantly enhance creativity outcomes.

Several studies have shown the positive impact of transformational leadership on creativity, such as Jyoti & Dev (2015), Praudia & Suharmono (2021), and Salma & Ramli (2023). Yet, limited research exists on how this leadership model operates within Indonesian government institutions where creativity is often stifled by procedural rigidity. This study provides empirical insights into whether transformational leadership can act as a catalyst for creativity even in highly regulated environments.

H2: Transformational Leadership has a significant positive effect on Employee Creativity

3. Method, Data, and Analysis

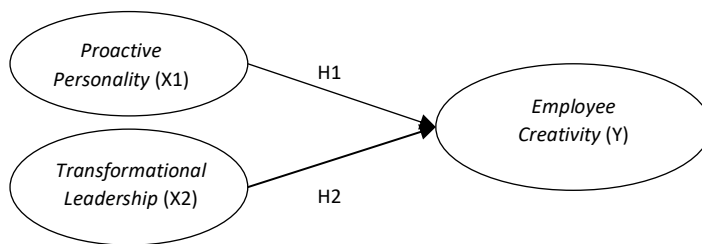
This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design aimed at examining the influence of proactive personality and transformational leadership on employee creativity. The population in this study consists of all civil servants at the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs in Pekalongan City, totaling 58 individuals, all of whom were included as research samples using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire developed based on theoretical indicators from Bateman & Crant (1993) for proactive personality, Bass & Riggio (2006) for transformational leadership, and Farmer et al. (2003)

for employee creativity. All questionnaire items were tested for validity and reliability, with results meeting the required standards ($r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.60).

Data analysis was conducted through several stages, including descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), and multiple linear regression analysis to assess partial effects among variables. The t-test and F-test were used to examine the significance of the relationships, while the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) was used to determine the extent to which the independent variables contribute to employee creativity. All data processing was carried out using SPSS version 26.

Research Model

Figure 1. Research model



4. Result and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent characteristics data

Category	Measurement	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	75,8%
	Female	14	24,2%
Age	21-30 Years Old	4	6,9%
	31-40 Years Old	9	15,5%
	41-50 Years Old	16	27,6%
	>50 Years Old	29	50%
Education	Elementary/Junior High	13	22,4%
	High School	29	50%
	Diploma 3	1	1,7%
	Bachelor	8	13,8%
Length of Service	Master	7	12,1%
	5-10 Tahun	7	12,1%
	11-20 Tahun	32	55,2%
	> 20 Tahun	19	32,7%

Source: Employee Data from the Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs Department processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, the characteristics of the respondents in this study show that the majority of civil servants at the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs in Pekalongan City. are male, which is 44 people or 75.8%, while women only number 13 people or 24.2%. Based on age, most respondents are over 50 years old as many as 29 people (50%), followed by 41-50 years old as many as 16 people (27.6%), 31-40 years old as many as 9 people (15.5%), and the rest are 21-30 years old, which is 4 people (6.9%). In terms of education level, most respondents have high school education/equivalent as many as 29 people (50%), followed by elementary school/junior high school

graduates as many as 13 people (22.4%), then bachelor's degree as many as 8 people (13.8%), and diploma 3 as many as 1 person (1.7%) and Master's degree as many as 7 people (12.1%). Meanwhile, based on length of service, the majority of respondents have worked for 11-20 years, namely 32 people (55.2%), then 7 people (12.1%) have worked for 5-10 years, 19 people (32.7%) have more than 20 years of work experience. This shows that most respondents have sufficient work experience and are dominated by male employees with a high school education background or equivalent.

Validity Test Result

Table 2. Validity test result to each variable

Variable	Item	R Calculate	R Table	Description
Proactive Personality (X1)	X1 Question 1	0,664	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 2	0,763	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 3	0,782	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 4	0,749	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 5	0,652	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 6	0,764	0.2542	Valid
	X1 Question 7	0,670	0.2542	Valid
Transformational Leadership (X2)	X2 Question 1	0,600	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 2	0,729	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 3	0,757	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 4	0,770	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 5	0,795	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 6	0,754	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 7	0,658	0.2542	Valid
	X2 Question 8	0,702	0.2542	Valid
Employee Creativity (Y)	Y Question 1	0,669	0.2542	Valid
	Y Question 2	0,830	0.2542	Valid
	Y Question 3	0,786	0.2542	Valid
	Y Question 4	0,820	0.2542	Valid
	Y Question 5	0,819	0.2542	Valid

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, it shows that the validity test of the research instrument with each statement obtained a calculated r value > r table with a significance value < 0.05. So, all statements in the questionnaire are declared valid.

Reliability Test Result

Table 3. Reliability test result to each variable

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Standart Alpha	Description
Proactive Personality (X1)	0,845	0,60	Reliable
Transformational Leadership (X2)	0,840	0,60	Reliable
Employee Creativity (Y)	0,867	0,60	Reliable

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, it shows that the obtained values cronbach alpha > 0.60 then the respondents' answers for each variable can be used in research and can be said to be reliable.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test Result

Table 4. Normality test result

	Unstandardized Residual	Standart	Description
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200 ^{c,d}	0,05	Normal

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the results in the table above, it shows that the significance value is $0.200 > 0.05$, which means it has a normal distribution.

Multikolinierity Test Result

Table 5. Multikolinierity test result

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Proactive Personality	0,318	3,142
Transformational Leadership	0,318	3,142

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, it shows that the limit tolerance on each variable is more than 0.10 or > 0.10 and the VIF limit is < 10.00 , then it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

Heteroskedastisity Test Result

Table 6. Glejser test result

Variable	Significance	Standart
(Constant)	0,033	0,05
Proactive Personality	0,063	0,05
Transformational Leadership	0,220	0,05

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

From the table above, the results of the Glejser test show that the sig. the value of each variable is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). So overall it can be concluded that there is no problem of heteroscedasticity.

Model Feasibility Test Result

Table 7. Model feasibility test result

Model	F	Significance	Description
Regression	43,483	0.005 ^b	Suitable

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, the F test results produce an F value of 43.483 with a significance value of 0.005. This significance value is smaller than 0.05, therefore it shows that the regression model in this study is suitable for use in hypothesis testing.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Result

Table 8. Multiple linear regression analysis result

Variable	B	Std. Error	Description
(Constant)	3,169	1,860	Positive
Proactive Personality	0,229	0,105	Positive
Transformational Leadership	0,321	0,097	Positive

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

$$Y = 3,169 + 0,229 + 0,321 + e$$

$\alpha = 3,169$ is a constant value from the regression equation that is positive meaning when Proactive Personality And Transformational Leadership equals zero (0) then Employee Creativity experienced an increase of 3,169.

$\beta_1 = 0.229$ shows a significant positive influence when Proactive Personality increases by 1% then Employee Creativity will experience an increase of 0.229.

$\beta_2 = 0.321$ shows a significant positive influence when *Transformational Leadership* increased by 1% then *Employee Creativity* will experience an increase of 0.321.

T Test Result (Parcial)

Table 9. t test result (parcial)

Variable	T	Sig.	Description
Proactive Personality	2,171	0,034	Significant
Transformational Leadership	3,324	0,002	Significant

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Hypothesis testing of education variables Proactive Personality (X1) on Employee Creativity (Y) through the calculation results that have been obtained, the significance level is < 0.05 ($0.034 < 0.05$). This shows that the variable Proactive Personality has a significant impact on Employee Creativity officer Department of Trade, Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of Pekalongan City. So H1 is accepted.

Variable hypothesis testing Transformational Leadership (X2) on Employee Creativity (Y) through the calculation results that have been obtained, the significance level is < 0.05 ($0.002 < 0.05$). This shows that the variable Transformational Leadership has a significant impact on Employee Creativity officer Department of Trade, Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of Pekalongan City. So H2 is accepted.

Results Of The Determination Coefficient Test (R²)

Table 10. Results of the determination coefficient test (r²)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Percentage	Reminder	Description
.783a	0,613	0,598	59,8%	40,2%	Moderate to Strong

Source: Output SPSS processed by researchers, 2025

Based on the table above, the values obtained are adjusted r square of 0.598 which shows that Employee Creativity influenced by Proactive Personality and Transformational Leadership by 59.8%, while the remaining 40.2% was influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

Discussion

Influence Proactive Personality on Employee Creativity

The t-test results show that proactive personality has a significant positive effect on employee creativity, with a significance value of $0.034 (< 0.05)$. This implies that employees with a higher degree of proactive behavior are more likely to demonstrate creativity in the workplace. In a public institution such as the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs of Pekalongan City, this finding is particularly

relevant. Civil servants often operate within a rigid bureaucratic system, where initiative and innovation are not always institutionally rewarded. Therefore, employees with a proactive personality have the potential to break through routine constraints and foster idea generation even in unsupportive environments. Rather than relying solely on structural reforms, cultivating proactive traits among civil servants may be a practical strategy to improve service innovation.

This result is consistent with previous research by Sukmajati & Suharnomo (2022), Agustina & Maisara (2022), and Callea & Urbini (2022), which found that proactive personality significantly influences employee creativity. Thus, it can be concluded that proactive personality is one of the key factors in fostering employee creativity within the government sector.

Influence Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

The transformational leadership variable also shows a strong positive effect on employee creativity, with a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.05). This finding confirms that when leaders offer support, inspiration, and vision, employees are more encouraged to express ideas and engage in creative problem-solving. In public organizations—where formal procedures and risk-averse cultures often dominate—transformational leaders can serve as a counterbalance by building trust, promoting autonomy, and fostering a more innovative organizational climate. This supports the notion that bureaucratic reform must be accompanied by leadership transformation. Leaders in public institutions need to go beyond managing compliance—they must become facilitators of change.

This result aligns with previous studies by Praudia & Suharmono (2021), Salma & Ramli (2023), and Dezar & Yuniawan (2023), which also found that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on employee creativity. Therefore, the presence of transformational leaders in the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs of Pekalongan City is crucial for cultivating a work culture that supports and sustains creativity.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the influence of Proactive Personality and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity among civil servants at the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs in Pekalongan City. The results of multiple linear regression and partial t-tests indicate that both proactive personality and transformational leadership have a positive and significant effect on employee creativity, with significance values of 0.034 and 0.002, respectively.

These findings highlight that proactive employees those who take initiative and adapt to change are more likely to generate creative ideas. Likewise, transformational leadership that inspires, motivates, and supports personal development contributes to a work climate conducive to innovation. Together, these two factors play a critical role in enhancing creativity within public organizations.

However, the study has several limitations. It focuses on a single government agency, limiting the generalizability of its findings. Additionally, the quantitative approach used does not capture the deeper, subjective experiences related to creativity. Lastly, only two independent variables were examined, while other relevant factors such as organizational climate, intrinsic motivation, and workload remain unexplored.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and limitations of the research, the author makes several suggestions as follows:

1. For organizational policymakers and leaders at the Trade, Cooperatives and SMEs Department, it is recommended to institutionalize support for transformational leadership practices and proactively nurture employee character through systematic efforts such as leadership development programs, creativity-oriented training, and a performance appraisal system that rewards initiative and innovation.
2. For future researchers, expanding the study to other government or private institutions is advised to enhance generalizability. Including additional variables such as innovation climate, job autonomy, and intrinsic motivation could offer a more holistic understanding of what drives employee creativity.
3. For academic development, this study provides an initial empirical contribution to understanding creativity in Indonesia's public sector. Future studies could adopt a mixed-methods or qualitative approach to explore how internal and organizational dynamics shape creative behavior among civil servants.

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