



DO KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MEDIATE THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY?

Oleh

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Abstract

*This research aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership style on employee creativity by mediating the role of knowledge sharing and information technology in microfinance institutions in Central Java. The population of this study was all employees of micro-financial institutions in Central Java, and the sample used was 250 employees who were selected using a non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling, namely employees in marketing, administration and services, information and Information Technology departments who had worked for at least 1 year. Data were analyzed using SEM with the help of PLS 3. This research proves that transformational leadership adopted by microfinance institutions can increase employee creativity. Likewise, with the mediation of information technology and the mediation of knowledge sharing, the influence of transformational leadership can boost employee creativity.*

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Islamic micro-financial institutions face intense competition and massive growth in almost all districts, including Kebumen District, Central Java, Indonesia. Their role is vital for SMEs, especially in rural areas. Based on data from the Kebumen Regency Cooperative and SMEs Office, currently, there are 13 Islamic micro-financial institutions, and the total number of customers served has reached 10,000. The utilization of e-banking, which has not been maximized in Islamic micro-financial institutions and human resources, whose capabilities still need to be improved, is still an obstacle that must be faced. Another problem encountered is the not yet optimal use of modern information technology, especially those related to customer service. Besides, micro-Islamic banking products are indeed less diverse.

Islamic micro-financial institutions are increasingly excited about their development with the support of information technology. The development of information technology

encourages micro-Islamic banks to be more flexible in adapting so that they can withstand competitive pressures. One way to survive is to create innovative products and services. Employee creativity is a prerequisite for building organizational innovation (Çekmecelioğlu, H. G., & Günsel, 2013). Efforts that Islamic micro-financial institutions must make include creating an organizational culture that makes employees creative and making various efforts to encourage it.

The leader's role is to manage the source of power for humans. This leadership will determine the strategy organization's reasonable period long period short, decisive key success organization. (Avolio & Bass, 1995) Transformational leaders will try to develop knowledge and skills and increase motivation to trigger employee creativity. An intellectual leader will always push his subordinates to think "out of the box" so that they will produce creative ideas. Employee creativity is an initial thought in generating



ideas beneficial for developing new processes, procedures, and products (Liu, S., Schuler, R. S., & Zhang, 2013). (Hughes et al., 2018) show that the transformational leadership style influences employee behavior and creativity.

The research (de Villiers, 2014) finds that transformational leadership has charisma and narcissism that is too optimistic in controlling others. It can have a disastrous impact on creativity. However, research results vary regarding the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity, including negative (Raja & Green, 1997), significant optimism (Gong et al., 2009); (Shin & Zhou, 2003), and no relationship (Wang & Rode, 2010). This research will resolve the research gap, namely the difference in the results of previous studies between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

(A. S. Y. Chen & Hou, 2016) states that leadership can affect employee creativity if an innovative climate mediates it. Various studies have tried to understand the relationship between different leadership styles and their impact on increasing employee creativity (Mumford et al., 2002). The intellectual stimulation of a transformational leader can encourage employees to think in new ways and seek new solutions (Avolio & Bass, 1995).

The business environment has shifted to the knowledge era (Kosasih & Budiani, 2007). The leader's role is to transform knowledge to followers while creating practices of sharing knowledge between individuals described in documents, procedures, and training (Pieterse et al., 2010). Conclude that there is a scarcity of empirical evidence to show that transformational leadership can engender creative work behavior.

Leadership generally affects technology adoption and acceptance (Neufeld et al., 2007). The benefit of using information technology is that it facilitates work activities. This can influence employee behavior, so organizations need to empower leaders to continue to develop information technology as a predictor for

improving employee behavior (Kuo & Lee, 2011). This study uses information technology in the development of employee creativity in micro-Islamic banking

However, knowledge-sharing support is needed to increase employee creativity (Akturan & Çekmecelioğlu, 2016). Sharing knowledge and developing information technology has been proven to optimize organizational management (Iqbal et al., 2018). But, the operation of information technology depends on the employee's role (Lee & Kim, 2017).

This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity, the influence of transformational leadership on information technology, and the influence of information technology on employee creativity. In addition, this study also analyzes the effect of transformational leadership on knowledge sharing and the impact of knowledge sharing on employee creativity. Then, the role of knowledge sharing and information technology as mediators of transformational leadership and the effect on employee creativity will be analyzed. Combining knowledge sharing and information technology mediation will become a research novelty that has never been studied. Micro-Islamic banking is believed to be an SME that needs individual creativity to survive and increase its capacity, so it was chosen as the subject of this study.

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

A leader is someone who can create inspiration for his employees to develop their creativity (Pan et al., 2015). A leader is a mover in making change (Noruzy et al., 2013). Effective leadership is leadership that can increase employee creativity (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985) states that transformational leaders have a clear vision for the organization and can push employees to think with new methods. Based on the findings



of various research, the hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee creativity

The adoption of information technology becomes a supporter of substantial change and the creation of a creative moment. Technology information is an individual's device to finish his work (Anggraeni, 2020). Research results show that technological information can help develop an aligned Business at the moment of development (Aloini et al., 2022). Industry 4.0 is a phase of a new change industry with integration technology as a solution.

Behavior leadership's influence is essential in accepting and adopting technology (Neufeld et al., 2007). The role of leaders is needed to develop a culture conducive to the organization for successful technology information (Kaushal, 2011). A leader with technical skills can create a vision over a long period and commit to developing technology information (Ingebrigtsen et al., 2014). Researcher proposes:

H2: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on technology information  
Transformational leadership has highlighted leadership theories in which relationships and interactions are developed within firms. Transformational leadership sets expectations and inspires subordinates to identify further workplace opportunities. Transformational leaders use information technology to facilitate organizational communication and increase its effectiveness. The ideal influence of transformational leadership is a facilitator of information technology, which can improve employee interaction. (Yee, 2000) and (Seyal, 2015) state that transformational leaders serve as role models by highlighting the importance of the effective use of information technology. Based on the study, the researcher proposes:

H3: Technology information has a positive influence on employee creativity (Howell & Avolio, 1993) stated that transformational leadership increases innovation and knowledge

sharing among employees in the company. Transformational leaders can build communication networks among employees, and increasing trust is what they strengthen and foster knowledge-sharing practices (Slater & Narver, 1995). Transformational leadership pushes and develops the work environment in knowledge sharing between employees (Choi et al., 2016). Research results show that leadership positively affects an employee's perception of knowledge sharing. Transformational leadership's characteristics can intellectually stimulate subordinates to become innovative, motivate them to share the same vision, and help them become more creative in overcoming problems (Bhatt, 2000). Researcher submits hypothesis:

H4: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing become part of a growth organization. Various studies have shown that role knowledge sharing increases individual capacity. (Saqib Khan et al., 2015) It states that knowledge sharing, as a value-owned organization, can increase behavior innovation. Knowledge sharing helps employees increase creativity and performance (Ali et al., 2020). Researcher proposes:

H5: Knowledge sharing has a positive influence on employee creativity

Technology information has become part of human life (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015). Its existence is capable of helping leaders reach organizational objectives. Technology information can increase employees' skills (García-Sánchez et al., 2019). Information technology can change employee habits and make them more creative (Chais et al., 2018). Besides that, technological information has proven to be a source of creativity and innovation that connects employees and customers (Kandampully et al., 2016). Based on the findings, the researcher proposes the following:



H6: Technology information mediates the influence of transformational leadership on employee creativity

Knowledge-sharing practices have been proven to assist leaders in enhancing organizational knowledge development efforts that can help with the management process in an organization held more effectively (Dey & Mukhopadhyay, 2018). Knowledge sharing can increase leaders' role in fostering employee creativity (Afsar et al., 2019). Research conducted by (Dewi et al., 2016) shows that transformational leadership supports a culture of knowledge sharing and can increase the willingness of colleagues to donate and gather knowledge, which in turn affects the speed and quality of employee creativity. Based on the findings, the researcher formulated a hypothesis as follows:

H7: Knowledge sharing mediates the influences of transformational leadership on employee creativity

## METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership transformational on employee creativity with mediation technology information and knowledge sharing. This study uses the quantitative approach, where data is obtained from a respondent in a manner direct to us, usually called primary data. A questionnaire was used to get primary data. The questionnaire contains closed questions using 5 5-point Likert scale, with 1 point to describe the answers "Strongly Disagree" and point 5 to describe "Strongly Agree". The population study is employees of Islamic micro-financial institutions in Kebumen, Central Java. The sample study is 125 employees of Islamic micro-financial institutions, and it uses a non-probability sampling technique. Data was collected using a purposive sampling technique on employees who had worked for at least one year in the marketing department, administration & service department, technology information department, and public

relations. A quantitative approach was used in the design of this study, and the analysis used was the structural equation model (SEM) based on partial least squares with PLS version 3 application.

Variables measurements in the study use parameters adopted from previous research. Transformational leadership adapted from (Bass, 2000) consists of 8 items from four dimensions: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Technology information consists of 4 dimensions: hardware, software, brain device, and database (Meiryani & Susanto, 2018). Knowledge sharing refers to (Van Den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004). This scale consists of four items that show the behavioral aspects of contributing knowledge and gathering knowledge. Employee creativity uses four items from (Tierney et al., 1999) that show originality in work, taking risks in finding new ideas at work, and identifying opportunities for new products/processes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the characteristics of respondents in this study were dominated by female respondents, totaling 77 (61.6%). Respondents' education was dominated by a bachelor, with 79 respondents (63.2%), while the age of respondents was dominated by those aged 26-34 years, with 43 respondents (34.4%). While the category of the length of work is dominated by respondents with a length of work of 1-5 years, a total of 55 respondents (44%)



Table 1. Characteristic of respondent

Category	Sum (N=125)	Percentage %
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	77	61.6
Male	48	38.4
<b>Education</b>		
High school	46	36.8
Bachelor	79	63.2
<b>Age (years)</b>		
18-25	32	25.6
26-34	43	34.4
35-40	38	30.4
>41	12	9.6
<b>Tenure (years)</b>		
1-5	55	44
6-10	53	42.4
>10	17	17.6

Table 2. Outer loading

Variables	Indicators	Outer Loading
Transformational leadership	TL1	0.805
	TL2	0.794
	TL3	0.728
	TL4	0.794
	TL5	0.764
	TL6	0.735
	TL7	0.711
	TL8	0.827
Knowledge sharing	KS1	0.905
	KS2	0.802
	KS3	0.920
	KS4	0.765
Employee creativity	EC1	0.754
	EC2	0.826
	EC3	0.829
	EC4	0.818
Information Technology	IT1	0.850
	IT2	0.725
	IT3	0.841
	IT4	0.848

Table 2 below shows that the results of the validity test of each questionnaire statement item have a good value (valid) because they meet the requirements because the loading factor value is above 0.50 (Ghozali, 2015)

Figure 1. Model Measurement Test

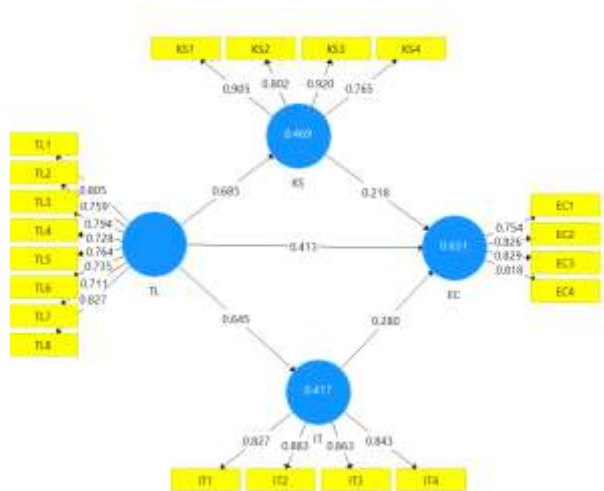


Table 3 below shows that all constructs meet the criteria for composite reliability with a criterion value of 0.7 ( $CR \geq 0.7$ ) and a Cronbach Alpha value with a criterion value greater than 0.6 ( $CA \geq 0.60$ ). All constructs were declared feasible from the results obtained because they met the reliability criteria (Hair Jr et al., 2017).

Table 3. AVE, CR, CA and R Square

Variable s	AV E	CR	CA	R-Sq.
Transformational leadership	0.90	0.91	0.88	-
Information Technology	0.72	0.91	0.90	0.42
Knowledge sharing	0.72	0.93	0.91	0.70
Employee creativity	0.65	0.91	0.88	0.651

Discriminant validity meets the criteria for the average value of the extracted variance (AVE) with the rule of thumb:  $AVE >$  correlation between constructs with a cut-off value of  $\geq 0.50$  (Hair et al., 2010). The analysis shows that the discriminant validity value is in



the sufficient category. The results of the study are presented in Table 3 above

Figure 1 and Table 4 show that transformational leadership positively affects employee creativity, as seen from the t-statistic value of 4.661 and p-value of 0.001 (H1 is accepted). Transformational leadership positively impacts information technology, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 9,950 and a p-value of 0.001 (H2 accepted). Information technology significantly impacts employee creativity, as seen from the t-statistic values of 2,861 and 0.001 (H3 accepted). Transformational leadership positively affects knowledge sharing with a t-statistic value of 11,909 and a p-value of 0.000 (H4 accepted). The analysis results also show that knowledge sharing positively affects employee creativity, with a t statistic of 2.062 and a p-value of 0.038 (H5 is accepted).

Table 4. Direct Effect

Relation ship between n variabl es	t stati stics	p- val ues	S. D	Notes
IT→EC	2.86 1	0.0 04	0. 08 5	Supported
KS→EC	2.06 2	0.0 38	0. 07 7	Supported
TL→EC	4.66 1	0.0 01	0. 08 2	Supported
TL→IT	9.95 9	0.0 00	0. 08 0	Supported
TL→KS	11.9 09	0.0 00	0. 08 5	Supported

Table 5 below is the result of statistical analysis through PLS 3, which shows the mediating role of information technology and knowledge sharing:

Table 5. Indirect effect

Relatio nship between n variabl es	T stat isti c	p- val ues	S. D	Notes
TL→IT→EC	4.4 19	0.0 00	0. 05 4	Medi ating
TL→KS→EC	3.1 66	0.0 02	0. 07 7	Medi ating

Based on Table 5 above, it can be concluded that information technology partially mediates the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity, as indicated by the t-statistic value of 4.419 and the p-value of 0.000 (H6 accepted). This shows that the use of information technology that is well-managed by leaders can increase employee creativity. The results above also show a partial mediation of knowledge sharing on the influence of transformational leadership on employee creativity, as indicated by a t statistic count of 3.166 and a p-value of 0.000 (H7 accepted).

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis in this study is accepted. It means that transformational leadership directly influences employees' creativity in Islamic micro-financial institutions in Kebumen. This shows that applying leadership with a transformational approach can increase employee creativity. (Avolio & Bass, 1995) Transformational leadership has four dimensions: charismatic influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. All dimensions are proven to be able to influence employee creativity. With charismatic influence, transformational leaders can instill pride, confidence, and respect (Hater & Bass, 1988) so that employees can carry out work that is charged beyond expectations and have the energy to achieve higher work goals. (Amabile et al., 2004); (Jung et al., 2003).



Transformational leaders can influence follower creativity by making employees feel challenged and excited to explore new approaches to their work. Following individual considerations, leaders pay attention to follower development needs and delegate work projects in ways that stimulate learning experiences (Hater & Bass, 1988). Leaders provide flexibility to followers to meet their developmental needs so that employees devote more time to their work due to increased feelings of wisdom and enriched opportunities to test work abilities. As a result, employees are stimulated to achieve high levels of creativity. With inspirational motivation, transformational leaders use symbols and emotional appeals to focus efforts so that employees are motivated to achieve more than they set out to do based on their self-interest. Finally, employees can express and implement new ideas. Likewise, through intellectual stimulation, leaders awaken employees to think in new ways and emphasize problem-solving skills and reasoning before taking action (Hater & Bass, 1988).

The second hypothesis in this study is accepted (H2 accepted), transformational leadership has a significant and positive effect on information technology. These results indicate that applying transformational leadership in Islamic micro banking can increase the use of information technology. Transformational leaders can develop changes to adapt to technological developments quickly. Thus, hardware, software, databases, and brainware can support micro-Islamic banking in Kebumen. The results of this study support previous research, namely (Schepers et al., 2005). This study's results prove a significant correlation between transformational leadership and information technology in supporting company activities. Research conducted by (Noseworthy, 1998) and (Chandna & Krishnan, 2009) also confirms the strategic role of transformational leadership in

successfully implementing information technology in companies.

The positive influence of information technology on employee creativity (H3 accepted). This means that better the adoption of information technology in micro-Islamic banks can increase employee creativity. This is because employees can learn new things through media accessed through information technology. It has been proven that through information technology, employees can access many things that can help them in their work (Cooper & Crum, 2013). Through information technology, employees can apply and develop new things (Dewett, 2003). These results prove that information technology is vital in increasing employee creativity. This means that micro-Islamic banks must further improve information technology as a source of opportunity to maximize its use and increase employee creativity.

The following finding is that transformational leadership positively affects knowledge sharing (H4 is accepted). It explains that applying transformational leadership in micro-Islamic banking can improve knowledge-sharing practices. Transformational leaders can guide subordinates to make effective intellectual decisions based on their knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). As long as the transformational leadership style supports knowledge sharing, the process will be effective, and this support takes place through intellectual stimulation (Y. H. Chen & Barnes, 2007). (Yang, 2007) explains that transformational leadership positively relates to knowledge sharing within an organization or company.

The results of this study show that knowledge sharing positively affects employee creativity (H5 is accepted). It proves that knowledge sharing can create a new mindset that is beneficial at work. Employees can submit plans and strategies to achieve targets without feeling afraid of being completed by their colleagues. An employee feels proud



when the strategy they create will be successful if implemented by his partner. The results of this study support (Chang et al., 2017) and (Liao & Chen, 2018) stated that knowledge sharing positively affects employee creativity.

The result of the study shows that information technology mediates the influence of transformational leadership on employee creativity (H6 is accepted). This proves that transformational leadership can be directly or indirectly involved in information technology to increase employees' creativity in Islamic micro banks. The development of information technology makes it easier for every employee to access information that can increase their creativity (Viete & Erdsiek, 2020). It makes it easier for leaders to improve employee capabilities (Ghimire et al., 2021).

This study shows that knowledge sharing mediates the influence of transformational leadership on employee creativity (H7 accepted). Transformational leadership that strengthens a sense of loyalty between organization members can stimulate knowledge sharing (Yaghoubi et al., 2014). Empowerment and collaborative empowerment approaches by leaders can help integrate knowledge across all members and generate creativity in product and process novelty (Ghamari et al., 2015).

In general, there are significant and positive influences between transformational leadership, employee creativity, knowledge sharing, and the use of information technology as well. Researchers recommend that leaders increase the practice of sharing and updating knowledge in daily practice. It is suggested that the organization implement a transformational leadership style and create transformational leadership skills, including self-understanding, unifying vision and mission between leaders and employees, and creating conformity values. If this leadership style is applied in the organization, the organization will benefit in the form of managed knowledge management, organizational learning, innovation, job satisfaction, and employee creativity. This

research has shown that employee creativity tends to benefit organizations. It implies that transformational managers can benefit from employee creativity by developing creative individuals by sharing knowledge and using information technology.

## CONCLUSION

The study results show that information technology and knowledge sharing mediate transformational influence on employee creativity. The role of information technology is essential; the current conditions cannot be separated from social media. Information technology development can be developed in hardware or software. For example, hardware repairs are carried out by internet networks and computer equipment. Computer security systems and their supporting applications are implemented for the software. The database is better organized and can be accessed easily. Brainware needs to pay attention to the ease of operation of the applied information system, which will be key in developing information technology.

The analysis results show that knowledge sharing plays a role in mediating the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity. Knowledge is part of organizational growth and plays a role in increasing individual capacity. The role of leaders in fostering employee creativity will be more straightforward if knowledge-sharing practices are made into a culture within the organization.

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