

Charting creativity in government: the relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and employee creative performance

Charting
creativity in
government

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the link between transformational leadership and employee creativity through the lens of self-determination theory, with psychological empowerment serving as a mediating factor. Additionally, it will examine how financial rewards and job formalization might moderate this relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – The research uses a survey approach, targeting employees and supervisors from government ministries in the United Arab Emirates through purposive sampling. The study collected data from 254 participants via an online questionnaire and analyzed it using the partial least squares structural equation modeling technique in SmartPLS4.

Findings – The results show that transformational leadership has a significant impact on the psychological empowerment and creative performance of employees. The relationship between transformative leadership and employee creative performance is mediated by psychological empowerment. Additionally, the moderating effects of financial rewards and job formalization are explored. The findings do not support the moderating role of job formalization, and financial rewards negatively moderate the transformational leadership–psychological empowerment relationship.

Research limitations/implications – The research is centered on a particular cultural setting and government ministry employees, thus limiting the generalizability.

Originality/value – This study explores at how transformational leadership affects employee creativity, considering the role of psychological empowerment and how financial rewards and job structure might influence this relationship.

Keywords Transformational leadership, Psychological empowerment,
Employee creative performance, Job formalization, Financial rewards, Government ministries

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The production of unique and valuable products, ideas and methods designed to enhance corporate growth and success is widely described in academic literature as employee

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creative performance (ECP), also known as creativity (Bakker *et al.*, 2022). Various research indicates that ECP has a notable impact on multiple organizational performance outcomes (Koh *et al.*, 2019). As a result, scholars have consistently delved into the determinants and influencers of ECP in the workplace (Yang *et al.*, 2023; Kasımoğlu and Ammari, 2020). Academic studies on ECP show that one of the critical strategies for energizing and inspiring workers is leadership, particularly transformational leadership (TL) (Zhang *et al.*, 2020; Mahmood *et al.*, 2019). Leaders following TL are characterized by their ability to motivate employees to transcend self-interest and embrace elevated ideals, values and aspirations to achieve higher levels of performance (Hassan *et al.*, 2018; Nasir *et al.*, 2019).

Zhang *et al.* (2020) noted that past research has frequently shown a connection between TL and ECP. However, it is important to acknowledge that the relationship between TL and ECP is not consistently positive across all instances. Research from Ma *et al.* (2022) and Iswanto *et al.* (2020) indicates that some studies have identified negligible or even negative correlations between TL and ECP. Such varied results imply that the influence of TL on ECP might depend on different contextual elements and individual variances. As such, a deeper exploration into the TL–ECP relationship is essential for more definitive conclusions. A contingency approach suggests that pinpointing a moderator affecting these relationships could provide a more lucid insight into the TL and ECP linkage. Rooted in the organismic integration theory (OIT) – a subset of the self-determination theory by Ryan and Deci (2000) – both extrinsic motivation and contextual elements have the potential to either bolster or impede intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. Hence, based on how well employees identify with and align their values to leadership and the surrounding conditions, the efficacy of TL in promoting ECP might be amplified when paired with different levels of autonomous regulation (Ma *et al.*, 2022). Building upon this theoretical premise, Golden and Shriner (2019) stated that leadership does not operate in isolation but is shaped by pivotal contextual elements. In line with the leadership contingency approach (Saleem and Mahmood, 2019), this study emphasizes the importance of job attributes, particularly job formalization (JF), as a significant situational factor potentially vital for the success of efforts to boost ECP. By incorporating this contextual element, the study seeks to delve deeper into the intricacies that govern the effect of TL on ECP. JF, a core component of job design that pertains to the organization's reliance on rules and procedures to guide behavior in specific roles, is identified as a moderating variable in this research. This recognition is based on its established relevance to both ECP and TL (Saleem and Mahmood, 2019). Recent research in cross-cultural management underscores the necessity for leaders to comprehend how diverse cultural value orientations impact individual responses to leadership. This study stresses the essential role that employees' cultural values play in determining their reactions to numerous work-related elements, such as perceptions of leadership efficacy, styles and external influences (Boussebaa, 2020). This study addresses several key knowledge areas. It introduces a connection between TL and ECP, enriching current literature on both subjects. Additionally, it formulates and tests a model to understand how TL, with the effect of financial rewards (FR), impacts ECP through psychological empowerment (PE). The research highlights the importance of considering leadership and organizational rewards collectively in shaping ECP. Furthermore, by delving into these topics, the study broadens an understanding of TL, offering valuable insights for researchers and managers on fostering a favorable environment for ECP in organizations (Ma *et al.*, 2022). There is a research gap concerning how PE specifically supports ECP within the TL framework (Ma *et al.*, 2022), despite extensive studies on leadership's impact on ECP using various mediators (Grošelj *et al.*, 2020). This study aims to address this by exploring the relationship between TL and ECP, considering the mediating role of PE, the moderating role of FR and

the influence of JF. Building on [Arifin's \(2020\)](#) call to study different leadership effects on employees, this research emphasizes understanding these interactions within specific contexts, especially among employees in United Arab Emirates (UAE) government ministries. This leadership style not only bolsters the organization's overall performance but also prioritizes individual transformation and growth, benefiting both employees and their managers. Studying government ministries in the UAE is particularly relevant given their unique operational context, marked by a multifaceted regulatory landscape, high public anticipation and administrative processes. These entities must address intricate regulations, satisfy elevated public demands and tackle bureaucratic challenges with finite resources. Examining the influence of TL on ECP within this framework can shed light on improving leadership within the public sector. Employee creativity is instrumental in spurring innovation and, subsequently, organizational success. Recognizing what drives creativity can help UAE ministries create an environment that encourages innovation, thereby enhancing organizational efficacy. The study's results can provide concrete evidence to inform decisions related to leadership and human resources management in government sectors. This assists policymakers and leaders in making educated decisions about leadership growth and empowering employees. Additionally, this research contributes to enhancing the OIT. Stemming from this, two research questions have been formulated:

RQ1. Is there a relationship between ECP and TL?

RQ2. How does JF as a situational factor impact the value of TL in enhancing ECP?

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 covers a literature review, discussing related research, hypotheses and the conceptual model. Section 3 explains the research methodology. In Section 4, we present and analyze the findings. The results are discussed in Section 5. Finally, Section 6 concludes with insights, limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Theory and hypothesis development

2.1 The relationship between transformational leadership and employee creative performance

Ever since Burns introduced the concept of TL in 1978, it has remained a central theme in research. The expanded interpretation of TL, emphasizing its crucial role in motivating employees toward business objectives, has drawn significant interest ([Nurtjahjani et al., 2020](#)). [Sandhu and Al Naqbi \(2023\)](#) found in their study of employees in the UAE that there was a positive correlation between TL and creativity. After implementing a 6-month TL intervention from senior management, [Tan et al. \(2023\)](#) reported that employees' creative identity has significantly improved within a firm in Singapore. TL encompasses various components that influence employees' creative capabilities, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, which all contribute to ECP ([Breevaart and Bakker, 2018](#)). This research investigates the dynamic between TL and ECP, leading to suggest the following hypothesis:

H1. There is a significantly positive impact of TL on ECP.

2.2 The mediating role of psychological empowerment

Based on the principles of the OIT, this study examines the diverse effects of TL on ECP. Although [Shafi et al. \(2020\)](#) studied how TL affects traits like employee creativity, the role of PE in enhancing ECP within the TL context has not been deeply explored. This research

delves into PE's possible mediating role and seeks to determine the optimal TL levels for better ECP. [Gao et al. \(2023\)](#) defined PE as a motivational concept stemming from an individual's perception of four primary elements:

- (1) a sense of self-determination and capacity to act and initiate actions;
- (2) confidence in one's ability to do the job efficiently;
- (3) a sense of control over the work setting; and
- (4) recognizing the job's value.

When employees experience PE, they believe in their power to meaningfully influence their work, leading to proactive behaviors, autonomy and motivation essential for creativity ([Gao et al., 2023](#)). [Xiaojun \(2018\)](#) posited that employees who perceive themselves as psychologically empowered exhibit increased intrinsic motivation due to an enhanced sense of autonomy, control and ownership of their tasks. This often catalyzes creative thinking and innovative approaches to problems. By fostering PE, organizations can unlock employees' creativity and cultivate a workspace where fresh ideas thrive.

In this study, PE is examined as a possible mediator between TL and ECP. By exploring how TL affects PE and how PE then affects ECP, the study aims to understand how TL impacts ECP. Essentially, PE acts as a bridge between TL and ECP, leading to the subsequent hypotheses:

H2. PE mediates the relationship between TL and ECP.

2.3 The relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and employee creative performance

TL, often seen in Western contexts, focuses on encouraging employees' creativity and independence, leading to increased PE ([Ma and Jiang, 2018](#)). Yet, in the Arab region, TL varies due to cultural norms, organizational practices and other contextual factors ([Litz and Scott, 2017](#)). Although some sectors (academics, banking, administration) have explored TL, others overlook it ([Kasimoğlu and Ammari, 2020](#)). Research indicates a positive link between TL and PE ([Saira et al., 2020](#)). Additionally, [Nasir et al. \(2019\)](#) highlighted TL's role in boosting employees' feelings of skill, autonomy, impact and meaning in their work. This leads to the formulation of hypothesis:

H3. There is a significant impact of TL on PE.

Research underscores the importance of PE in fostering employee involvement in creative tasks ([Saira et al., 2020](#)). When employees believe their work is meaningful and they have autonomy, they tend to be more engaged and use diverse problem-solving methods ([Pieters et al., 2022](#)). Empowered employees are also more likely to be proactive, explore fresh concepts and address issues innovatively ([Mahmood et al., 2019](#)). The process by which TL influences ECP through PE is likely linked to empowerment's boost to intrinsic motivation ([Koh et al., 2019](#)). Given this, the study posits hypothesis:

H4. There is a significant impact of PE on ECP.

2.4 Moderating role of financial rewards

Leadership plays a pivotal role in spurring employee creativity, but formal rules, regulations and compensation greatly affect their motivation and creative performance ([Llorente-Alonso](#)

et al., 2023). Among organizational aspects, the reward system, including FR, is particularly influential on employee motivation. Chi *et al.* (2023) defined FR as fixed rewards like salary, benefits and performance-based bonuses. This study theorizes that FR moderates the relationship between TL and PE, suggesting that the strength of the connection between TL and PE can vary based on an organization's compensation structure.

In organizations with transformative dynamics, it is posited that FR may influence the interaction between TL and PE. As Nasir *et al.* (2019) noted, TL drives employees through a clear mission, intrinsic motivation and encouragement to look beyond personal interests. In such environments, generous FR can instill a feeling of strong organizational backing, pushing individuals to put in more effort and demonstrate greater autonomy. Furthermore, substantial FR might lessen employees' apprehensions and alleviate uncertainties, fostering a setting conducive to independent decision-making. This study explores the moderating role of FR, aiming to shed light on how it can amplify the TL and PE connection, which ultimately affects ECP. As a result, the hypothesis that follows is put forth:

H5. TL and PE's relationship is positively moderated by FR.

2.5 Moderating role of job formalization

Creativity is shaped by various job characteristics (Ma *et al.*, 2022). This has prompted the study of the combined effects of job characteristics and cultural values, particularly JF, on the relationship between TL and ECP. Elevated JF often means organizational rigidity, reduced adaptability and doubts about leadership. However, research shows that creativity flourishes in environments with low to moderate JF, further boosted by TL empowerment (Ma *et al.*, 2022). Such levels of JF grant employees greater freedom for creativity. Conversely, high formalization often dampens ECP, suggesting organizations with stringent structures might see decreased creative contributions (Lee *et al.*, 2017). Based on this, the next hypothesis is formulated:

H6. The relation between TL and ECP is moderated by JF, such that a lower level of JF is anticipated to improve the relationship between TL and ECP

Figure 1 displays the conceptual model in visual form.

3. Methods

3.1 Sample description and data collection

Data were gathered from employees and their managers in UAE government ministries. The participants in the study are full time employees working in 22 ministries across all the emirates. An accompanying letter explained the survey's purpose, promised confidentiality and emphasized participation was voluntary. Using Google Forms, the study collected data via an online survey. A preliminary pilot survey was tested with ten ministry members to ensure clarity. The final data included 255 participants: 63.8% female and 36.2% male. Age distribution was as follows: 7.5% (18–25), 21.3% (26–33), 21.3% (34–41), 19.7% (42–49) and 30.3% (50+). In terms of tenure, 9.1% had under a year's experience, 12.6% had 2–5 years, 14.6% had 6–10 years, 14.6% had 11–15 years, 13.4% had 16–20 years and 35.8% had over 20 years.

3.2 Measures

A 7-point Likert scale was used, where 1 meant “strongly disagree” and 7 indicated “strongly agree.” The scales were translated into Arabic and then back into English to ensure accuracy:

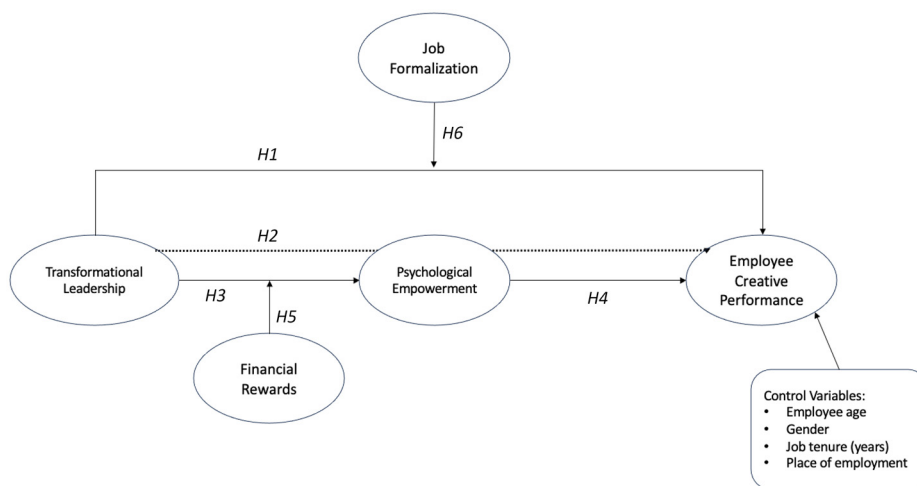


Figure 1.
Research model for
this study

Source: Developed by authors

- *Transformational leadership.* The study uses the Global Transformational Leadership scale (GTL) with seven questions to gauge TL (Carless *et al.*, 2000). An example item is, “My supervisor communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.”
- *Psychological empowerment.* The study used a modified 12-item version of the original 26-item empowerment measure by Kirkman and Rosen (1999) to assess PE (Kirkman *et al.*, 2004). An example item is “My team has confidence in itself.”
- *Employee creative performance.* The study used a 13-item scale from Zhou and George (2001) to measure ECP. Both supervisors and employees indicated their agreement with items about employee creativity. An example item is “Employee suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives.”
- *Financial rewards.* The study used eight items from Bustamam *et al.*’s. (2014) 18-item financial and nonfinancial incentives scale to measure FR. An example item is “I am satisfied with my base salary.”
- *Job formalization.* The study used Delery and Doty’s (1996) measure, adapted for team roles, to assess JF. The measure evaluates the balance between formally specified job roles and adaptive roles based on team members’ skills. A sample item is “The duties of jobs for team members are clearly defined.”

3.3 Control variables

Demographics like age, gender and job tenure can influence employee behavior and performance as they can affect attitudes and motivations. Including these factors offers a deeper insight into creative performance in UAE ministries. Past research, like Janssen and Huang (2008), also accounted for such variables. Age and experience were measured in years, gender was noted with a dummy variable (0 for male, 1 for female) and UAE’s Federal Authority for Government Human Resources list was used to categorize ministries.

4. Data analysis and results

The study used the partial least squares structural equation modeling method via SmartPLS4 to assess the proposed research model. This analysis consists of two stages: first, examining the measurement model, which reviews factor loadings, construct reliability and validity. Second, assessing the structural model to validate the hypotheses by considering path coefficients and their significance

4.1 Common method bias

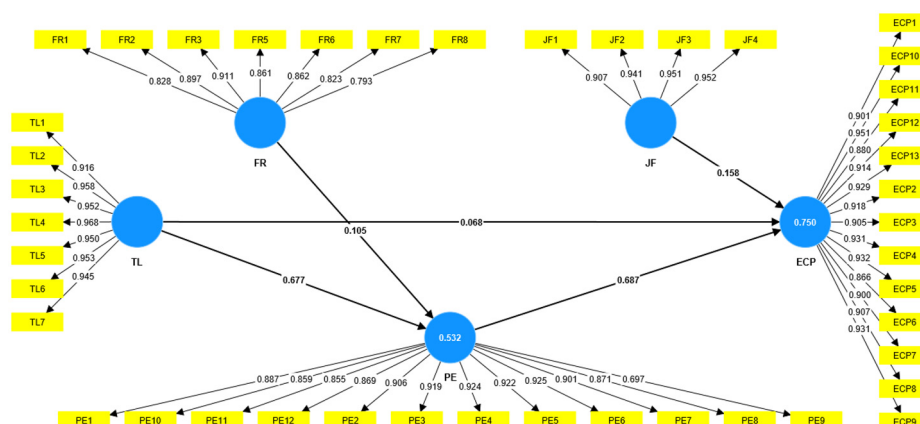
This study assessed the variance inflation factor (VIF) values of the inner model to check for common method bias. A VIF value over 3.3 indicates such a bias. However, all VIF values in this study were below 3.33, suggesting the model is not influenced by a common method bias (Kock, 2015).

4.2 Measurement model assessment

Measuring a model requires checking construct validity, reliability and factor loadings (Hair *et al.*, 2021). Ideally, factor loadings should be 0.70, but they can be lower in social sciences. Items with factor loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should only be removed if they improve construct reliability and convergent validity. In this study, one item (FR4) with a loading of 0.248 was dropped. All other items had loadings above 0.60 (Hair *et al.*, 2019), making them satisfactory. Figure 2 displays the model and the factor loadings for each construct.

After checking the factor loadings of each construct, the study used Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to ensure construct dependability. Both metrics exceeded the suggested 0.70 threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2019), confirming the construct's reliability. For construct validity, both convergent and discriminant validity were assessed. The average variance extracted (AVE) statistic was used to verify convergent validity. With AVE values between 0.730 and 0.900, surpassing the 0.50 benchmark (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), convergent validity was confirmed. Table 1 shows factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE values.

To confirm the uniqueness of the constructs, their discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio and Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion.



Source: Developed by authors

Figure 2.
Measurement model
with factor loadings

Table 1.
Factor loadings,
construct reliability
(Cronbach's alpha
and composite
reliability) and
convergent validity

Construct	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
<i>Transformational leadership</i>				
TL1	0.916	0.982	0.984	0.900
TL2	0.958			
TL3	0.952			
TL4	0.968			
TL5	0.950			
TL6	0.953			
TL7	0.945			
<i>Psychological empowerment</i>				
PE1	0.887	0.973	0.976	0.774
PE2	0.906			
PE3	0.919			
PE4	0.924			
PE5	0.922			
PE6	0.925			
PE7	0.901			
PE8	0.871			
PE9	0.697			
PE10	0.859			
PE11	0.855			
PE12	0.869			
<i>Financial rewards</i>				
FR1	0.828	0.939	0.950	0.730
FR2	0.897			
FR3	0.911			
FR5	0.861			
FR6	0.862			
FR7	0.823			
FR8	0.793			
<i>Job formalization</i>				
JF1	0.907	0.954	0.967	0.879
JF2	0.941			
JF3	0.951			
JF4	0.952			
<i>Employee creative performance</i>				
ECP1	0.901	0.983	0.985	0.833
ECP2	0.918			
ECP3	0.905			
ECP4	0.931			
ECP5	0.932			
ECP6	0.866			
ECP7	0.900			
ECP8	0.907			
ECP9	0.931			
ECP10	0.951			
ECP11	0.880			
ECP12	0.914			
ECP13	0.929			

Source: Developed by authors

According to the criterion, the square root of AVE for each construct should be greater than its correlation with other constructs. This was confirmed in the analysis, ensuring that each construct's internal variance was higher than its shared variance with others. Therefore, discriminant validity was established (refer to Table 2).

The study applied the HTMT ratio, as recommended by Henseler *et al.* (2015), to determine discriminant reliability. If the HTMT ratio between constructs is below 0.90, discriminant validity is confirmed. The results showed all HTMT ratio values were under the 0.90 threshold, establishing discriminant validity (refer to Table 3).

4.3 Hypotheses testing

After evaluating the measurement model, the structural model was examined to validate the proposed hypotheses. The study used the bootstrapping method with 10,000 samples to test the significance of the path coefficients. *H1* aimed to determine the influence of TL on ECP. The results showed TL had a partial impact on ECP ($=0.069$, $t = 1.316$, $p = 0.094$), with a significance level of $p < 0.10$. Thus, *H1* was partially confirmed. *H3* aimed to see if TL significantly influenced PE. The results showed a significant effect of TL on PE ($=0.549$, $t = 9.890$, $p < 0.001$), confirming *H3*. *H4* explored if PE positively impacted ECP. The analysis found a significant influence of PE on ECP ($=0.692$, $t = 9.573$, $p < 0.001$), supporting *H4*.

4.4 Moderation analysis

H5 examined the effect of FR on the relationship between TL and PE. The results showed a significant negative moderation by FR ($\beta = -0.286$, $t = 6.112$, $p < 0.001$). While the study predicted a positive effect, the data revealed the opposite. Therefore, *H5* was not confirmed, suggesting that higher FR weakens the positive link between TL and ECP.

Construct	TL	PE	FR	JF	ECP
TL	<i>0.949</i>				
PE	0.723	<i>0.880</i>			
FR	0.437	0.401	<i>0.855</i>		
JF	0.709	0.758	0.545	<i>0.938</i>	
ECP	0.677	0.857	0.458	0.728	<i>0.913</i>

Note: Italic values on the diagonal are the square root of AVE

Source: Developed by authors

Table 2.
Fornell and Larcker
criterion

Construct	TL	PE	FR	JF	ECP
TL					
PE	0.738				
FR	0.452	0.407			
JF	0.733	0.785	0.571		
ECP	0.688	0.874	0.467	0.750	

Source: Developed by authors

Table 3.
Heterotrait-monotrait
ratio

Table 4.
Direct and
moderation
hypotheses outcomes

H6 examined the moderating role of JF between TL and ECP. The results showed a minimal effect of JF on this relationship ($= 0.009$, $t = 0.211$, $p = 0.416$), so *H6* was not supported. The direct and moderation results can be found in [Table 4](#), with the structural model shown in [Figure 3](#).

4.5 Mediation analysis

The study aimed to explore PE's role in mediating the relationship between TL and ECP (*H2*). The results ([Table 5](#)) showed that TL influenced ECP through PE (*H2*: $=0.380$, $t = 7.088$, $p < 0.001$). Even with the mediator, there was still a direct, albeit reduced, significant link between TL and ECP ($=0.069$, $t = 1.316$, $p = 0.094$). This suggests PE partially

Paths	Path coefficient	SD	<i>t</i> -statistics	<i>p</i> -values	Decision
<i>H1</i> . TL → ECP	0.069	0.052	1.316	0.094	Partially supported
<i>H3</i> . TL → PE	0.549	0.055	9.890	0.000	Supported
<i>H4</i> . PE → ECP	0.692	0.072	9.573	0.000	Supported
<i>H5</i> . FR x TL → PE	-0.286	0.047	6.112	0.000	Not supported
<i>H6</i> . JF x TL → ECP	0.009	0.042	0.211	0.416	Not supported

Source: Developed by authors

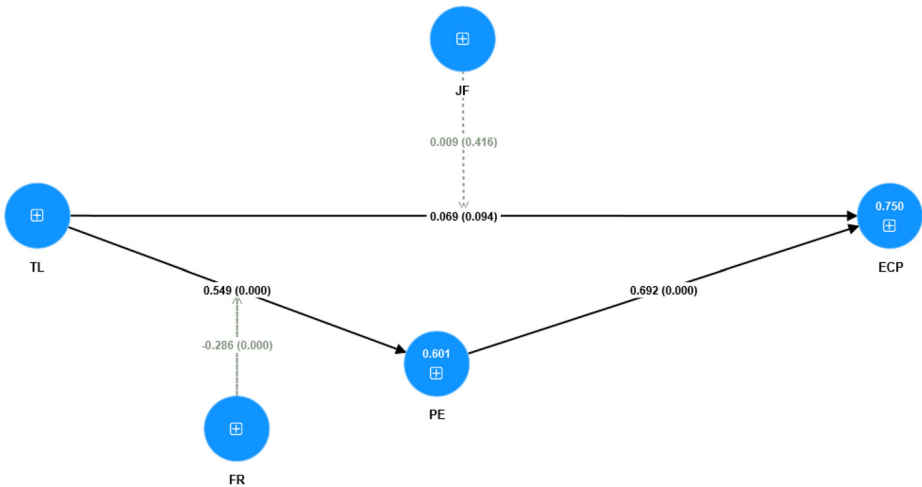


Figure 3.
Structural model

Source: Developed by authors

Table 5.
Mediation analysis
results

Paths	Indirect effect	SD	<i>t</i> -statistics	<i>p</i> -values
TL → PE → ECP	0.380	0.054	7.088	0.000

Source: Developed by authors

mediates the TL–ECP relationship, with TL still having a direct influence on ECP. Therefore, *H2* was confirmed. Mediation results are shown in [Table 5](#).

4.6 R-square and Q-square

To measure the model’s predictive significance and explanatory power, R-square and Q-square were used. ECP had an R-square of 0.750, meaning it explains 75% of the variance. PE had an R-square of 0.601, explaining 60.1% of the variance. These R-square values are considered satisfactory (>0.10) according to [Hair *et al.* \(2021\)](#). Both Q-square values for ethical leadership and innovative behavior were above 0, indicating the model’s predictive relevance (see [Table 6](#) for R-square and Q-square statistics).

4.7 Control variables

The study also considered gender, age and experience as influencing factors. While the main findings remained consistent even when these factors were accounted for, a notable observation was that senior employees in the surveyed ministries displayed higher creative performance ($p < 0.05$). This challenges the notion that creativity is mainly a trait of the young, hinting that age-related experience and knowledge might boost creativity in this setting. However, neither gender nor years of service significantly affected creative performance ($p > 0.05$). This means the ministries offer an equitable environment for both genders to showcase their creativity, and the duration of employment does not necessarily impact one’s creative contribution. Key factors like leadership style, empowerment, rewards and job structure seem more pivotal for creativity in this context.

5. Discussion

In the setting of government ministries in the UAE, the current research delved into the relationships between TL, PE, FR, JF and ECP. The findings shed light on how these elements intertwine to promote ECP. The data revealed that TL has a somewhat influential role in ECP, albeit not at a statistically significant level ($p = 0.094$). This suggests that transformational leaders, who inspire and motivate their teams, can potentially boost creative performance. This aligns with prior studies like [Breevaart and Bakker \(2018\)](#), which emphasize the positive link between TL and creativity. Essentially, TL can cultivate a creative atmosphere. Yet, the lack of strong statistical backing for TL’s direct impact on ECP (usually set at $p < 0.05$) hints at other factors at play in the TL–ECP relationship.

The study shows that PE acts as a bridge between TL and ECP. Essentially, transformational leaders can boost creativity by empowering their teams psychologically. Such leadership behaviors, like inspiring shared goals and promoting self-confidence, heighten team members’ PE, leading to increased creativity. This aligns with past research emphasizing the role of PE in boosting intrinsic motivation and creativity ([Gao *et al.*, 2023](#); [Birgul and Palalar, 2019](#)).

The research revealed a notable influence of TL on PE. The study further supported this observation, highlighting that TL significantly boosts PE, emphasizing the role of TL

Endogenous constructs	R-square	Q ² predict
PE	0.532	0.523
ECP	0.75	0.526

Source: Developed by authors

Table 6.
R-square and
Q-square

methods in enhancing employees' feelings of empowerment. This, in turn, augments their creative output. The evident positive link between TL and PE in this research suggests that transformational leaders play a vital role in shaping the psychological well-being of their employees. This aligns with previous research which suggests that such leaders often instill a sense of autonomy, competence and purpose in their team, fostering an environment conducive to heightened creative performance (Nasir *et al.*, 2019).

The study indicated a pronounced impact of PE on ECP. This aligns with existing research suggesting that employees who feel empowered are more inclined to engage in proactive behaviors, explore new ideas and exhibit creative problem-solving (Mahmood *et al.*, 2019). Essentially, the findings emphasize that employees, when they view themselves as empowered, are intrinsically motivated to participate in creative endeavors. This heightened motivation, combined with their sense of ownership and proactive attitude, enables them to not only spot innovation opportunities but also to adeptly bring creative ideas to fruition (Gashema, 2019). As such, the positive ramifications of PE on creative performance underscore the importance of fostering an empowering workplace in amplifying individuals' creative potential.

The study showed that instead of boosting the positive effect of TL on PE, higher FR levels actually lessen it. This means that offering more FR might dampen the usual benefits that TL brings in empowering employees. Simply, too much focus on monetary rewards might dilute the positive leadership effects that generally promote feelings of autonomy and purpose in workers (Zhou *et al.*, 2022). On the other hand, the expected influence of JF on how TL affects ECP was not supported by the findings. This means that how formal a job role is does not seem to change the relationship between TL and ECP in this study. While some previous research hinted at a connection (Ma *et al.*, 2022), this study's results do not align with this theoretical expectation, suggesting formal job roles do not necessarily influence the creativity benefits of TL.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this study looked into how TL and ECP are related within UAE's government ministries. The study sought to shed light to understand the factors influencing employee creativity, focusing on PE role and the effects of FR and JF. The results showed a somewhat strong positive link between TL and ECP, meaning leadership can boost creativity, especially when combined with other factors which are PE, FR and JF, thus answering both research questions of the study. The study found that TL helps empower employees, giving them a feeling of independence and skill. Importantly, PE acts as a bridge between TL and ECP, showing leadership can indirectly boost creativity through empowering employees. This underlines the need to make employees feel empowered to boost their creative outputs through leadership.

6.1 Implications

6.1.1 Theoretical implications. In simpler terms, this study offers new insights into leadership, employee empowerment and creativity in workplaces. Here are the main takeaways: first, the research shows that PE plays a key role in how TL affects ECP. By understanding this, the study gets a clearer idea of how to boost creativity in workplaces. Second, the study challenges the usual thinking about how TL and FR work together. Interestingly, offering more rewards might not always go well with certain leadership styles, especially when aiming for employee creativity. Third, even though the study did not find strong evidence about the role of JF in the context of UAE's government ministries, it still adds value to the ongoing discussions. It hints that factors like leadership and

empowerment might be more crucial than how formal a job is when looking at creativity outcomes.

6.1.2 Practical implications. The insights generated by this study have practical implications for both employees and supervisors. For employees, the study emphasizes the importance of participating in leadership development programs that focus on transformative practices. Engaging in such programs can provide valuable skills and insights, enabling employees to thrive in an environment where leadership encourages creativity. Furthermore, employees should actively seek roles and organizations that balance FR with nonfinancial motivators, such as recognition and opportunities for skill development. Moreover, supervisors and leaders play a pivotal role in fostering creativity within their teams. The study suggests that supervisors should actively engage in leadership development programs that enhance their TL skills. By inspiring and empowering their teams, supervisors can create an environment conducive to creativity. It is crucial for supervisors to carefully design and implement reward systems that go beyond financial incentives, incorporating elements like recognition and autonomy. Additionally, supervisors should champion empowerment initiatives within their teams, providing opportunities for team members to take ownership of their work and fostering a psychologically empowering work environment.

6.2 Limitations

The study has some restrictions that must be considered. First, the research was carried out within UAE government ministries, which may have limited the applicability of its results to other sectors of the economy or cultural contexts. Second, the accuracy of the results may be impacted by the use of data from surveys due to usual technique bias and probable subjectivity in responses. Third, while efforts were made to control for relevant demographic variables, there might be other unaccounted factors that could influence the relationships examined in the study. Moreover, the study focused on a selected set of variables, and there might be additional factors that contribute to ECP that were not considered in the analysis. Furthermore, cross-sectional research makes it difficult to conclude a causal relationship. Future longitudinal or experimental studies may be able to shed more light on the interactions between TL, PE, FR, JF and ECP over time.

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