Investigating the Role of Transformational Leadership on Followers' Creativity through Mediating Support for Innovation and Workplace Relationship: A Conceptual Approach

Saud. Alarifi, and Abraham. Althonayan

Abstract—Transformational leadership is a significant approach to motivate followers beyond expectations and set free the creativity inside them. It aims to transform the personal values and self-concepts of followers and shift them to a new level of needs and aspirations. After reviewing extensive literature, researcher found research gap and developed a conceptual framework. Researchers proposed a conceptual framework based on the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' creativity directly and through the mediation of workplace relationship and support for innovation. Researchers claim that no such conceptualisation has been made before in the literature in general and particular for developing countries. This research is proposed to examine transformational leadership effects on followers' creativity in a Gulf country. To this context a survey questionnaire has been developed. And will be used in public sector of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research may contribute to the literature of transformational leadership by developing a comprehensive theoretical framework that examines the factors which influence transformational leadership to enhance followers' creativity in public sector.

Keywords— Transformational Leadership, Followers' Creativity, support for innovation and workplace relationship.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE study of leadership places an important position in the history of organisational behaviours because ability to inspire, lead and motivate employee is a crucial issue in an organisation. Now a day, organisations are facing with dynamic environmental changes like increasing globalisation, rapid technological change, pace of competition, new management trends and shortening product life cycle. These characteristics require organisations to be more innovative and creative than before to lead, to inspire, to survive, to grow and to compete especially technological driven. Leadership is considered as the act of influencing and behavioural activities

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of an organised group to induce followers to behave in a desired manner and influence through the communication process towards the attainment of a specified goals. Being a wide scope of the subject in a variety of classification it is very hard to define the concept with particular definitions. However, researcher like Stodgill (1950, p-3) point out that leadership as "the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement". Following to the concept it is posited that leadership highlighted different aspects in order to followers' perception, role relationships and situation in exercising of influence, inducing compliance, a form of persuasion, a power relation (Yukl, 1989).

From the leadership literature transformational leadership has been conceptualised as a process that through leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. According to Bass and Riggio (2006, p.3), transformational leaders are those who "stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity". To this extent, transformational leaders raise followers' maturity-level and ideals plus concerns for achievement, self-actualisation, and the well-being of others, the organisation, and society (Bass, 1999). In this regard literature advocates the relationships between leaders and followers' creativity (Amabile, 1983; Tierney et al., 1999; Jung et al., 2003; Gumusluoglu and ilsev, 2009). However, research studies witnessed that perception of support for innovation and psychological empowerment is a main source of employee creativity (Tierney et al., 1999; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009). Many researchers carried out the studies like (Amabile et al., 1996; Zhou, 1998; Tierney et al., 1999; Dess and Picken, 2000) and very few studies found the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' creativity except Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009). To the knowledge of researchers none of the studies have been previously conducted in with the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' creativity. In this study, researchers

propose that support for innovation and workplace relationship is a way of underlying the effects of transformational leadership on followers' creativity. Given the importance of these factors the primary aim of this study is to investigate the effects of transformational leadership follower's creativity in a public sector organisation. The objectives of the study are to examine the relationship among transformational leadership and follower's creativity and also examine the mediatory role of support for innovation and workplace relationship between transformational leadership follower's creativity. The significance of this study is that first time such type of conceptualisation has been going to conduct in a public security organisations of Saudi Arabia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Leadership is an emerging field in the organizational behaviour which considered as the act of influencing and behavioural activities to induce followers. To this point, transformational leadership reflects a kind of leadership in which leaders move their followers beyond immediate self-interests through idealised influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualised consideration. Based on transformational leadership, employee behavioural approaches can capable to reform followers' values and norms, encourage both individual and organisational changes, and support their followers to perform beyond performance expectations (Jung & Avolio, 2000). In the leadership domain, followers' creativity has important value to understand the follower's motivation and organisational innovation. According to Amabile et al. (1996, p.1155), "all innovation begins with creative ideas".

Literature of organisational behaviour shows an increasing interest to examine factors that promote employees creativity, which involves creation of new and useful ideas concerning products, services, processes, and procedures in organisations (Amabile, 1988; Woodman et al., 1993; Zhou, 1998). One of the significant factors that play a major role in enhancing employees' creativity is the style of leadership (Dess and Picken, 2000). That is because, according to Redmond et al. (1993), leaders play the most central role in the workplace. Actually, leaders define and identify the context of their followers' tasks in which followers cooperate to set goals and identify problems and solutions (Amabile, 1998; Redmond et al. 1993). Furthermore, leaders articulate a vision demonstrating long-term rather than over short-term goals for organization and through that, they lead individual and joint efforts of their followers in the direction of innovative work processes and outcomes (Amabile et al., 1996). In behavioural literature, more specifically, transformational leadership has been proved its relation to creativity (Sosik et al., 1998, 1999). According to Elkins and Keller (2003), the behavior of transformational leaders is consistent with the determinants of innovation and creativity at the workplace. Some of these determinants are vision, support for innovation, autonomy, encouragement, recognition, and challenge (Elkins and Keller,

2003). In this specific style of leadership, the behavior of leaders is usually described as a driving force for creativity and that is because individualized consideration will act as a reward for followers through recognising and motivating them (Bass and Avolio, 1995; Sosik et al., 1998). Moreover, Bass (1990) explains that transformational leaders enhancing their followers' self-efficacy can make a positive impact on their creativity. That is because, followers feeling of self-efficacy increases their creative performance (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988; Redmond et al., 1993). There is another force for encouraging creativity of followers that is used by transformational leaders, which is the emotional relationships. According to Bass (1990), one of the main characteristics of transformational leaders is that they build emotional relationships with their followers. And those relationships as argued by Hunt et al. (2004) are expected to lead to a higher level of creativity.

Employees in any organization are like partners in social and task interaction. Positive association between co-workers and their leaders is shown as constructive attitudes and behaviors towards the organisational goals. In another side, negative relationships support to stress (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). The relationships that employee form at their workplace with their supervisors and co-workers represents social exchange relationships that are especially salient with respect to task and citizenship behavior (Li and Hung, 2009, p-1130). In social exchange theory two important categories such that leader-member relationships and co-workers relationships classifies individual tend (Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Sias, 2005). Interpersonal relationship between leaders and workers constitute an interconnected social system in an organisation. According to Li and Hung (2009, p-1130), members in a transformational leadership context interact more frequently with their leaders and have their leaders' support, confidence, encouragement, and consideration, and hence are more satisfied with their leader, identify with the leader, trust in the leader, and by extension, are more willing to form and maintain a high quality relationship with their leaders. Tierney and Tepper (2007) reveal that employees have to interact with co-workers and organisational leaders and they get influence towards the support on developing attitudes and behaviours at their job position. In addition Zohar and Tenne-Gazit (2008) support that transformational leader are trying to focus their relationships frequently by small power distance and needs and capabilities basis of individuals. This has been proved by previous researchers like (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen, 2005). However, social aspects regarding the relationships at workplace have been ignored and first time Li and Hung (2009) explored this kind of relationship. Thus, maintaining such behaviour by direct influence of leaders towards individuals on the development and maintenance their characteristics, values and beliefs. Based on above argument, researchers developed a conceptual model (Figure 1).
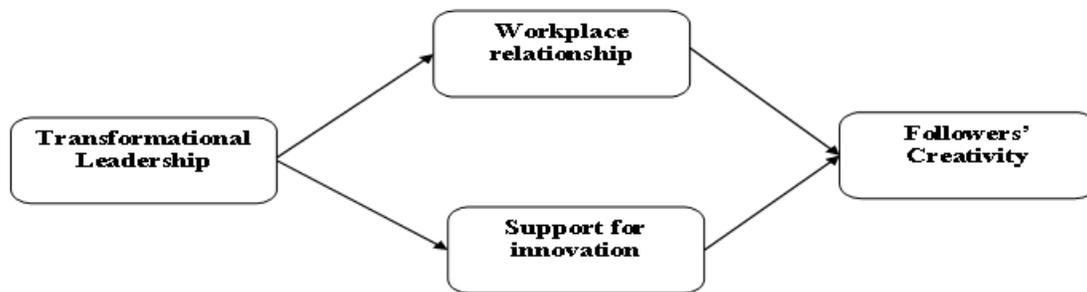
Source: Developed by Researcher

Fig.1 Conceptual Model

In an organisation, employees' innovation begins with creative ideas. This also leads to successful implementation of new programs, new product introductions, or new services depends on a person or a team having a good idea and developing that idea beyond its initial state (Amabile et al., 1996). Mumford et al. (2002) argue that although typically there is association between creative work and artists and scientists. Navigating away from the traditional psychological approach to creativity, which focuses on the characteristics of creative persons, Amabile et al. (1996) assume that the social environment can influence both the level and the frequency of creative behaviour. Furthermore, creative work can occur when the tasks presented involve complex, ill-defined problems where performance requires the generation of novel, useful solutions (Mumford et al., 2002). Creativity is defined by Amabile et al. (1996, p.1155) as "the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain". Furthermore, creativity happens at the individual level as stated by Oldham and Cummings (1996). In addition, Amabile et al. (1996) argues that the starting point for innovation is the creativity by teams and individuals. Furthermore these researchers argue that "creativity is the seed of all innovation, and psychological perceptions of innovation (the implementation of people's ideas) within an organisation are likely to impact the motivation to generate new ideas (p.1155).

There are different ways that leaders can affect their followers' creativity as identified by many studies. Leaders define and identify the context of their followers' tasks in which followers cooperate to set goals and identify problems and solutions (Amabile, 1998; Redmond et al. 1993). Leaders are the main determinant of organisational culture can achieve a significant impact on organisational creativity by creating and maintaining an organisational climate and culture that encourage creative initiatives and assist diffusion of learning. More specifically, transformational leadership has been related to creativity (Sosik et al., 1998, 1999; Elkins and Keller, 2003). In the leadership literature, behaviour of leaders is usually described as a driving force for creativity (Bass and Avolio, 1995). To this extent, the creation of organisational environment may be a better strategy to foster individuals' creativity where followers may have to spend enormous amount of time and efforts to increase their intellectual capacity, expertise, and creative thinking skills. Researchers found many variables like intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy,

and organisational environment for increasing the level of followers' creativity in an organisation (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988; Amabile, 1998). According to Sosik et al. (1998, p-7) "intellectual stimulations is a key factor of transformational leadership, which is likely to promote creativity by encouraging followers to think out of the box and by enhancing generative and exploratory thinking". Following to the literature, researchers propose to examine the relationship of transformational leadership and followers' creativity in a public sector organisation. Justification behind the hypothesis is that only few researchers examined this relationship in a developed culture but no one has worked in developing country like Gulf areas. Therefore this study suggests examining in real settings of collective culture to find the effect of transformational leadership towards the followers' creativity.

H1: Transformational leadership is expected to be positively associated with followers' creativity.

Employees in any organisation are like partners in social and task interaction. Positive association between co-workers and their leaders is shown as constructive attitudes and behaviours towards the organisational goals. In another side, negative relationships support to stress (Viswesvaran, Sanches, and Fischer, 1999). The relationships that employee form at their workplace with their supervisors and co-workers represents social exchange relationships that are especially salient with respect to task and citizenship behaviour (Li and Hung, 2009, p-1130). In social exchange theory two important categories such that leader-member relationships and co-workers relationships classifies individual tend (Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Sias, 2005). Interpersonal relationship between leaders and workers constitute an interconnected social system in an organisation. According to Li and Hung (2009, p-1130), members in a transformational leadership context interact more frequently with their leaders and have their leaders' support, confidence, encouragement, and consideration, and hence are more satisfied with their leader, identify with the leader, trust in the leader, and by extension, are more willing to form and maintain a high quality relationship with their leaders. Tierney and Tepper (2007) reveal that employees have to interact with co-workers and organisational leaders and they get influence towards the support on developing attitudes and behaviours at their job position. Resultantly, this kind of relationship may hold up for the positive or negative impact. Literature supports that leader and members have

vertical relationships as a governing authority and in the sense of co-workers relationships, they exchange knowledge on the basis of reciprocal (Gouldner, 1960; Fiske, 1992). In addition Zohar and Tenne-Gazit (2008) support that transformational leader are trying to focus their relationships frequently by small power distance and needs and capabilities basis of individuals. This has been proved by previous researchers like (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen, 2005). However, social aspects regarding the relationships at workplace have been ignored and first time Li and Hung (2009) explored this kind of relationship. Thus, maintaining such behaviour by direct influence of leaders towards individuals on the development and maintenance their characteristics, values and beliefs. On the basis of this conceptualization, The researcher proposed following hypothesis.

H2: Workplace relationship is expected to be positively mediated between transformational leadership and followers' creativity.

Innovation has been conceptualised with adoption of useful ideas and idea implementation with the product which should take out from outside of an organisation (Kanter, 1988, Van de Van, 1986; Scott and Bruce, 1994). Eventually, innovation commences with problem recognition and to solve that problem by generating different ideas which may be adopted or either novel. Exploring innovative ideas for organisational production is a multistage process where many social, cultural and organisational factors might be involved. These factors may largely support the followers' creativity where climate and culture have been found important in the literature (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988; Scott and Bruce, 1994; Yukl, 2001). However, literature support to organisation's qualities to provide appropriate climate and culture to their employees influencing employees' creativity (Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978; Amabile et al., 1996). Many Researchers like Mumford and Gustafson (1988) argue that organisational innovation is dependent on the availability of organisational climate where individuals developed their capacity for innovation, their readiness to carry out productive efforts. Furthermore, Scott and Bruce (1994) agreed that organisational climate is one of the most significant factors that influence innovation creativity. They further argue that perceptions of employees on the extent of creativity support, and the extent of creativity resource-allocation in the organisation, have significant effect on innovative performance. Indeed, organisational climate and culture presents a sense-making tool and a guiding principle of creative processes leading to more innovative products and services. . Literature confirmed that leaders have positive role in development of organisational culture, environment and transformation which are related to collective social construction where leaders have full control and influence (Jung, 2001; Mumford et al., 2002). Indeed, leaders develop a work environment that may encourage creativity and also create climate that serves as a leading way for more creative work process (Amabile et al., 2004; Scott and Bruce, 1994). Thus, based on leaders' beliefs for what is more, leaders can create a supporting climate in their organisations (Amabile et al., 1996; Amabile et al., 2004). Here leaders can effect on creative behaviour through their influence on the followers'

perceptions of a climate supportive of innovation (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009, p-464).

According to Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, (2009) transformational leaders, by intellectually stimulating their followers, championing innovation, and articulating a compelling vision throughout their organisation, help to establish an organisational climate where employees feel changed and energised to seek innovative approaches in their jobs (p-464). Several studies like (Jung et al., 2003; Koene et al., 2002; Bain et al., 2001; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009) examined this effect and found evidence that organisation climate supporting innovation is a significant determinant of individuals' creativity. However, there are also strong negative relationships between transformational leadership and followers' innovative behaviour (Basu, 1991; Basu and Green, 1997). Howell and Higgins, 1990 and Jung et al. (2003) found positive impact of transformational leadership on innovative organisational climate. In addition, Koene et al. (2002) found a positive effect of charismatic leadership and consideration on organisational climate. Bain et al. (2001) conducted an empirical study in four Australian companies with large R&D projects. They examined six indicators of innovation such as supervisory ratings and found a significant relationship between them and organisational climate for innovation (Bain et al., 2001). Another study conducted by Scott and Bruce (1994) examined scientists and engineers in an R&D division in a large US company and found that organisational climate that support innovation lead to increasing innovative behaviour. They found that leader–follower exchanges positively associated with innovation support. However, the studies of Basu (1991); Basu and Green (1997) and Podsakoff et al. (1996b) didn't support for a interaction between transformational leadership and substitutes. Based on this, to examine the impact of followers' support for innovation through transformational leadership and followers' creativity, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H3: Followers' perception of support for innovation is expected to be positively mediated between transformational leadership and followers' creativity.

III. Conclusion

This research has been designed to examine the effects of transformational leadership on followers' creativity and organisational innovation. Leaders can encourage follower's creativity and organisational innovation in their organisations. After extensive reviewing literature in the domain of transformation leadership a conceptual approach has been developed to know the relationships between the factors. For examining the conceptual framework, researcher has proposed to adapt a survey questionnaire based on the literature. By applying the survey questionnaire researchers will collect data through random sampling from the employees of public sector security organisation of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This research will contribute to the behavioural and psychological literature and particularly for leadership. This study may support to field experts and administration of the public security organisations especially from the Gulf countries.

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