






Transformational Leadership and Work Environment as Predictors of Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation

(A Case Study of Civil Servants at State Vocational High Schools in the Southern Region of Kulon Progo)

Syamsul Hadi^{1*} , Pidha Tri Rahayu^{2*} , Kusuma Chandra Kirana^{3*} 

¹ Universitas of Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
¹syamsul.hadi@ustjogja.ac.id, ²pidharahayu@gmail.com,
³kusumack@ustjogja.ac.id

Abstract. This study investigates the effects of transformational leadership and the work environment on innovative work behavior, with work motivation as a mediating variable. The research involved 155 civil servants at public vocational high schools in southern Kulon Progo; after excluding incomplete responses and outliers, 149 valid questionnaires were analyzed using SEM-PLS. The results show that transformational leadership positively and significantly influences work motivation ($\beta = 0.529$; $t = 5.616$; $p = 0.000$) and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.293$; $t = 2.647$; $p = 0.004$). The work environment significantly affects work motivation ($\beta = 0.363$; $t = 3.627$; $p = 0.000$) but does not significantly influence innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.018$; $t = 0.242$; $p = 0.404$). Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.426$; $t = 3.190$; $p = 0.001$) and partially mediates the relationships between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.225$; $t = 2.595$; $p = 0.005$) as well as between the work environment and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.155$; $t = 2.353$; $p = 0.009$). These findings indicate that strengthening transformational leadership and cultivating a supportive work environment can enhance employees' work motivation, which in turn promotes innovative work behavior in schools.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Work Environment, Work Motivation, Innovative Work Behavior, Civil Servants.

1 Introduction

Recently, innovative work behavior (IWB) has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational competitiveness and long term sustainability. Rapid technological change, increasing environmental uncertainty, and the growing demand for creative problem solving have transformed IWB into an essential capability at both individual

and organizational levels. Previous studies have indicated that perceived organizational support, resilience, psychological capital and self efficacy are all crucial factors to generate innovation behavior [1];[2]. Also, leadership styles as servant and transformational leadership have been demonstrated to create an enabling atmosphere for creativity and innovation [3];[4].

Of these, transformational leadership is one of the strongest leadership forms for encouraging innovation and employee participation. Transformational leaders, who motivate the followers by providing inspirational concern (inspirational motivation), intellectual stimulation and consider the individual needs of each subordinates (individualized consideration) have a potential to enhance employees' performance beyond what is expected for them and they are able to produce creative ideas [1]. However, evidences are not consensual: on the one hand, some works confirm a positive association between transformational leadership and IWB while others find different findings or even contextual ones [2];[3]. These inconsistencies highlight the necessity to also consider mediating mechanisms, work motivation for example, and contextual workplace characteristics that might moderate this association.

The workplace context has also been cited as having a significant impact on the health, performance and innovation of employees now more than ever [4];[5]. Its success depends on its leaders and be these who they may, motivation and innovation will need to be nurtured in supportive policy settings with good facilities. Nevertheless, various challenges persist, particularly in public schools, where limited resources and varying levels of employee motivation may hinder the development of innovative work behavior. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of transformational leadership and the work environment on innovative work behavior, with work motivation as a mediating variable, among civil servants in public vocational high schools in the southern region of Kulon Progo Regency..

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Relationships between Transformational Leadership, Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior (IWB) represents the intentional actions of employees to create and promote new ideas generating better performance in organizations [6]. In its multidimensional nature, IWB consists of both generating ideas, selling them to others and realizing them in practice. A number of organizational antecedents affect IWB, with leadership style, work climate and work motivation among them. Transformational leadership (four dimensions: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) motivates employees to think innovatively, question routines of the work practice and become involved in problem-solving that results in innovative solutions [7];[2]. When leaders make their followers powerful and give them psychological support, they create an environment where employees dare to try things out and follow their own instincts [8]. A supportive working environment in terms of not only the physical environment involved (i.e., comfort of work space and technological facilities, etc.), but also social one including support from

coworkers, collaboration with others, communication among personnel gives a place to make psychological safety effective for creative behaviors [9];[10]. In addition, work motivation refers to the internal and external mechanisms that start up, steer, and maintain work behavior [11];[12], enhances employees' determination to implement innovative thinking. Based on [13], work motivation is defined as intrinsic, identified, instrumental and introjected regulation, external regulation and amotivation types representing the entire range of motivational orientation in public service settings. Transformational leadership, work environment and work motivation are anticipated to collectively have positive effects on innovative work behavior.

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Work environment has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

Hypothesis 5: Work motivation has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

2.2 Relationships between Transformational Leadership, Work Environment, and Work Motivation

Work motivation is a psychology process that seeks to explain why people start, maintain and direct their efforts toward the accomplishment of work goals [14]. Visionary leadership has been used to strengthen motivation as it inspires employees through vision, believes in the capacity of subordinates and stimulates intellectual stimulation etc [15]. Leaders demonstrating individualized consideration offer affirmation and emotional support, which strengthen intrinsic motivation and job commitment [16]. Conversely, a positive work environment influences work motivation through providing comfortable physical conditions as well as access to adequate facilities and supportive coworker relationships that act to remove stress and add enthusiasm. A well-designed environment also promotes collaboration and an affective bond between employees and their work [17];[18]. It was previously demonstrated that professionals exposed to such kind of leadership and work environment are more motivated, engaged, and disposed to make a greater effort [5];[19]. Thus, transformational leadership and work environment are anticipated to significantly enhance work motivation.

Hypothesis 3: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on work motivation.

Hypothesis 4: Work environment has a positive effect on work motivation.

2.3 Mediating Role of Work Motivation

Work motivation serves as a mediating mechanism linking transformational leadership and work environment with innovative work behavior. Motivation channels the effects of leadership and workplace conditions into proactive and creative actions. Employees who feel motivated whether through intrinsic enjoyment, alignment with personal values, external incentives, or a sense of obligation as conceptualized in [13] motivational framework are more persistent in overcoming obstacles and more willing to implement

new ideas [20]. Transformational leaders enhance these motivational drives by providing meaning, recognition, and psychological empowerment, while a supportive work environment sustains motivation by fostering comfort, cooperation, and emotional stability [18];[2]. Empirical evidence highlights that motivation partially mediates the relationship between leadership, workplace conditions, and innovative behavior, showing that employees' internal drive is essential in transforming external support into innovation [21];[22]. Therefore, work motivation is expected to mediate both relationships in this study.

Hypothesis 6: Work motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior.

Hypothesis 7: Work motivation mediates the relationship between work environment and innovative work behavior.

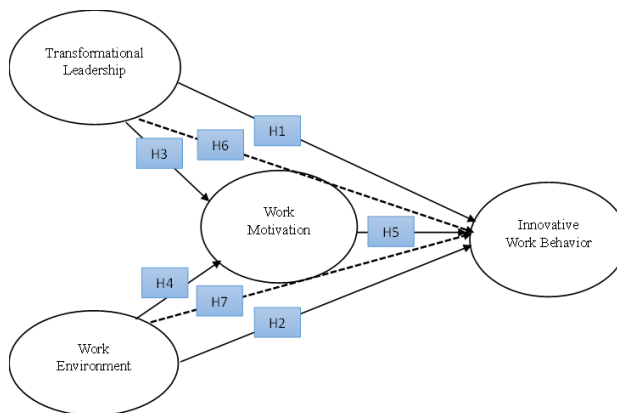


Fig. 1. The theoretical model of the study

3 Methods

3.1 Study Setting and Sampling Procedure

This study employed a quantitative approach using a saturated sampling technique, involving all civil servants working at public vocational high schools in the southern region of Kulon Progo Regency, covering the subdistricts of Kokap, Temon, and Panjatan. The initial population consisted of 155 respondents; however, three respondents did not participate, and three data points identified as outliers were excluded from the analysis to maintain the accuracy of the research results. Consequently, a total of 149 valid responses were used for data analysis.

3.2 Measures

Primary data were gathered using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument, adapted from prior studies and adjusted to the research context, measured each variable through specific indicators and items as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Research Instrument Grid

Variable	Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Transformational Leadership [23]	1. Idealized Influence 2. Intellectual Stimulation 3. Individual Consideration 4. Inspirational Motivation	1. My leader is a role model who deserves to be emulated. 2. My leader shows consistency in carrying out tasks. 3. My leader often provides new ideas to improve work performance. 4. My leader helps solve problems in different or innovative ways. 5. My leader cares about my personal problems. 6. My leader gives special attention when I experience difficulties at work. 7. My leader always motivates subordinates to work better. 8. My leader inspires us to achieve organizational goals.
Work Environment [9]	1. Physical Work Environment 2. Social Work Environment	1. I feel that the air circulation in the workspace is comfortable enough to support work activities. 2. I feel that the lighting in my workspace supports concentration while working. 3. I feel that the internet facilities at school are adequate to support daily tasks. 4. I feel that the workspace size at school is appropriate for work activities. 5. I have good working relationships with my colleagues. 6. My colleagues are always willing to help when I face difficulties at work. 7. I feel comfortable communicating and collaborating with coworkers. 8. There is a sense of mutual respect and teamwork among the staff.
Work Motivation [13]	1. Intrinsic Motivation 2. Identified Regulation 3. Instrumental Regulation	1. I work because I enjoy and feel satisfied with my job. 2. I feel happy when I can complete my

	4.Introjected Regulation 5.External Regulation 6.Amotivation	work tasks well. 3. I consider my job meaningful because it contributes to society. 4. I perform my job as a form of responsibility to the community. 5.I work to achieve financial stability and job security. 6. I perform my job because it supports my family's needs. 7. I keep working hard to avoid disappointing my colleagues and superiors. 8. I perform my job to maintain good relationships with others at work. 9. I work to receive salary, benefits, or other rewards. 10. I perform my tasks to comply with organizational demands. 11. I sometimes feel that my work has no clear purpose. 12. I feel unmotivated to complete my job tasks.
Innovative Work Behavior [6]	1.Idea Generation 2.Idea Implementation 3.Idea Realization 4.Idea Sustainability	1.I often come up with new ideas to improve work processes. 2. I actively seek creative solutions to problems at work. 3. I share my innovative ideas with colleagues or superiors. 4. I encourage others to support the implementation of new ideas. 5. I am proactive in using new concepts at work. 6. I strive to turn innovative ideas into practical actions.

3.3 Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to ensure that each construct met the criteria of validity and reliability before proceeding to hypothesis testing. This stage includes the assessment of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability.

- Convergent validity was assessed through the values of outer loadings (≥ 0.70 , acceptable ≥ 0.60) and Average Variance Extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$).
- Discriminant validity was evaluated using Cross Loading, Fornell–Larcker Criterion, and Latent Variable Correlation, where each indicator's loading on its respective construct exceeded its cross loadings with other constructs, and the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than the correlations among constructs, indicating that all constructs met the minimum threshold for discriminant validity.

- Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with minimum acceptable values of 0.70 (acceptable at ≥ 0.60).

3.4 Model Fit Evaluation

The model fit evaluation was performed to confirm that the research model adequately represented the observed data. Several fit indices were assessed, including SRMR, d-ULS, d-G, Chi-Square, NFI, GoF, and Q^2 predictive relevance. The model was considered acceptable when SRMR values were below 0.10 (preferably < 0.08), while $NFI \geq 0.90$ indicated a good fit. The Goodness of Fit (GoF) index was used to evaluate the overall fit of the model, categorized as small (0.10), moderate (0.25), and large (0.36), while Q^2 values above zero reflected predictive relevance.

3.5 Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation aimed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships among latent variables using SmartPLS 4.0. The R^2 values indicated the explanatory power of endogenous variables, with thresholds of 0.75 (strong), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (weak). Hypothesis testing was conducted through the bootstrapping procedure, where t-statistics greater than 1.96 ($p < 0.05$) denoted significant relationships. For mediation effects, significance in both direct and indirect paths indicated partial mediation, whereas significance only in the indirect path represented full mediation.

4 Results

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 summarizes the respondents' demographic profile, showing a predominantly female, mid aged, teacher dominated sample with most holding a bachelor's degree and 5–10 years of service.

Table 2. The Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Number	% of sample
Gender		
Male	62	42%
Female	87	58%
Age		
<25 years	2	1%
25 – 35 years	30	20%
36 – 45 years	47	32%
>45 year	70	47%
Job Position		
Teachers	102	68%
Staff	47	32%
Years of Service		
<5	29	19%

5 – 10	96	64%
>10	24	16%
Education		
SMA/K	22	15%
D3	13	9%
S1	91	61%
S2	23	15%
S3	0	0%

Note: Percentage of sample computed for n = 149

4.2 Validity and Reliability

Table 3 shows that all constructs have strong item loadings and high reliability, indicating a well validated measurement model.

Table 3. Result of Cross Loading Factor, AVE, CA, CR

Item	Cross Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Transformational Leadership		0.775	0.952	0.960
KT01	0.895			
KT02	0.879			
KT03	0.874			
KT04	0.871			
KT06	0.872			
KT07	0.894			
KT08	0.877			
Work Environment		0.767	0.939	0.952
LK01	0.884			
LK02	0.895			
LK03	0.841			
LK04	0.863			
LK05	0.871			
LK06	0.898			
Work Motivation		0.786	0.970	0.974
M01	0.886			
M02	0.910			
M03	0.863			
M04	0.917			

M05	0.884			
M06	0.854			
M07	0.904			
M08	0.900			
M10	0.889			
M12	0.857			
Innovative Work Behavior		0.737	0.949	0.957
PKI01	0.855			
PKI02	0.885			
PKI03	0.864			
PKI04	0.754			
PKI05	0.922			
PKI06	0.840			
PKI07	0.866			
PKI08	0.872			

4.3 Goodness of Measurement Model

Table 4 indicates that the model meets acceptable fit criteria, as shown by low SRMR values and consistent indices across saturated and estimated models.

Table 4. Summary of model fit test using SmartPLS

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.055	0.057
d_{ULS}	1.495	1.590
d_G	1.183	1.176
Chi-square	886.136	899.116
NFI	0.837	0.835

4.4 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5 indicates that the model demonstrates an acceptable level of explanatory power for work motivation and innovative work behavior.

Table 5. R-square Results

Var	R-square	R-square adjusted
Work Motivation	0.619	0.614
Work Innovative Behavior	0.423	0.402

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing results presented in Table 5 indicate that six out of seven proposed hypotheses are supported, while one is not. Transformational leadership shows a significant positive effect on both work motivation ($p = 0.000$) and innovative work behavior ($p = 0.004$). Similarly, the work environment exerts a significant influence on work motivation ($p = 0.000$), and work motivation itself significantly predicts innovative work behavior ($p = 0.001$). In contrast, the direct effect of work environment on innovative work behavior is not significant ($p = 0.404$), suggesting that environmental factors may not directly stimulate innovation without the presence of additional psychological mechanisms.

The mediation analysis in Table 6 further demonstrates that work motivation partially mediates the effects of transformational leadership and work environment on innovative work behavior ($p = 0.005$ and $p = 0.009$, respectively). These findings highlight the central role of work motivation, indicating that transformational leadership and a supportive work environment foster innovative behavior primarily by strengthening employees' motivational drive.

Table 6. Hypotesis Testing Result

Hypotesis Testing	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Remarks
H1: Transformational Leadership → Innovative Work Behavior	0.293	2.647	0.004	Significant
H2: Work Environment → Innovative Work Behavior	0.018	0.242	0.404	Not Supported
H3: Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation	0.529	5.616	0.000	Significant
H4: Work Environment → Work Motivation	0.363	3.627	0.000	Significant
H5: Work Motivation → Innovative Work Behavior	0.426	3.190	0.001	Significant

Table 7. Indirect Hypotesis Testing Result

Hypotesis Testing	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Remarks
H6: Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation → Innovative Work Behavior	0.225	2.595	0.005	Mediated (Partial)
H7: Work Environment → Work Motivation → Innovative Work Behavior	0.155	2.353	0.009	Mediated (Partial)

5 Discussion and Implications

5.1 Transformational Leadership, Work Environment, and Work Motivation as Predictors of Innovative Work Behavior

The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership has a meaningful and significant effect on innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.293$; $t = 2.647$; $p = 0.004$). This result suggests that when leaders are able to inspire, stimulate new thinking, and offer personalized support, employees become more willing to generate and apply new ideas in their work. As discussed in Chapter II, transformational leadership strengthens employees' psychological readiness for innovation. This is also consistent with previous findings by [24];[25], who highlight the important role of inspirational leadership in stimulating creativity. Considering the structure of vocational high schools, where employees often rely on leadership direction, these findings reaffirm the importance of transformational leadership in promoting innovative behavior.

In contrast to the effect of leadership, the work environment was not found to directly influence innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.018$; $t = 0.242$; $p = 0.404$). Although the direction of the relationship is positive, the strength is insufficient to produce a meaningful change. This suggests that environmental conditions—such as physical comfort and social interactions—do not directly push employees to innovate. This pattern aligns with [10], who argue that the work environment tends to influence innovation indirectly, often through psychological factors. Therefore, it appears that in this study's context, innovation depends more on internal drivers and leadership influence than on environmental comfort.

On the other hand, work motivation emerges as a strong predictor of innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.426$; $t = 3.190$; $p = 0.001$). This finding highlights that employees who feel motivated—whether through intrinsic satisfaction or identified regulation as described by [13]—are more proactive in generating and implementing new ideas. Similar results were reported by [22], emphasizing that motivation plays a crucial psychological role in driving innovation. Taken together, these results indicate that among the three predictors tested, work motivation serves as the most influential factor in shaping innovative behavior.

5.2 Effects of Transformational Leadership and Work Environment on Work Motivation

Moving from innovative behavior to its antecedents, the findings indicate that transformational leadership has a substantial positive influence on work motivation ($\beta = 0.529$; $t = 5.616$; $p = 0.000$). Leaders who articulate meaningful visions, express confidence in their employees, and stimulate intellectual involvement strengthen employees' internal energy and engagement. As outlined in Chapter II, such leadership fulfills important psychological needs like competence and autonomy. This is consistent with [15];[2], who emphasize that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee motivation. In structured educational settings like vocational high schools, this motivational boost becomes especially relevant.

In addition to leadership, the work environment also contributes positively to work motivation ($\beta = 0.363$; $t = 3.627$; $p = 0.000$). A supportive environment characterized by comfortable workspace, adequate facilities, and positive social interactions helps employees feel more energized and emotionally secure. These findings are in line with [26];[9], who noted that conducive physical and social environments improve well being and stimulate motivation. Considering the vocational school context, the environment appears to provide the foundational comfort needed for employees to stay engaged and motivated.

5.3 The Mediating Role of Work Motivation

Consistent with the previous results, work motivation is also found to significantly mediate between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.225$; $t = 2.595$; $p = 0.005$). While the effect of leadership is already positive, it becomes even stronger when employees are motivated. So wherein does its corporate leadership stimulus reside, since it originates not only in the well head but also in the psychological motivation. This is echo with [2] and proves that leadership influences innovation through motivational paths such as empowerment and psychological preparedness.

Work motivation also has an intermediary effect on the association between work environment and innovative employment behaviour ($\beta = 0.155$; $t = 2.353$; $p < 0.009$). Although, by itself the environment cannot spur innovation, but at most an indirect element through motivation that will stimulate employees to innovate. These findings are consistent with [5];[27], who posit that supportive environment enhance employees' psychological readiness and fosters the ability to be more positively involved in innovation. In essence, the mediation effect it found indicates that leadership and work environment exert a more significant influence on innovative behavior through their success in enhancing employee motivation. Overall, these findings indicate that the proposed model demonstrates an acceptable level of explanatory power in explaining work motivation and innovative work behavior.

6 Conclusion

It provides empirical evidences on relationships among the transformational leadership, work environment, work motivation and innovative work behavior in public vocational high schools in southern Kulon Progo Regency. These last results confirm that transformational leadership and work environment have positive effects on the motivation to work. Second, they found that transformational leadership and work motivation directly positively affected innovative work behavior, however, the effect of direct influence of work environment on innovative work behaviors was not significant.

The results further show that work motivation partially mediates the path of transformational leadership towards innovative work behavior as well as of work context towards innovative work behavior respectively. The findings highlight motivation as a key psychological mediator of the relationship between leadership, work environment and innovative effectiveness. That is, the more motivated an employee is, the amount

of any creative, idea or initiative he may bring to his work leads to innovative output in that organization.

The implications here are theoretical, in that the findings confirm that creativity is not a plaything of structure (that is leadership or environment) but internal psychological cause side aspects as well, such as motivation. This is in line with previous studies [15];[6];[10] which highlight motivation as a major booster of innovative behaviour. Tactically, it reinforces the importance of leaders who foster intrinsic motivation and an empowering work context where employees are trusted.

Therefore, in both organizations and particularly in educational organizations and schools they have to cultivate transformational leadership behavior and a positive working climate that would stimulate individuals 'motivation and creativity. This bang should resonate, no less than among players and coaches than executives to coffee vendors and extra seat sales." This alone should pay dividends not just in performance but also in creativity," a key ingredient of organizational flexibility, the ability to stay alive amid utter chaos. Implications for theory and practice: This study generates some theoretical significance on the question of how leader and workplace conditions collectively arouse motivation level on innovation works in educational setting.

7 Limitations and Further Directions

This study provides meaningful implications but also has several limitations. The use of a cross sectional, self report design may introduce bias, suggesting that longitudinal or mixed method approaches would offer deeper insights. The sample was limited to civil servants in vocational schools in southern Kulon Progo, restricting generalizability; larger and more diverse samples are recommended for future research. Additionally, only work motivation was examined as a mediator, while other psychological or contextual factors may also influence innovative work behavior. Future studies should consider additional mediators or moderators to develop a more comprehensive understanding. Overall, despite supporting the relationships among transformational leadership, work environment, motivation, and innovative behavior, broader and multi method studies are needed to strengthen generalizability.

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