

Article

Nexus of Transformational Leadership, Employee Adaptiveness, Knowledge Sharing, and Employee Creativity

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Abstract: The survival of an organization in the contemporary competitive and dynamic global business environment is associated with its creative workforce. This study explores the impact of transformational leadership (TL) and employee adaptiveness on workforce creativity. The mediating role of employee adaptiveness and the moderating role of knowledge sharing has also been tested. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect data from the 561 employees working in three star and five star hotels. Statistical techniques such as correlation and hierarchical regressions were used for testing hypotheses. To test the mediation effect, we used the statistical procedure suggested by Preacher and Hayes. The results revealed that employee creativity is initiated through TL in hotels and TL positively affects employee adaptiveness. The results of the mediating analysis confirmed the mediating role of employee adaptiveness between TL and creativity link in the context of hotel industry operating in developing nations. Moreover, the findings also revealed that knowledge sharing plays key role for TL and employee adaptiveness links. In this study, quantitative research design was utilized, and the cross-sectional method was used for data collection. Future research designs can be based on both quantitative and current qualitative analyses. The current model can be enriched using factors such as knowledge management systems, organizational structures, and digital platforms in the future.

Keywords: employee creativity; transformational leadership; employee adaptiveness; knowledge sharing



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1. Introduction

The successful business operation of SMEs in the contemporary competitive and dynamic global business environment is highly linked with its creative workforce [1]. Employees with creative skills provide innovative ideas for innovating organizational processes [2]. The success of SMEs in the dynamic business environment is required to remain a step ahead of the competition and to gain the confidence and trust of customers [3]. Today's customer demands are dynamic; therefore, organizations must have the ability to solve complex challenges and problems creatively and innovatively [4]. Instead of thinking about what they have been asked to do, creative employees express themselves more proactively in a committed way and find innovative solutions and opportunities [5]. Through their creative abilities, they challenge the status quo and introduce the latest and more viable ways of handling the tasks and solutions to problems [6]. These employees become the backbone of SMEs and embody creativity and innovation [3].

Recent research studies focused on large scale organization and linked creativity with numerous factors. These factors include employee polychronicity and employee resilience,

creative personality [7], knowledge management and motivation management [8], affective commitment, and job resource fullness [9]. Other factors include intrinsic motivation and proactive personality [10], paternalistic leadership [11], work curiosity [12], and authentic leadership [13]. Among these major antecedents of employee creativity, the most critical factor is transformational leadership [14], enabling employees to adapt to the required changes. Transformational leadership enables employees to change their working style effectively, i.e., to improve their adaptive skills in a creative way [15,16]. However, no explicit research has been conducted to show the employee creativity model using transformational leadership and employee adaptiveness as major antecedents.

Different studies have emphasized that creativity is a prerequisite for the survival and growth of SMEs [8,17]. It is perceived as a primary factor developing organizational benefits in a competitive business environment [15]. The scarcity of research literature provides an opportunity to explain the relationships between TL and employees' creativity with an additional opportunity to investigate SMEs within a developing country context. The aim of this research is to fill this gap in the literature; therefore, the current study enhances the existing knowledge in the field by explaining relationships involving TL with employees' creativity through employees' adaptiveness.

Creativity is meant as introducing something novel and viable to the organization, which may mean something new, original, unconventional, and exceptional. It is a different and new perspective; out-of-the-box thinking; incorporating something that was not previously available [9,18]. Transformational leadership is meant as that leadership style that transforms their followers' self-concept by explaining the compelling vision of the organization. This leadership is meant as the leadership style which inspirationally motivates, is idealized by followers, and gives intellectual stimulation to the employees to think critically, expand their personal goals and surpass formal processes [19,20]. Today's business organizations rely significantly on employee creativity. The same is the case with SMEs in a highly competitive and dynamic environment [21]. The level of employee creativity ensures organizational survival, growth, performance, and development through their capacity to introduce innovative ideas, processes, systems, and knowledge creation [22,23].

In this study, we investigated the impact of TL on the creativity of employees working in SMEs. Though some studies have reported a positive relationship between TL and employees' creativity [24], very limited studies have been conducted in the context of SMEs. To the best of our knowledge, no previous studies have explored the mediating role of employees' adaptiveness in the link between TL and employees' creativity. The present study addresses these gaps in the literature by exploring the said relationship in SMEs. The outcomes of this study contribute to the betterment of organizations, particularly in SMEs, to get a better understanding of employees' creativity and the mechanism through which it can be enhanced and capitalized. Moreover, the results of this study will provide evidence regarding the impact of TL on employees' creativity. Additionally, the study's findings will help illuminate the mediation caused by employees' adaptiveness on the relationship of transformational leadership and employees' creativity. Furthermore, the findings also help to illuminate the moderating role of knowledge sharing on TL and employee adaptiveness.

1.1. Dynamic Capability Theory

Dynamic capability theory (DCT) refers to a firm's potentials to integrate and reconfigure emerging advancements through an organization's resource base in turn to act in changing business environment [6,17]. It concerns the development strategies of successful companies to elucidate how fundamental discontinuous changes adapt [18]. This theory mainly focused on companies' capabilities to build and integrate internal/external resources and maintain capability standards that ensure their competitive survival level [19]. We extend this theory core assumptions boundaries through designing framework that highlight the transformational leadership role in the achievement of employee creativity through supportive mediating role of the employee adaptiveness and moderating role of the knowledge sharing. This study extended the DCT by highlighting that employee com-

petencies can be strengthened through transformational leadership in emerging business environments to adapt to changes and achieve creativity.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

For the relationships among study-constructs as shown in Figure 1, i.e., we used four variables: transformational leadership (independent variable), employee adaptiveness (mediating variable), knowledge sharing (moderating variable) and employee creativity (independent variable).

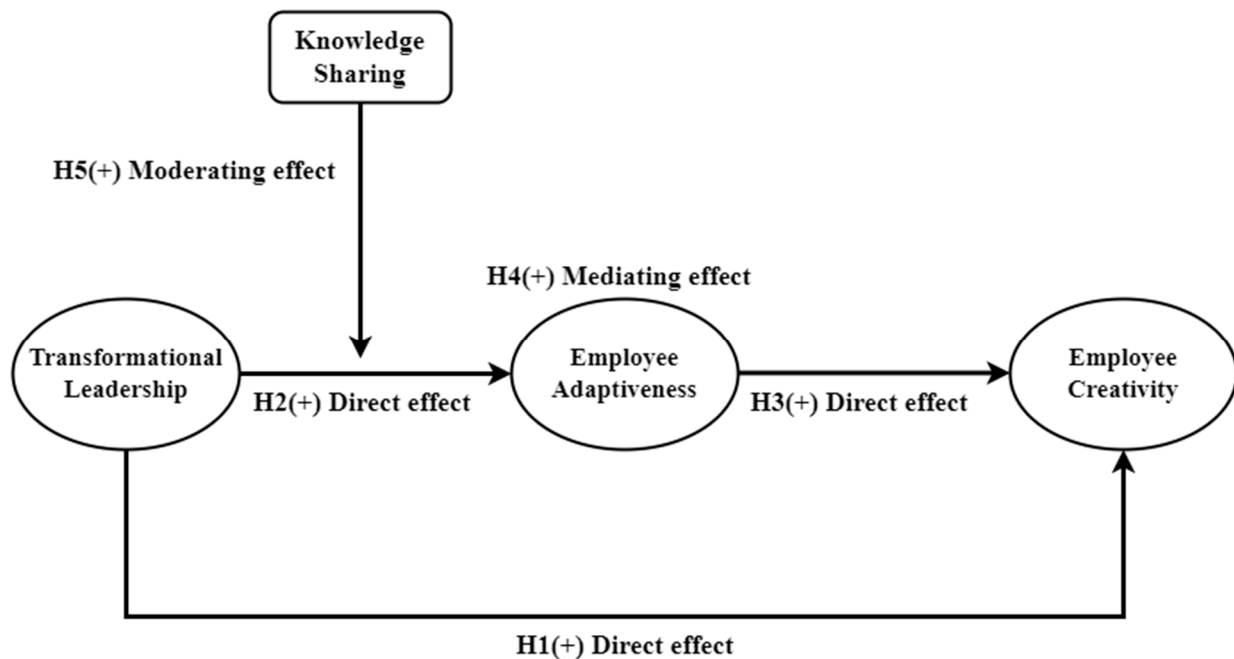


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity

Findings from prior studies reported that employee creativity is highly dependent on the prevailing leadership styles in the organization [3]. This is because the leadership makes efforts to promote and develop employees' creative skills for novel and better solutions to the problems [25]. Among all the leadership styles, it is TL which is highly conducive to creativity through intellectual stimulation [21]. This happens when a supervisor challenges the employees to go beyond expectations and find more novel and viable solutions to the problems [26–28]. It is also suggested that employees' adaptiveness may increase their creativity. TL received scholarly attention during the last quarter of the 20th century [29]. It has been seen as one of the most effective and dominant leadership styles [30]. Ref. [31] documented that TL as an exchange process of helping leaders and their followers to achieve a higher level of motivation and morale. TL develops and promotes employee interest in knowledge creation and motivates them to collective goal attainment [32]. It is valuable to bring a radical change in employees' attitudes through advancing their thinking level. In simple terms, employees show a higher level of commitment under TL [33].

TL comprises four major dimensions, including inspirational motivation, idealized influence/charisma, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation [34]. Creative employees handle the problems in an efficient, effective, and different manner; they possess the ability to observe the invisible needs of customers [35]. Employees' creativity comprises their ability and capacity to conceive and develop more novel and helpful thoughts regarding the organization's procedures, processes, practices, products, and services [36]. TL improves creativity and enables employees to act on bringing novel ideas, processes, and

products to the firm, which may include a different and new viewpoint; something original, unique, and unusual for the firm, as well as unconventional thinking for attaining the objectives of the firm [5,36]. Transformational leaders encourage creativity, which ensures the development of new and useful ideas that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of different processes [30]. The creativity of employees initiated through TL develops creative thinking, skills, and expertise. This is typically dependent on their formal education and past experiences [19,37].

Developing creative thinking in the workforce is the responsibility of organizational leadership [24]. To ensure an environment of creativity and innovation, organizations need leaders who can face complex and challenging problems with novel solutions [38]. In many contemporary research studies on employees' creativity, TL has been reported as the most influential predictor of other constructs and performance [35,39]. TL empowers the subordinates to think creatively, analyze various aspects of a problem, and find novel and more feasible solutions through technology [36]. It has been reported that a strong relationship exists between TL and employees' creativity, performance, and commitment [4]. TL also leads to more commitment, more satisfaction, and less stress for employees [26,36]. Transformational leaders have a strong inclination towards learning; they encourage and motivate their subordinates' creativity and innovation [40].

Organizations may get a competitive advantage through employee creativity based on TL. Therefore, it is believed to be one of the essential features of the organizational environment [16]. Many studies provide valuable understanding about transformational leadership; however, the most promising direction has been through understanding the impact of transformational leadership concerning the promotion of employees' creativity [23,33,34]. The intellectual stimulation of a transformational leader can encourage the employees to think about the existing established frameworks critically and to find new solutions for existing problems [19,41]. It encourages the employees to look for novel solutions.

Moreover, the transformational leaders, while using their idealized influence and communicating an inspirational and persuasive vision, motivate the employees to give extra effort and perform beyond the expectations with a view to find out creative solutions for the problems being encountered in their jobs [39,42]. The transformational leader can intrinsically motivate employees and, therefore, plays a crucial role in promoting creativity [23,34]. All these attributes of TL can result in employee creativity.

Hypothesis (H1). *Transformational leadership has a positive association with employee's creativity.*

2.2. Transformational Leadership and Employees' Adaptiveness

Employee adaptiveness refers to the extent to which they cope, act in response, or sustain changes, as per the demands of the organization [43]. Being an advanced type of change in employees' behavior and aptitude adds to capricious conditions [24]. Adaptive behavior refers to the individuals' constructive behavior in situations of uncertainty, unanticipated and new circumstances [44]. Employees' adaptiveness is the degree to which employees manage, react to or support changes. It is an advanced type of change in an employee's behavior and aptitude which contributes effectively to unpredictable situations [45]. In the present context of business, transformational leaders can enhance the adaptability of the employees through showing more transformational behavior [15]. Transformational leaders communicate vision more effectively (a compelling vision) and describe the status quo so that the employees may feel more motivated in adapting required skills [46]. To ensure organizational objectives, transformational leaders provide a platform to their followers to adapt required skills according to the dynamic situation and learn new dexterities [39].

Several studies have shown that adaptiveness is a part of the overall performance of employees (see, for example, [47,48]). Adaptive employees change their behavior as per the needs of the situation or environment [49]. Organizations may emphasize the value of

employees' adaptiveness through TL to be ready to get the desired adoptions according to changing circumstances in the environment [50]. Employee adaptiveness has been studied with respect to TL. It has been suggested that transformational leadership may encompass components that may cause behaviors that pave the way for employee adaptiveness [51]. Hence, the current study builds the argument that transformational leadership predicts employees' adaptiveness. Transformational leaders can encourage employees to participate in decision-making, give suggestions for the desired change, give necessary feedback and reward employees accordingly [34]. Transformational leaders can encourage their followers to manage the change requirements and give outstanding performance, which was not even expected [32]. The expectations of every follower concerning his/her ideal leader are high and common among followers. As a result, the followers show higher levels of commitment to achieve the vision of transformational leaders and follow their instructions, thus improving their adaptiveness [20].

Transformational leaders give meaning to work through promoting values that are of a higher order. All of this helps the followers in achieving self-concordance and adaptive skills. Transformational leaders develop a psychological state through which activities are aligned with their values, i.e., extremely helpful for enabling employees' adaptiveness [41,48]. Since, under transformational leadership, the employees are connected through their deep values and implicit self-esteem, it is quite common that they always have positive feelings that come along with changing work environments [34].

Hypothesis (H2). *Transformational Leadership predicts the employees' adaptiveness.*

2.3. Employees Adaptiveness Predicts Employees Creativity

Employee adaptiveness is an ability to adjust in dynamic environments and is linked with creativity. In the contemporary volatile business environment, it has become an essential requirement for all the employees and organizations to be adaptive as per need [38]. Creativity is the result of one's overall creative thinking, skills, and expertise depending on his/her formal education and past experiences [52,53]. It is imperative to note that the ideas need to be novel and functional to be creative, i.e., they must have potential value for the organization's development. Moreover, it should be noted that creativity may either be a minor incremental attunement or radical and drastic developments [54,55]. Adaptive employees being flexible are essential for creativity [56]. Instead of wasting time by resisting change or sticking with the rigid plans, tasks, and activities which are no longer a priority of the organization, the adaptive employees accept the reality and focus on understanding and acting according to the new situation. Since the adaptive employees have strong leadership support, whenever any unfavorable situation arises, instead of waiting for their superiors, they take necessary measures that are appropriate for the situation [50]. In this way, they ensure that any opportunity available may be taped well in time, while if there is any risk or other unfavorable situation, they handle the contingency in a more appropriate, novel, and creative manner. In case of any change in the work nature, processes, or schedule, the employees with adaptive capabilities display them acclimatize creative behavior and ensure that the system may continue without any halt. If there is any setback, instead of mourning thereon, the adaptive employees make efforts to find new avenues by applying their creative thought processes, abilities, and skills. Those employees may adapt to emerging situations and manage creativity needs by discarding the orthodox methods and processes by giving advanced solutions for existing and emerging issues.

Hypothesis (H3). *Employees Adaptiveness predicts Employees Creativity.*

2.4. Mediating Role of Employees Adaptiveness

TL is considered a leadership style wherein the leaders transform the thinking, norms, values, and priorities of the followers and encourage them to discharge their responsibilities beyond expectations [39]. When a transformational leader gives intellectual stimulation to his followers, they acclimatize themselves and make efforts to resolve the problem or perform the desired task in a more appropriate way [34,38]. This attunement in their routine task initiated through TL sets a new direction for creativity and novel thinking [40]. The intellectual stimulation of the transformational leader enables employee's creativity by encouraging them to raise questions about the established framework assumptions and formalities and addresses the existing problems with new and more viable solutions [57]. Since these leaders give individual consideration to all, they show empathy and extend a helping hand towards them in their concerns and liberate them for giving new suggestions [33]. Such a supportive working environment gives confidence to the workforce. They freely think about the workable solutions by going beyond the standard operating procedures and continuing creative activities fearlessly [35]. A leader with his own exemplary performance becomes a role model for his subordinates by making high-level efforts to achieve goals. Moreover, TL themselves make sacrifices to give an advantage to their followers and show exemplary ethical and moral character. This contribution on the part of the leaders enables their followers to put in an extra effort and to go beyond the expectations for solving the existing and emerging problems and develop their adaptive skills for achieving novel and creative solutions [42]. TL themselves are flexible and encourage employees' adaptive skills, giving them a sense of freedom and applying their cognitive abilities to achieve the desired result more creatively and distinctively [15]. It is suggested that transformational leadership determines employee's creativity via increasing their adaptability i.e., employee ability and willingness to change their factors [16]. One of the critical roles of leadership is to keep their followers motivated. One of the motivational states of followers is their adaptiveness in transformational leadership and employee creativity. Transformational leadership, through augmenting employee's motivation, as well as capabilities, may regulate the employees' proactive behavior [14,48]. This study suggests that adaptability (considered as positive motivational orientation) caused by TL influences employee creativity.

Since TL possess a charismatic personality, and their contribution is idealized by the followers who are inspired to explore and implement novel ideas in handling their ultimate tasks. In this respect, instead of following the status quo, they go for improvement of their adaptive skills and find ultra-modern and more practicable actions by the needs of the hour [16,49]. The inspirational motivation of the leader convinces the employees to become adapted to everyday situations and make efforts to achieve creativity with desired objectives in a better way [31,43]. When the idealized performance of their supervisor influences the followers, they tend to undertake critical thinking and make efforts to find novel ideas and products [58]. Considering the above, we posit the following as our fourth and the last hypothesis for this study:

Hypothesis (H4). *Employees' adaptiveness mediates between transformational leadership and an employee's creativity link.*

2.5. Moderating Role of Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a mechanism through which organizational members exchange their skills, knowledge, and expertise with each other [59]. Knowledge sharing is a way to exchange valuable information and ideas via mutual interaction and conversation among organizational members [60]. The knowledge sharing mechanism becomes an important way of learning and being involved in different activities through the exchange of knowledge among organizational members [59]. This mechanism depends on the efforts of TL, who inspire the followers for mutual communication at workplace [61]. Existing studies emphasize that the mechanism of knowledge sharing becomes a source of sharing

valuable knowledge, skills, and abilities among subordinates [62], particularly in the situation which is more unpredictable [63,64].

Creativity flourishes in environments where employees freely share their knowledge, skills, practices, abilities, and expertise, along with encouragement to coworkers for their achievements [4]. In such environments, employees conceive novel and significant ideas, share them with their colleagues and senior management, and, if practical, implement them successfully [5]. Besides giving importance to the exchange of valuable information, TL can set standards for their subordinates through their actions [11]. TL gives their followers a free hand to share information and expertise with each other in the workplace and emphasizes the role of cooperation, share knowledge, and give opportunity for learning new skills while working as part of a team. Followers of a TL feel a high level of confidence and take an active part in the exchange of valuable information, which results in employee adaptiveness. It is vitally important for an organizational member to exchange knowledge with other colleagues that facilitate them for the adjustment under changing situations and environment by encouraging them to find novel solutions for the problems, get along the change, and surpass the expected performance by applying excessive efforts in the unusual situation. All of this results in reducing negative perceptions in employees' minds and instead boosts positivity and adaptiveness, which would establish a pattern of constructive thoughts and strategies essential to the individuals' constructive behavior in situations of uncertainty, unanticipated, and new circumstances.

Hypothesis (H5). *Knowledge sharing strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and employee adaptiveness in SMEs.*

3. Methods

3.1. Data Collection

The population of the current study consists of employees working in various three and five star hotels in Pakistan. For sampling purposes we used the simple random sampling method because that ensures that each population member has an equal chance to be chosen as a representative respondent from the larger population [65]. For sampling purposes, a list of 126 hotels in big cities of Pakistan was used to identify a representative sample. Questionnaires were sent to 731 employees of various three and five star hotels. A detailed cover letter was attached with each questionnaire and sent to the respondents who agreed to participate in this study. During the three-month process of data collection only 561 usable responses were collected from respondents.

3.2. Scale Measurement

All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, and all the items used in this study have been adapted from previous scholars' work. The necessary details of all variables, including their survey items, are in Appendix A. The scale of 12-items was adapted from the work of [27,28,44] for the measurement of TL. It had a Cronbach's α of 0.85.

The four-item scale adapted from the work of [66] was used for the measurement of employee adaptiveness. It had a Cronbach's α of 0.88. Moreover, the four-item scale adapted from the work of [67] was used for the measurement of employee creativity. It had a Cronbach's α of 0.87. Furthermore, a four-item scale adapted from the work of [59] was used for the measurement of knowledge sharing. It had a Cronbach's α of 0.86. Finally, the control variables for this study consisted of the age of the business, business size, respondent's education, and the respondent's experience.

4. Analysis and Results

First, we used descriptive statistics, correlation, and then regression [68,69] approaches to examine the data. Reliability and validity tests were checked following [70] guidelines. Outcomes of factor loading, AVE, composite reliability and alpha for the study constructs

are shown in Table 1. Results proved that both convergent and discernment validity is not an issue.

Table 1. Results of Constructs.

Details	Loadings	AVE	C.R	C.Alpha
Transformational Leadership		0.76	0.92	0.85
T-L1	0.844			
T-L2	0.847			
T-L3	0.855			
T-L4	0.874			
T-L5	0.822			
T-L6	0.865			
T-L7	0.862			
T-L8	0.832			
T-L9	0.844			
T-L10	0.866			
T-L11	0.866			
T-L12	0.855			
Employee Adaptiveness		0.77	0.94	0.88
EmpAdap1	0.836			
EmpAdap2	0.855			
EmpAdap3	0.842			
EmpAdap4	0.845			
Knowledge Sharing		0.74	0.91	0.86
K-S 1	0.863			
K-S 2	0.852			
K-S 3	0.824			
K-S 4	0.854			
Employee Creativity		0.78	0.95	0.87
EmployCreativity1	0.814			
EmployCreativity2	0.824			
EmployCreativity3	0.844			
EmployCreativity4	0.855			

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was performed to establish model fitness. Three models were compared by using study variables; transformational leadership, employee adaptiveness, and employee creativity. The results of our baseline 3-factor model, i.e., our hypothesized model, fit to the data show that the values are within the range of the cut-off level [71]. Results are presented in Table 2 (RMSEA = 0.045, $\chi^2 = 1568.21$, $df = 550$; $\chi^2/df = 2.851$; CFI = 0.93; GFI = 0.94).

Table 2. CFA Results.

Model Detail	χ^2	D-f	χ^2/df	RMESA	GFI	CFI
4-factor model (Hypothesized)	1568.21	550	2.851	0.045	0.94	0.93
Three-factor model	1090.22	340	3.207	0.014	0.87	0.86
Two-factor model	1060.22	325	3.262	0.011	0.82	0.79
Single-factor model	1055.44	310	3.405	0.22	0.78	0.77

4.2. Descriptive Analysis

The results focused on the assessment of transformational leadership predicting employee adaptiveness ($r = 0.44$), creativity ($r = 0.21$), and adaptiveness is positively correlated with employee creativity ($r = 0.30$) (See Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation Results.

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Hotel age	0.9	0.81	1							
Hotel size	33	—	0.09	1						
Respondent education	2.9	0.84	0.08	0.03	1					
Respondent experience	2.4	0.91	0.06	0.05	0.04	1				
TL	3.8	0.93	0.09	0.12 *	0.08	0.07	1			
Employee adaptiveness	3.5	0.91	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.44 **	1		
Employee Creativity	3.9	0.95	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.21 *	0.30 **	1	
Knowledge sharing	3.6	0.90	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.09	0.25 **	0.23 *	0.17 *	1

Note: SD (Standard Deviation); TL (Transformational Leader). * = Sig at 0.05; ** = Sig at 0.001.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

The findings depicted in Table 4 are used to explain the study hypotheses. A hierarchical regression technique was used to analyze the collected data. The findings shown in Table 4 suggested that TL is a strong predictor of employee creativity (0.23). Based on these findings, we agreed to study H1. The findings also suggested that TL is significantly linked with employee adaptiveness (0.46). These findings confirmed the study H2. Furthermore, findings also revealed that employee adaptiveness positively predicted employee creativity (0.30). Therefore, we accepted the study H3.

Table 4. Results of Path Analysis.

Model	Description	Effects	Beta	Sig	Remarks
1	Transformational leadership → Employee creativity	+	0.23	0.000	H1-Proved
2	Transformational leadership → Employee adaptiveness	+	0.44	0.000	H2-Proved
3	Employee adaptiveness → Employee creativity	+	0.30	0.000	H3-Proved

H4 proves that employee adaptiveness mediates between TL employee creativity. To confirm the mediation effect of employee adaptiveness, we utilized mediation techniques of previous researchers [69]. Table 5 shows the results of the indirect effect of TL on employee creativity through employee adaptiveness (TL→EA→EC). Table 5 presents the findings of total, direct and indirect effect. Path 'a' coefficient i.e., (0.478) shows that TL predicts employee adaptiveness. Path 'b' coefficients (0.382) show the direct effect of employee adaptiveness on EC. Path 'c' coefficients (0.248) show the total effect of TL on employee creativity. The results shown in Table 5 also confirmed the mediating effect of employee adaptiveness based on (Beta = 0.1551, Lower = 0.2008 to Upper = 0.3187). Based on these findings, we accepted the study H4.

Table 6 presented the outcomes of hierarchical regression conducted for the confirmation of the moderating effect of knowledge sharing. Step 1 and 2 of Table 6 explained the information regarding base models used in the current study. Furthermore, Step 3 explained the moderation coefficients of knowledge sharing. Based on the coefficient of interaction term i.e., TL × knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$), we accepted the study H5. Figure 2 show slop analysis.

Table 5. Results of Mediation Analysis.

Path Details		Coefficient	t-Value	SE	Sig	
(Path a) Transformational leadership → Employee adaptiveness		0.478	16.440	0.041	0.000	
(Path b) Employee Adaptiveness → Employee creativity		0.382	11.486	0.033	0.000	
(Path c) Transformational leadership → Employee creativity		0.248	7.648	0.046	0.000	
(Path c') Transformational leadership → Employee creativity		0.093	1.931	0.048	0.054	
<i>Model summary for DV Model: R² = 0.1646; F = 99.0219; p = 0.0000</i>						
<i>Bootstrap for indirect effect of IV on DV through mediator “ab path”</i>						
Model Detail	Data	Boot	Bias	SE	Lower	Upper
TL → EA → EC	0.1551	0.1538	−0.001	0.030	0.2008	0.3187
<i>Soble Test Z Score = 9.404</i>						

Table 6. Outcomes of moderation analysis using hierarchical regressions.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Moderation of knowledge sharing			
Business age	0.028	0.010	0.009
Business size	0.023	0.020	0.017
Respondent education	0.007	0.005	0.006
Respondent experience	0.033	0.034	0.043
Transformational leadership		0.32 **	0.35 **
Knowledge sharing		0.24 **	0.28 **
Transformational leader × knowledge sharing			0.22 **
R ²	0.009	0.191	0.198
Adjusted R ²	0.003	0.159	0.175
ΔR ²	0.007	0.163	0.028
ΔF	4.172	79.63	17.13

Note: ** = Sig at 0.001.

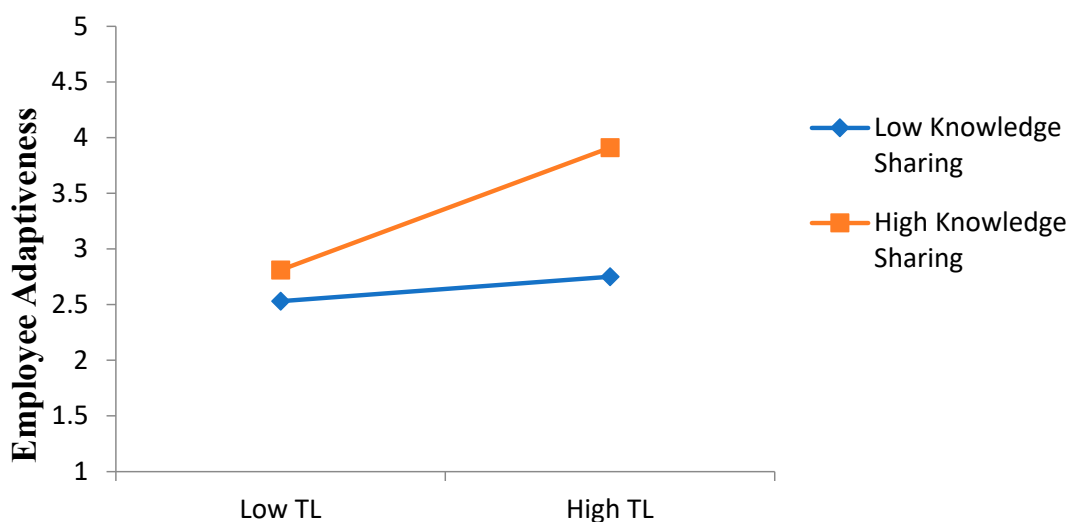


Figure 2. Slope Analysis.

5. Discussion

The primary aim of this study is to test the relationship between TL and employee creativity. The mediation effect of employee adaptiveness has also been assessed. Moreover, the moderating role of knowledge sharing on TL and employee adaptiveness has also been empirically tested. In this respect, five hypotheses were formulated and tested. The first hypothesis shows that TL enables employees to enhance their creativity, which is constructive for organizations. It has been reported that a strong relationship exists between TL and employee creativity. Findings from prior studies reported that employee creativity

is highly dependent on the prevailing leadership styles in the organization [17]. This is because the leadership makes efforts to promote and develop employees' creative skills to out novel and better solutions to the problems [25]. Among all the leadership styles, it is TL which is highly conducive for creativity through intellectual stimulation [21]. This happens when a supervisor challenges the employees to go beyond expectations and find more novel and viable solutions to the problems [26–28]. It is also suggested that employees' adaptiveness may increase their creativity. TL received scholarly attention during the last quarter of the 20th century [29]. It has been seen as one of the most effective and dominant leadership styles [30]. This empowerment improved their adaptive skills, and employees can make decisions according to situations. Hence, TL predicts employee creativity.

The results of H2 show that TL is positively linked with employee adaptiveness. This study's results support prior findings that TL shows a greater level of commitment that automatically enhances an organization's employee adaptiveness [20]. Employees' adaptiveness is the extent to which they cope, act in response, or sustain changes, as per the demands of the organization [43]. Being an advanced type of change in employees' behavior and aptitude adds to capricious conditions [24]. Adaptive behavior refers to the individuals' constructive behavior in situations of uncertainty, unanticipated and new circumstances [44]. Employees' adaptiveness is the degree to which employees manage, react to or support changes. It is an advanced type of change in an employee's behavior and aptitude which contributes effectively to unpredictable situations [45]. H3 proposed that employee adaptiveness positively predicts employee creativity. In the SMEs in this study, employee adaptation plays an essential role in employee creativity. This research outcome corroborates that employee adaptiveness is the ability to adjust in dynamic environments and is linked with creativity. In the contemporary volatile, it has become an essential requirement for all the employees and organizations to be adaptive as per need [38]. Creativity is the result of one's overall creative thinking, skills, and expertise depending on his/her formal education and past experiences [52,53]. It is imperative to note that the ideas need to be novel and functional to being creative, i.e., it must have potential value for the organization's development. Moreover, it should be noted that creativity may consist of minor incremental attunement or radical and drastic developments [54,55]. The fourth hypothesis of this study examined the mediating role of employee adaptiveness. The fourth hypothesis finds that TL style can enhance and increase employee creativity through employee adaptiveness. When a transformational leader gives intellectual stimulation to their followers, they acclimatize themselves and make efforts to resolve the problem or perform the desired task in a more appropriate way [34,38]. This attunement in their routine task initiated through TL set a new direction for creativity and novel thinking [40]. The intellectual stimulation of the transformational leader's augments enables employee's creativity by encouraging them to raise questions about the established framework assumptions and formalities and address the existing problems with new and more viable solutions [57]. The results proved the H4 that employee adaptiveness mediates between transformational leadership and employee creativity links. The last hypothesis proposed that knowledge sharing positively moderates the association between TL and employee adaptiveness. Knowledge sharing is defined as a mechanism through which organizational members exchange their skills, knowledge, and expertise with each other [59]. Knowledge sharing is a way to exchange valuable information and ideas via mutual interaction and conversation among organizational members [60]. The knowledge sharing mechanism becomes an important way of learning and being involved in different activities through the exchange of knowledge among organizational members [59]. Overall, this research contributes to the stream of knowledge through highlighting the role of transformational leadership, employee adaptiveness and knowledge sharing in the achievement of employee creativity.

5.1. Theoretical Implication

The current study contributes to theory in many ways. First, this study adds to the existing creativity management literature the newest results of TL in terms of employee creativity in SMEs working in developing nations. This research pays attention and contributes to the literature by showing that transformational leadership determines creativity among SME's employees. Hence, it extends the work of the previous researcher on TL's domain [27,28,44]. The work of previous researchers links TL with organizational performance, knowledge management and motivation [33], affective commitment and job resourcefulness [9], intrinsic motivation and proactive personality [10], paternalistic leadership [11], work curiosity [12], and authentic leadership [13]. Thus, this research contributes to the existing body of literature by demonstrating that TL can be linked to employee creativity. Therefore, we have expressed the imperative role of employee adaptiveness in this relationship, focusing on the direct relation between TL and employee creativity. The results of our study also prove the mediating role of employee adaptiveness between TL and employee creativity.

Furthermore, this research also helps to improve the concept of employees' adaptiveness and creative employee adaptiveness, which eliminates the uncertainties about the scope of TL in the literature. The study also proposes an inclusive model to describe TL outcomes by enhancing its scope of influence. The mediation by employee adaptiveness between TL and employee creativity can also be considered a major contribution to the field of creativity and innovation. Furthermore, moderation by knowledge sharing on the relationship between TL and employee adaptiveness also contributes to the existing literature of knowledge management and foundation for further theory development.

5.2. Practical Implications

The SMEs employees must achieve many tasks in their daily activities. Therefore, they are always in search of creativity to perform these various tasks smoothly. Employee creativity is defined as the development of new and useful ideas that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of different processes [30]. The results of our study contribute to the practical management of SMEs. Senior management should pay close attention to employee creativity and should acknowledge its importance. The conclusions of this study show that for employees, an advanced level of TL style increases employees' creativity, which empowers the organization. The management of SMEs should focus more on TL styles for improving employees' adaptive ability to enable them to advance businesses in creative ways. Employee creativity enhances productivity and can be very fruitful in terms of employee engagement and business performance.

Next, managers should pay a great deal of attention to employee adaptiveness and leverage this to develop creativity. The results of our study recommend that TL can indirectly affect employee creativity through employee adaptiveness. Therefore, managers should direct their employees to and inspire them to enhance adaptiveness for managing change in organizations. Additionally, this study helps employees adapt to the changes necessary due to the evolving circumstances of any business environment. Employees working under the supervision of TLs should focus on their adaptive skills and find the newest ways to solve routine issues. Finally, this study has some limitations which provide opportunities for future research. This study was conducted in the context of SMEs working in a developing nation. Future research should and can be considered in developed nations. Also, this study was based on a quantitative research design. The same model can be analyzed with a qualitative research design to deepen the insights and to add additional context for the field. Within this study, we tested employee adaptiveness as a mediator in the relationship between TL and creativity. In the future, researchers should consider more variables as mediators or moderators for extending the insights of this research model while extending knowledge regarding the impacts of TL.

6. Conclusions

The current study was conducted to explain the role of TL in the development of employee adaptiveness and creativity. Furthermore, we also tested the mediation effect of employee adaptiveness between TL and employee creativity. The moderating role of knowledge sharing on the relationship between TL and employee adaptiveness has also been tested. The findings confirmed that TL is the primary source for the enhancement of employee creativity and adaptiveness. Moreover, the results also confirmed the mediating effect of employee adaptiveness and the moderating role of knowledge sharing.

The current research also has some limitations. First, this study was based on cross-sectional data, and it is quantitative in nature, and qualitative methods were not used. Secondly, this research only focuses on employee creativity through TL. Third, the current study was conducted among the hotel industry only. The elimination of these limitations may become future directions of study; this study should be conducted with a longitudinal data collection technique and qualitative research design, or mixed methods can provide better results in future. Creativity can be linked with other factors such as knowledge management systems, organizational structure, and digital platforms.

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Informed Consent Statement: All participants provided ICS.

Data Availability Statement: Due to confidentiality purposes, data is not publicly available.

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Appendix A

Variables	Items
Transformational leadership	Our supervisor:
TL1	Is an admirable listener.
TL2	Gives us autonomy in designing how I perform my job.
TL3	Believes in taking better decisions for my job.
TL4	I feel proficient and prepared to accomplish tasks for my profession.
TL5	Clearly delivers his idea in the written form.
TL6	Generally, says the right words at the right time.
TL7	Paint an attractive picture of the future for us.
TL8	Gives an interesting model to follow.
TL9	Shows interest in what I say.
TL10	Articulates a fascinating vision.
TL11	Encourages the attainment of group goals.
TL12	Supports the achievement of superior performance expectations.
Employee adaptiveness	
EA1	We can adopt rapid changes occurring in the market.
EA2	Our extant competencies support in implementing advancements in the industry.
EA3	We are capable of withstanding challenges in the way of our success.
EA4	We are excited to face challenges and adapt to new e-commerce trends.

Variables	Items
Knowledge Sharing	
KS1	We appreciate knowledge sharing among fellow employees and consider it as valuable for all.
KS2	We believe that sharing ideas and knowledge among workers is beneficial.
KS3	We consider that sharing of information, knowledge and ideas gives pleasure and success.
KS4	Our organization offers sufficient opportunities for knowledge sharing.
EC1	Our subordinates explore new patterns and opportunities for dealing with challenges and work.
EC2	Our subordinates find novel ideas and techniques to resolve problems.
EC3	Our subordinates generate new tools to perform operational tasks.
EC4	Our subordinates present originality in their work.

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