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Predicting Employee Creativity through Transformational Leadership: Empirical Evidence from the Aluminium Manufacturing Sector in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examined the relationship between three dimensions of transformational leadership- namely, idealized influence (II), inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (IC) and employees' commitment of Aluminum manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The study used a correlational design. Data were collected from 211 employees of six randomly selected aluminum manufacturing companies in Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for analysis. The three components of transformational leadership used were found to positively and significantly associate with employee commitment. More so, workplace environment was found to mediate the association of transformational leadership and employees' creativity. The study concluded that transformation leadership is important for growing creative employees in today's organizations and recommended that: 1. Organizations should train their leaders on transformational leadership skills to enable them transmit its values to employees. 2. Organizations should reward leaders that exhibit the characteristics of transformational leadership so that others can emulate same.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, employee creativity, workplace environment, aluminum, manufacturing, companies

1. Introduction

Business organizations are today functioning in a very vibrant, dynamic and complex environment which have been further heightened and exacerbated by technological and pandemic disruptions. This situation calls for employee creativity as a way for organizations to remain afloat and prosperous. Literature is awash with studies that noted the significance of employee creativity for innovation and by extension organizational wellbeing (Amabile, 1988; Ouakouak & Ouedraogo, 2017; Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2009; Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014), pointing to the fact that employee creativity is significant in the life and health of organizations.

Going by the awareness that stimulating individual creativity is a vital element for firms to remain competitive and survive in the market, various organizations are also constantly looking for different ways to inspire their employees to work creatively and develop innovative ideas (Gu, Tang, & Wan, 2015; Liu et al., 2012; Walton, 2003). Consequently, many researchers and practitioners alike are interested to understand the dynamics of employee creativity especially, to recognize the factors that develop or inhibit creativity within organizations (De Alencar & De Bruno-Faria, 1997; Zhou & Shalley, 2008).

Given that managers' leadership behaviors shape work environment, and employee creativity is heavily influenced by work environment; scholars in the domain of creativity and leadership have agreed that managers' leadership behaviors or style should have a powerful influence on employee creativity (Amabile, 1983, 1986; Bass, 1985; Podsakoff & Todor, 1985; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Also, leadership style was described (Gabriel & Isukul, 2021) as one of the most important influencers of employee motivation and overall work attitudes.

Several styles of leadership are recognized in literature and in practice; these styles include democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire as identified in Ikram, Su, Fiaz & Saqid (2017). Others are the contemporary leadership styles, including transactional, bureaucratic, charismatic, servant leadership and transformational leadership styles amongst others. The transformational leadership style has received extensive popularity as compared with other styles of leadership (Khalili, 2016; Mittal & Dhar, 2015; Schaubroeck et al., 2012; Shin & Zhou, 2003; Wang & Rode, 2010; Wang, Rode, Shi, Luo, & Chen, 2013), due to its different approaches to motivate creativity of employees as compared with other styles of leadership (Gupta, Singh, Kumar, & Bhattacharya, 2012; Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004).

Although transformational leadership and employee creativity have received much attention from several researchers, those efforts have witnessed mixed results about the effect of transformational leadership on employee creativity, including negative (Basu & Green, 1997), significant positive (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009; Shin & Zhou, 2003) as well as no relationship (Wang & Rode, 2010). Additionally, studies exploring the direct association between transformational leadership and employee creativity in our clime are very rare and need further investigation. More so,

even though there are any of such studies, the introduction of workplace environment as a moderating variable in the current study would make a great difference.

This is necessary as it was already suggested in Herrmann and Felfe (2013) who also expressed the necessity to investigate other moderating variables to predict employee creativity. It is on this backdrop that this study locates its locus to investigate the predictive influence of transformational leadership on employee creativity of Aluminum manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Today's organizations are facing more challenges and higher speed of events in ways that are previously unknown. This situation calls for greater ingenuity, smartness and aggressiveness in operation to maintain survivability and prosperity. The ability of organizations to deal with this turn of events has much to do with the performance of her employees, especially in terms of creativity. Creativity is commonly perceived as the ability to come up with innovative products, novel approaches, and functional processes (Proctor, 2014; Koseoglu et al., 2017). It is also seen as the establishment of novel ideas to improve the performance and increase the effectiveness & efficiency of organizations (Gong et al., 2009). When employees are creative at work, organization gains enormously. However, in the reverse case, organization suffers and overall performance is stifled. The failure to be creative remains an enigma to several aluminum manufacturing companies because it results in the inability to respond to customers' needs, which may lead to customer dissatisfaction and eventual withdrawal behaviours. In the event of these, organizations may suffer big blows and eventual overall poor performance. The quest for employees' creativity has warranted our resolve to search for variables that can predict it, for which transformational leadership is being tried.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the association of transformational leadership and employee creativity of aluminum manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

In order to pursue with clarity and precision the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework in figure 1 reflecting transformational leadership as the independent variable (IV) or explains and employee creativity as a unidimensional dependent variable (DV) or explanandum; and workplace environment as mediating variable.

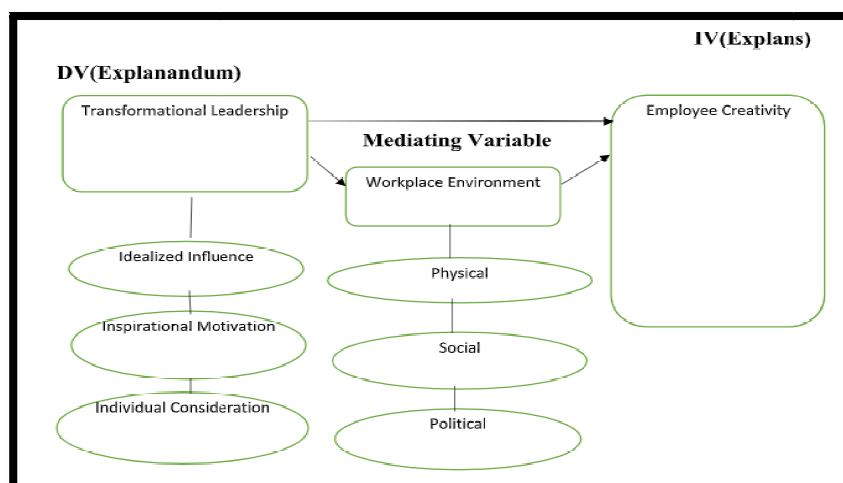


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity of Aluminum Manufacturing Companies in Port Harcourt
Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2021)

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives this study intends to seek-

- To ascertain the association of idealized influence and employee creativity of the manufacturing companies in Rivers State.
- To empirically validate the nexus between motivational inspiration and employee creativity of Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State
- To know the association between individual consideration and employee creativity of manufacturing Companies in Rivers State.
- To find out the mediating effects of workplace environment on the hypothesized association between transformational leadership and employee creativity of manufacturing Companies in Rivers State.

1.5. Research Questions

- What is the association between idealized influence and employee creativity of the manufacturing companies in Rivers State?

- What is the nexus between motivational inspiration and employee creativity of Manufacturing Companies in Rivers State?
- What is the association between individual consideration and employee creativity of manufacturing Companies in Rivers State?
- What are the mediating effects of workplace environment on the hypothesized association between transformational leadership and employee creativity of manufacturing Companies in Rivers State?

2. Literature

2.1. Conceptualizing Employee Creativity (EC)

The term creativity has its origin from Latin word '*creatio ex nihilo*, meaning the efforts to create something from nothing (Ikpesu, 2020: 61). Accordingly, creativity arises out of richness of ideas and original thoughts which results in something novel being produced (Ikpesu, 2020). When an individual employee partakes in this creative exercise, it is then referred to as employee creativity which has been described as the establishment of novel ideas to improve the performance and increase the effectiveness & efficiency of organizations (Gong et al., 2009). Creativity in business settings is commonly perceived as the ability to come up with innovative products, novel approaches, and functional processes (Proctor, 2014; Koseoglu et al., 2017).

In the context of this paper, creativity is basically an employee's creative thinking, expertise, and skills based on their experience and qualification. It is therefore defined as employees' ability to generate original, improved, and innovative ideas, products, and procedures with high execution potential and performance improving content in a structured process (Sirkwoo, 2015; Koseoglu et al., 2017). Furthermore, the creative employees can also share useful and new ideas to make necessary changes in the products and services (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Thus, employee creativity can be perfectly linked to a raw material necessary for the development of organization (Lukes & Stephan, 2017; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). The organizations that encourage employee creativity in order to turn ideas into new products and services achieve competitiveness in market (Kremer, Villamor, & Aguinis, 2019).

2.2. Transformational Leadership (TL)

Burns (1978) has established the concept of transforming leadership in his research on political leaders, and has defined the concept as follows: '*transforming leadership is a concept in which both leaders and followers help each other to move forward to the high level of morale and motivation.*' In essence, TL stands as a unique leadership philosophy and one of the most effective and contemporary leadership styles till date (Derue et al., 2011; Mozammel and Haan, 2016; Ra'ed Masa'deh et al., 2016). Resting on the assertion that certain leader behaviors can direct followers toward an advanced level of thinking (Mozammel and Haan, 2016; Anthony, 2017), through developing an inter-simulating relationship with the aim of converting a follower into a leader and a leader into a moral agent (Russell, 2011).

TL is also defined as the process of expanding and broadening the interests and needs of followers, increasing their morale and motivation, and ensuring that they understand and adhere to their goals systematically (Brian Joo and Lim, 2013; Rafferty and Griffin, 2004). Thus, a transformational leader works on raising awareness, interest, and creativity among his followers (McCleskey, 2014) through shifting their focus from mere existence toward achievement and growth (Bolden et al., 2003). From an organizational perspective, a manager who brings up change and renewal to the organization and advances its efficiency is sought to be transformational as well (Burns et al., 2008). Transformational leadership has been described as having four related dimensions otherwise known as the 4Is as depicted in table 1. (Only three of these dimensions have been used in this study because we consider the dimension of intellectual stimulation of having seemingly obvious positive association with creativity and decided to exclude it).

Dimensions of TL	Characteristics of Each Dimension
Idealized Influence (II)	This occurs when the leaders' admirable behavior can cause followers to identify with the leader; the leader's ability to appeal to followers on an emotional level. This is about leaders' ability to provide a role model for their followers by having a clear set of values and demonstrating them in every action
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	This reflects the leader's ability to articulate a vision that is interesting and inspiring to followers, challenge them with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to move forward individually as well as within groups
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	Leader's ability to increase the awareness of problems and persuade employees to deal with them from different perspectives. Moreover, leaders challenge assumptions, take risks, and seek ideas from employees to stimulate and encourage creativity among them.
Individual Consideration (IC)	This explains how the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach, and listens to their concerns and demands. It also encompasses the need to respect and celebrate the individual input that each employee is able to contribute to the team.

Table 1: Dimensions of Transformational Leadership (dTL)

2.3. Workplace Environment (WE)

Work environment can be anything that exists around the employee and can affect how he performs his duties (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). Nitisemito (1992) state that working environment is both an external and an internal condition that can influence working spirit and result in instantly finished jobs. Accordingly, Sedarmayanti (2003) argued that a decent working environment is a condition where individuals can do their jobs in an ideal, secure, healthy, and comfort way. Therefore, many studies classify the work environment into toxic and conducive environments (Akinyele, 2010; Chaddha, Pandey and Noida, 2011; Yusuf and Metiboba, 2012; Assaf and Alswalha, 2013). McGuire and McLaren (2007). The classification above is more about the feelings brought about by the work environment and less of the actual constituents of the workplace environment. Below is a brief discussion on some of the proxies of workplace environment as applicable to this study.

2.3.1. Physical Workplace Environment (PWE)

Physical Workplace Environment has been described as the internal and external office layout, temperature, comfort zone and also the work setting or arrangement (Ismail et al., 2010). The physical workplace environment factors also include lighting (both artificial and natural), noise, furniture and spatial layouts, comfort level, ventilation and heating (Vischer, 2007). These features assist on functional and aesthetic side, the decor and design of the workplace environment that ultimately help improve the employees' experience and necessitate better performance as well as employee wellbeing.

2.3.2. Social Workplace Environment (SWE)

The concept of social evokes the involvement of more than one person. Social work environment therefore deals with relationships between or among people at job settings. It includes communication styles, relationship between superiors and subordinates, relationship among coworkers, the readiness of others to assist and team work etcetera (Agbozo, Owusu, Hoedoafia and Atakorah, 2017). To achieve a progressive work environment, personal respect for personnel at every level of an establishment is critical in operations because every human being looks forward to being respected by others.

2.3.3. Political Workplace Environment (PolWE)

Pfeffer (1992, p.30) defined politics as the processes, the actions, and the behaviors through which potential power is utilized and realized. In furtherance, Nihat, Samet and Ozgur (2016) defined workplace politics as the use of power in order to obtain results that are either not approved by the workplace or organization or use tools that are also not approved by the organization. Similarly, Mintzberg in Mustafa and Murat (2012) defined workplace politics as informal, parochial, typically divisive and illegitimate behavior that is aimed at displacing legitimate power in different ways. Workplace politics is also seen as a social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize self-interest (Olusegun, 2019). The spate and degree that these behaviour manifest in the workplace and their resultant aftermaths constitute the workplace political environment. In some organizations political behaviours are highly exhibited which in most cases results in so much maneuverings and dramatic power show, in other organizations to, these behaviours are not conspicuously displayed. The difference in the intensity of these political behaviours determines the nature of the political environment of any workplace.

2.3. Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity

Transformational leaders have been described as those who share knowledge, promote novel ideas & support employees to think out of the box (Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Prasad & Junni, 2016). The leaders also support employees to overcome fear of risk and revolutionize the routine ways of working, leading to a high level of creativity. By idealized influence, the leaders inspire the employees and acquire respect and loyalty.

The transformational leaders inspire and motivate the employees for achievement of goals by articulating a steering vision and path. Through intellectual stimulation, the employees are stimulated to perform creatively (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Through individual consideration, the leaders pay attention to individual employees to accomplish their needs (Ng, 2016; Sosik, Kahai, & Avolio, 1998). Several authors have tried to comprehend the impact of different styles of leadership on employee creative behaviors (Mumford et al., 2002). Most of them have contributed to the literature and provide some valuable insights; most promising direction of these studies is the influence of TL in promoting creativity.

TL style has been a very famous style of leadership among researchers because of its notable influences on employees. Some studies, though not so recent have also confirmed the positive and significant effect of TL in predicting creativity (Mittal & Dhar, 2015, 2016; Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014; Wang et al., 2013). It was also reported the transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in encouraging creativity in organizations (Tidd, Bessant, & Pavitt, 2004); encourages employees to adopt new patterns for accomplishment of assignments, which enhances the creativity of employees (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Yunus and Anuar's (2012) study indicates that TL encourages the employees to see fresh and new approaches for completion of their assignments. A study conducted by Yasin, Nawab, Bhatti, and Nazir (2014) indicates positive impact of intellectual stimulation on innovation. Also, transformational leaders were recognized as those who build a strong relationship with their employees, leading to enhancement of job performance (Ng, 2016).

Regarding the specific nexus of the dimensions of TL and EC, TL is also expected to be linked to EC through idealized interest (II) (McCleskey, 2014), whereas leaders with noble values, strong and ethical beliefs, and a responsible sense of mission are those who followers look up to, imitate, and resort into when handling problematic situations (Jyoti and Dev, 2015). These ideal beliefs flow from leaders to their followers, who in turn, perceive them to be outstanding

(Cekmecelio_glu and €Ozba_g, 2016). Furthermore, communicating confidence and charisma to followers is found to contribute into elevating their creativity development. Leaning on this line of thought, it is hypothesized that:

- *H₁. Idealized Influence positively impacts employee creativity*

Leaders are expected to transmit a transformational behavior through an intellectual stimulation (IS) of their followers (Salter et al., 2014). Challenging and questioning followers' efforts and suggestions in a problem-solving context will ultimately lead them to reframing problems more accurately, targeting issues pragmatically, and approaching former situations innovatively (Jyoti and Dev, 2015; Cekmecelio_glu and €Ozba_g, 2016). This momentum stimulates employees to develop creative and generative thinking, due to the encouragement of their leaders to think 'out of the box' (Amabile and Pillemer, 2012; Martin, et al., 2016). As an innovative and groundbreaking solution comes likely from an employee who expresses himself creatively to a leader who accepts and encourages his critics, suggestions, and proposed solutions (Amabile and Pillemer, 2012; Porter and Heppelmann, 2015). This is so because, employee would hardly feel very free to approach a harsh and impatient leader who does not see anything good in other persons with creative opinions; but would rather withhold such ideas than receive humiliation or be ridiculed. From the aforementioned literature, we posit the first research hypothesis to be tested as follows:

- *H₂. Individualized consideration positively impacts employee creativity.*

Inspirational motivation (IM) refers to the extent to which leaders are able to motivate their followers by articulating and communicating high expectations through inspirational visions (Gardner et al., 2011; Keskes, 2013; Odumeru and Feanyi, 2013; Ngaithe et al., 2016). This component contributes into cultivating a creative work environment, where followers are encouraged to take-in interpersonal risks, perform beyond usual expectations, and generate innovative content (Sirkwoo, 2015). A leadership-reframing work confirmed that leaders communicating confidence to their followers, inspire them to perceive every challenging situation as a new opportunity and to always seek out new and creative approaches (Gonget al., 2009). This can certainly contribute into cultivating a creative problem-solving atmosphere at the workplace (Gong et al., 2009; Gardner et al., 2011). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis to be posited is as follows:

- *H₃. Inspirational motivation positively impacts employee creativity.*

2.4. Mediating Role of Workplace Environment on the Hypothesized Association of Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity

The purpose of mediation analysis is to see if the influence of the mediator is stronger than the direct influence of the independent variable. In essence, it explains the reasons for the existence of any relationship between the explains and the explanandum variables. put differently, mediator speaks to the how or why certain effects occurs. Having hypothesized the existence of positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity, it will be further fascinating to check for the reason behind the final result that would accompany the hypotheses when tested. The extent to which a person generates new and useful ideas depends on the support that is received from the work environment (Amabile et al., 1996; Woodman et al., 1993). Considering the high bearing influence work environment has on employee's creativity (see Dul, Ceylan and Jasper, 2009), it becomes thinkable that the association of transformational leadership and employee creativity can be mediated by workplace environment. It is on the strength of this assumption that we have proposed as follows:

- *H₄: Physical workplace environment mediates the hypothesized association of transformational leadership and employee creativity of the manufacturing companies in Rivers State.*
- *H₅: Social workplace environment mediates the hypothesized association of transformational leadership and employee creativity of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.*
- *H₆: Political workplace environment mediates the hypothesized association between transformational leadership and employee creativity of manufacturing companies in Rivers State.*

3. Methodology

The correlation research design is adopted in this paper. This follows the intent of assessing the relationship between the variables; and validating the appropriability of the adopted theoretical framework for the study. The accessible population for the study is 211 employees from 6 aluminium manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study is conducted as a census wherein all specified population units are included in the analysis. The census according to Neuman (2011) accords studies a higher and more substantial level of representativeness and lower levels of error margins. The structured questionnaire is the adopted tool for the sourcing of primary data for the investigation. Questionnaire is distributed personally and through the support of research assistants to the target organizations of interest. Tests for the reliability of the instrument is carried out using the Cronbach alpha coefficient with the alpha coefficients illustrated on table 2 below:

Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Idealized Influence	5	0.832
Inspirational Motivation	5	0.911
Individualized Consideration	5	0.895
Employee Creativity	5	0.888
Administrative Environment	5	0.816
Social Environment	5	0.883
Political Environment	5	0.829

Table 2

3.1. Data Results

In this section of the study, the findings are presented and analysed. All 211 questionnaire copies were distributed accordingly and with a success return rate of 203 copies. Retrieved copies were subsequently coded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 2).

3.2. Univariate Analysis

The univariate distributions for the constructs are presented on table 1:

		Employee creativity	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Individual Consideration	Administrative Environment	Social Environment	Political Environment
N	Valid	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.4680	3.2894	3.2882	3.0530	3.8358	3.4466	3.4893
Std. Deviation		1.06976	.95099	.87990	.92274	1.13130	1.14647	1.07131
Skewness		-.898	-1.046	-1.220	-.760	-1.140	-.609	-1.083
Std. Error of Skewness		.171	.171	.171	.171	.171	.171	.171
Kurtosis		-.095	.172	.307	-.599	.079	-.798	.100
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.340	.340	.340	.340	.340	.340	.340

Table 3: Distribution for the Study Constructs

Source: SPSS Data, 2021

The Table 3 above illustrates the distribution for the constructs of the study based on summaries obtained from their manifest properties. The distribution which is based on a 5 – point Likert scale format of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately agree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The distributions for the variables demonstrate evident levels of agreement to the properties and manifestations of the constructs; where mean scores (\bar{x}) are observed to range mostly between $\bar{x} = 3.0 - 4.0$, it is evident that constructs such as employee creativity, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, administrative environment, social environment, political environment are substantial and well manifested realities within the context of the study.

3.3. Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate analysis involving the test for the bivariate relations is presented on Table 4

		Employee Creativity	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Individual Consideration
Employee Creativity	Pearson Correlation	1	.975**	.704**	.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	203	203	203	203
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	.975**	1	.686**	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	203	203	203	203
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.704**	.686**	1	.568**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	203	203	203	203
Individual Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.686**	.733**	.568**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	203	203	203	203

Table 4: Test for Bivariate Hypotheses

Source: SPSS Data, 2021

The evidence on the relationship between transformational leadership dimensions – (a) idealized influence (b) inspirational motivation, and (c) individual consideration; and employee creativity are revealed to be significant. The evidence demonstrates that all three dimensions of transformational leadership all contribute positively (idealized influence and employee creativity $R = 0.975$; inspirational influence and employee creativity $R = 0.704$; individual consideration and employee creativity $R = 0.686$). The evidence identifies transformational leadership as a strong predictor of employee creativity within the Nigerian manufacturing industry.

3.4. Multivariate Analysis

The test for the mediating influence of work environment dimensions: Physical, social and political environment on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity are addressed in this section of the paper.

3.4.1. Physical Environment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.671	.170		3.952	.000
	Physical	.729	.042	.771	17.172	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee creativity

Table 5: Influence of Physical Environment on Employee Creativity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	-.347	.136		-2.558	.011
	Leadership	1.188	.041	.898	29.014	.000
3	(Constant)	-.348	.136		-2.562	.011
	Leadership	1.148	.077	.868	14.879	.000
	Phys	.034	.055	.036	.612	.541

Table 6: Regression of Physical Environment and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

Source: SPSS Data, 2021

The test on the mediating role of physical environment on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity (Table 5 and 6) is revealed to be insignificant. The results show that while physical environment has a significant impact (Model 1 = $P < 0.05$) on employee creativity; its role as a mediator is however insignificant (model 3 = $P > 0.05$). On this basis it is affirmed that although the physical environment plays a key role in outcomes of employee creativity, it does not significantly mediate between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

3.4.2. Social Environment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.480	.188		7.877	.000
	Social	.577	.052	.618	11.150	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee creativity

Table 7: Influence of Social Environment on Employee Creativity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	-.347	.136		-2.558	.011
	Leadership	1.188	.041	.898	29.014	.000
3	(Constant)	-.387	.127		-3.041	.003
	Leadership	1.459	.063	1.103	23.119	.000
	Social	-.240	.045	-.258	-5.398	.000

Table 8: Regression of Social Environment and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

Source: SPSS Data, 2021

The result on the mediating influence of the social environment on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity (table 7 and 8) is shown to be insignificant. The evidence suggests that while social environment may be considered an antecedent of employee creativity (model 1 = $P < 0.05$), it does not however mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity (model 3 transformational leadership $t = 23.119$; employee creativity $t = -5.398$). The evidence shows transformational leadership has a stronger impact on employee creativity; hence social environment does not mediate the relationship between the variables.

3.4.3. Political Environment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.142	.076		1.851	.066
	Political	.953	.021	.955	45.483	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee creativity

Table 9: Influence of Social Environment on Employee Creativity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	-.347	.136		-2.558	.011
	Leadership	1.188	.041	.898	29.014	.000
3	(Constant)	-.225	.080		-2.812	.005
	Leadership	.390	.047	.295	8.215	.000
	Political	.700	.036	.701	19.549	.000

Table 10: Regression of Political Environment and Transformational Leadership on Employee Creativity

Source: SPSS Data, 2021

The evidence on the test for the mediating role of the political environment on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity (table 9 and 10) is revealed to be significant. The results shows that the political environment plays a key role which can be translated as that of mediation where it significantly accounts for the interaction between transformational leadership and employee creativity (model 1 and 3 = $P < 0.05$). This suggests that the political environment has significant implications for the outcome of transformational leadership on employee creativity.

4. Discussion of Findings

This study has revealed at the end of the analysis that transformational leadership is positively and significantly associated with employee creativity. This association were identified in the tests of each dimension of transformational leadership on employee's creativity which proved that the study hypotheses are upheld in those regards. This finding is in

tandem with previous studies that have also portrayed transformational leadership as positively and significantly associated with employee creativity. This finding can be substantiated on the strength of the facts that transformational leaders share knowledge, promote novel ideas and support employees to think out of the box (Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Prasad & Junni, 2016).

The leaders also support employees to overcome fear of risk and revolutionize the routine ways of working. TL encourages employees to adopt new patterns for accomplishment of assignments, which enhances the creativity of employees (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Yunus and Anuar's (2012) study indicates that TL encourages the employees to see fresh and new approaches for completion of their assignments -all these are precursors to creativity. Studies by some authors confirmed the positive influence of TL on EC (Cheung & Wong, 2011; Gong et al., 2009; Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Khalili, 2016; Mittal & Dhar, 2015; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Specifically, idealized influence by idealized influence, the leaders inspire the employees and acquire respect and loyalty which could account for creativity. Also, inspirational motivation has the potential to drive employee's zeal towards the extra ordinary attempts which can result in creativity. Through individual consideration, the leaders pay attention to individual employees to accomplish their needs (Ng, 2016; Sosik, Kahai, & Avolio, 1998) and by so doing, employee are stimulated towards creativity.

The findings that administrative and physical environment do not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity can also be explained by the fact that without these factors, transformational leadership can still directly influence employee creativity. Although the political environment was found to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity, implying that the influence of the political environment has the potentials to alter the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

5. Conclusion

This study concluded that transformational leadership is vital for growing creative employees in the aluminum manufacturing companies in Rivers State. Also, the workplace environment was not found to be a major mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity; except for the political environment. These findings have exposed how important leadership is in the attitudinal tendencies of employees, implying that when there is right leadership, employees are more likely to exhibit positive work behaviours and vice versa.

6. Summary of Findings

In view of the results, this study finds that:

- Idealized influence significantly and positively contributes towards outcomes of employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- Inspirational motivation significantly and positively impacts on the outcomes of employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- Individual consideration significantly and positively influences the outcomes of employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- The administrative environment does not significantly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- The social environment does not significantly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- The political environment significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity in aluminum manufacturing firms in Rivers State

7. Recommendations

- Organizations should train their leaders on transformational leadership skills to enable them transmit its values to employees.
- Organizations should reward leaders that exhibit the characteristics of transformational leadership to enable other emulate same.
- Organizations should pay careful attention to its environment and be able to check negative forces in such environment, especially the political environment that appears to be most influential going by the result of this study.
- Creativity should be recognized and celebrated in the organization to serve as motivation for every employee.

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