


**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON SALESPERSON JOB PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF SELF-EFFICACY AND CREATIVITY IN VIETNAMESE SMES**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b>  <b>Received:</b> December, 02<sup>nd</sup> 2023  <b>Accepted:</b> March, 07<sup>th</sup> 2024</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This study investigates the influence of transformational leadership on the job performance of salespersons in Vietnamese SMEs. It examines the mediating role of self-efficacy and creativity, contributing to the literature on effective leadership strategies and their impact on salesperson performance.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b>            Transformational Leadership;            Job Performance;            Self-Efficacy;            Creativity;            Vietnamese SMEs.</p>	<p><b>Theoretical Framework:</b> Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the study proposes that transformational leadership positively affects self-efficacy and creativity, leading to improved job performance among salespersons.</p> <p><b>Design/Methodology/Approach:</b> Data is collected through a survey questionnaire administered to salespersons in Vietnamese SMEs. The collected data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the proposed relationships.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> The study reveals the impact of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance and highlights the mediating roles of self-efficacy and creativity.</p>
	<p><b>Research Implications:</b> This research contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature in Vietnamese SMEs, offering practical insights for enhancing sales force productivity.</p> <p><b>Practical &amp; Social Implications:</b> This study emphasizes the significance of transformational leadership in enhancing salesperson self-efficacy and creativity. It informs the development of targeted interventions and training programs, resulting in improved sales performance and overall organizational success. Additionally, the findings have broader applicability to effective leadership strategies across diverse cultural and business contexts.</p> <p>Doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4015">https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4015</a></p>

**EXPLORANDO A INFLUÊNCIA DA LIDERANÇA TRANSFORMACIONAL NO DESEMPENHO NO TRABALHO DO VENDEDOR: OS PAPÉIS MEDIADORES DA AUTOEFICÁCIA E DA CRIATIVIDADE NAS PME VIETNAMIANAS**

**RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** Este estudo investiga a influência da liderança transformacional no desempenho no trabalho de vendedores em PMEs vietnamitas. Ele examina o papel mediador da autoeficácia e da criatividade, contribuindo para a literatura sobre estratégias de liderança eficaz e seu impacto no desempenho dos vendedores.

**Estrutura Teórica:** Baseado na teoria da liderança transformacional, o estudo propõe que a liderança transformacional afeta positivamente a autoeficácia e a criatividade, resultando em melhor desempenho no trabalho dos vendedores.

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**Desenho/Methodologia/Abordagem:** Os dados são coletados por meio de um questionário administrado a vendedores em PMEs vietnamitas. Os dados coletados foram analisados usando modelagem de equações estruturais (SEM) para examinar as relações propostas.

**Resultados:** O estudo revela o impacto da liderança transformacional no desempenho no trabalho dos vendedores e destaca os papéis mediadores da autoeficácia e da criatividade.

**Implicações para Pesquisa:** Esta pesquisa contribui para a literatura de liderança e comportamento organizacional em PMEs vietnamitas, oferecendo insights práticos para melhorar a produtividade da equipe de vendas.

**Implicações Práticas e Sociais:** Este estudo enfatiza a importância da liderança transformacional na melhoria da autoeficácia e criatividade dos vendedores. Ele informa o desenvolvimento de intervenções direcionadas e programas de treinamento, resultando em melhor desempenho de vendas e sucesso organizacional global. Além disso, os resultados têm aplicabilidade mais ampla para estratégias de liderança eficazes em contextos culturais e empresariais diversos.

**Palavras-chave:** Liderança Transformacional, Desempenho no Trabalho, Autoeficácia, Criatividade, PMEs Vietnamitas.

## EXPLORANDO LA INFLUENCIA DEL LIDERAZGO TRANSFORMACIONAL EN EL DESEMPEÑO LABORAL DEL VENDEDOR: LOS FUNCIONES MEDIADORAS DE LA AUTOEFICACIA Y LA CREATIVIDAD EN LAS PYMES VIETNAMITAS

### RESUMEN

**Propósito:** Este estudio investiga la influencia del liderazgo transformacional en el desempeño laboral de los vendedores en las PYME vietnamitas. Examina el papel mediador de la autoeficacia y la creatividad, contribuyendo a la literatura sobre estrategias de liderazgo efectivo y su impacto en el desempeño de los vendedores.

**Marco Teórico:** Basado en la teoría del liderazgo transformacional, el estudio propone que el liderazgo transformacional afecta positivamente a la autoeficacia y la creatividad, lo que lleva a un mejor desempeño laboral de los vendedores.

**Diseño/Methodología/Aproximación:** Los datos se recopilan a través de un cuestionario administrado a vendedores en PYME vietnamitas. Los datos recopilados se analizaron utilizando modelado de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) para examinar las relaciones propuestas.

**Hallazgos:** El estudio revela el impacto del liderazgo transformacional en el desempeño laboral de los vendedores y destaca los roles mediadores de la autoeficacia y la creatividad.

**Implicaciones para la Investigación:** Esta investigación contribuye a la literatura sobre liderazgo y comportamiento organizacional en las PYME vietnamitas, ofreciendo ideas prácticas para mejorar la productividad de la fuerza de ventas.

**Implicaciones Prácticas y Sociales:** Este estudio enfatiza la importancia del liderazgo transformacional en el aumento de la autoeficacia y la creatividad de los vendedores. Informa sobre el desarrollo de intervenciones específicas y programas de capacitación, lo que resulta en un mejor desempeño de ventas y un éxito organizacional general. Además, los hallazgos tienen una aplicabilidad más amplia en estrategias de liderazgo efectivas en diversos contextos culturales y empresariales.

**Palabras clave:** Liderazgo Transformacional, Desempeño Laboral, Autoeficacia, Creatividad, PYMES Vietnamitas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of today's dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations are continuously seeking ways to enhance their performance and achieve sustainable success. Among various factors that influence organizational outcomes, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior and performance of employees. Transformational leadership,

characterized by its ability to inspire and motivate followers, has gained significant attention as an effective leadership style that can drive employee engagement, satisfaction, and ultimately, job performance (Li et al., 2018; Ricardianto et al., 2020).

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of transformational leadership on job performance, specifically focusing on the mediating roles of self-efficacy and creativity among salespersons in Vietnamese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Murphy & Anderson, 2020; Ricardianto et al., 2020). The unique context of Vietnamese SMEs provides an interesting setting to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance, considering the cultural and organizational characteristics prevalent in this context (Ambarwati et al., 2023; Curado & Santos, 2022).

Previous research has established the positive influence of transformational leadership on job performance in various industries and settings. However, limited studies have specifically examined the mechanisms through which transformational leadership impacts job performance, particularly in the context of Vietnamese SMEs. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the mediating effects of self-efficacy and creativity (Vancouver et al., 2002).

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully execute specific tasks or behaviors, has been recognized as an important psychological factor that influences job performance (Vancouver et al., 2002). It is expected that transformational leadership, by instilling confidence, providing support, and setting high expectations, can enhance the self-efficacy of salespersons, thereby positively impacting their job performance (Hur et al., 2021).

Creativity, another critical aspect of job performance, refers to the generation of novel and valuable ideas (Awan et al., 2019). Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on challenging the status quo and inspiring followers to think outside the box, is believed to foster a creative work environment (Kustanto et al., 2020). Thus, it is hypothesized that transformational leadership positively influences the creativity of salespersons, which, in turn, leads to improved job performance.

To empirically examine these relationships, data will be collected from salespersons working in Vietnamese SMEs through a survey questionnaire. The proposed research aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the impact of transformational leadership on job performance, mediated by self-efficacy and creativity, in the context of Vietnamese SMEs. The findings of this study will offer valuable insights for

organizations in designing effective leadership strategies that enhance salesperson performance and contribute to overall organizational success.

## 2 LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES

### 2.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SELF-EFFICACY

The impact of transformational leadership effectiveness on employees' self-efficacy has typically been studied, focusing on how the leader's transformational approach enhances employees' self-efficacy. (Eliophotou et al., 2021) Nevertheless, the exploration of leader's self-efficacy in relation to transformational leadership effectiveness remains largely unexplored, with only a limited number of studies investigating the connection between leader's self-efficacy and transformational leadership (LaRocca et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021; Zainab et al., 2022).

Theories already in existence provide support for the notion that a leader's self-efficacy is potentially linked to behaviors that are indicative of transformational leadership. According to Bodin (2016), there is a strong association between high levels of self-efficacy and superior performance across various tasks and domains (Bodin & Nohrstedt, 2016). The influence of self-efficacy on personal choice partially contributes to this effect. When individuals have a strong sense of self-efficacy in a specific task, they are more inclined to choose to engage in that task, set ambitious performance goals, and subsequently demonstrate higher levels of performance (Goleman, 2017).

Transformational leadership is traditionally associated with challenging the status quo and instilling confidence in followers that they can achieve higher levels of performance (Steinmann et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be inferred that the leader's own self-efficacy plays a significant role in the development of transformational leadership. Individuals with low levels of self-efficacy are unlikely to proactively challenge situations or influence others to do so.

Hypothesis H1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and self-efficacy.

### 2.2 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVITY

Transformational leadership has a positive influence on the creativity of followers, as it diverges from traditional leadership styles by prioritizing change and envisioning, rather than

concentrating on supervision, monitoring, and control (Afsar et al., 2017; Al-Mansoori & Koç, 2019; Giddens, 2018; Vu, 2023). As a result, individuals under transformational leadership are more inclined to explore numerous alternative problem-solving methods, employ unconventional approaches, and demonstrate persistence. These behaviors indicate an intrinsically motivated mindset. Therefore, transformational leadership theory is considered to have the potential to enhance creativity and foster innovation among individuals and teams (Karimi et al., 2023; Le & Lei, 2019; Suifan et al., 2018). Transformational leaders are believed to facilitate followers' creativity through two mechanisms: cognitive and motivational (Bosselut et al., 2020). On the cognitive level, the intellectual stimulation component of transformational leadership plays a significant role (Boukamcha & Journal, 2019). Transformational leaders actively highlight unconventional perspectives, break away from common patterns of thought, and encourage their followers to critically evaluate and reflect upon existing assumptions and approaches to work (Boukamcha & Journal, 2019). Additionally, transformational leaders encourage their subordinates to embrace an explorative and open mindset, fostering a culture of thinking outside the box (Chen et al., 2019). As a result, followers are expected to rediscover their intellectual curiosity, tap into their imagination, and generate original solutions and fresh, unique ideas (Zaman et al., 2020). Moreover, transformational leaders exhibit unconventional and creative behavior themselves, serving as role models for creativity among their followers. Furthermore, the emotional relationships established by a transformational leader with their followers (Zaman et al., 2020) can also serve as a catalyst for creativity. Emotional attachment is likely to contribute to higher levels of creativity (Yu et al., 2019). When employees feel emotionally connected to their leader, they are more inclined to respond to the leader's encouragement and support for innovation by demonstrating increased creativity in their tasks. Indeed, as Li (2020) suggest, further research should explore the impact of transformational leadership on followers' creativity in real-world settings (Li et al., 2020). The current field study aims to establish a positive relationship between transformational leadership and individual-level creativity, primarily driven by the creativity-enhancing behaviors exhibited by such leadership. Additionally, considering the collectivist orientation prevalent in Vietnamese SMEs, it is expected that the compatibility between this leadership style and the cultural context will further strengthen the proposed positive relationship. In collectivist societies, there is an expectation for leaders to provide care and support to their followers, while followers are inclined to identify with their leaders' vision and display loyalty (Orofino, 2021). Kaur (2020) suggests that transformational leadership is more likely to thrive in collectivist cultures

compared to the individualistic cultures of the Western world (Kaur & Noman, 2020). Additionally, Hawkins (2021) state that the effects of transformational leadership are more pronounced among individuals with a collectivist mindset rather than those with an individualistic mindset (Hawkins, 2021).

Hypothesis H2: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employees' creativity.

### 2.2.1 Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Transformational leadership is characterized by leaders who inspire and challenge their employees to surpass conventional expectations, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and excellence (Vu, 2023; Yuan et al., 2018). These leaders not only motivate their followers to achieve their goals but also instill a sense of purpose and passion for their work (Vu, 2023). Consequently, transformational leadership is believed to positively impact job performance, leading to higher productivity and overall organizational effectiveness (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to accomplish tasks and overcome challenges successfully (Schunk, 1991). Transformational leaders possess the ability to enhance their followers' self-efficacy by providing encouragement, support, and constructive feedback (Eliophotou Menon & Lefteri, 2021). As employees' self-efficacy increases, they tend to approach tasks with greater confidence and commitment, leading to improved job performance (Ahmed & Development, 2019; Yu et al., 2020). Creativity is a vital aspect of job performance, particularly in today's rapidly evolving business landscape (Schiuma et al., 2022). Transformational leaders foster a climate that encourages creativity and innovation, promoting the generation of novel ideas and solutions (Al Ahmad et al., 2019). Employees who feel inspired and empowered by their leaders are more likely to engage in creative problem-solving and demonstrate originality in their work (Li et al., 2019; Lin & Journal, 2017).

Hypothesis H3: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job performance

Hypothesis H4: There is a positive relationship between Self-efficacy and job performance

Hypothesis H4A: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance.

Hypothesis H5: There is a positive relationship between Creativity and job performance

Hypothesis H5A: Creativity mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance.

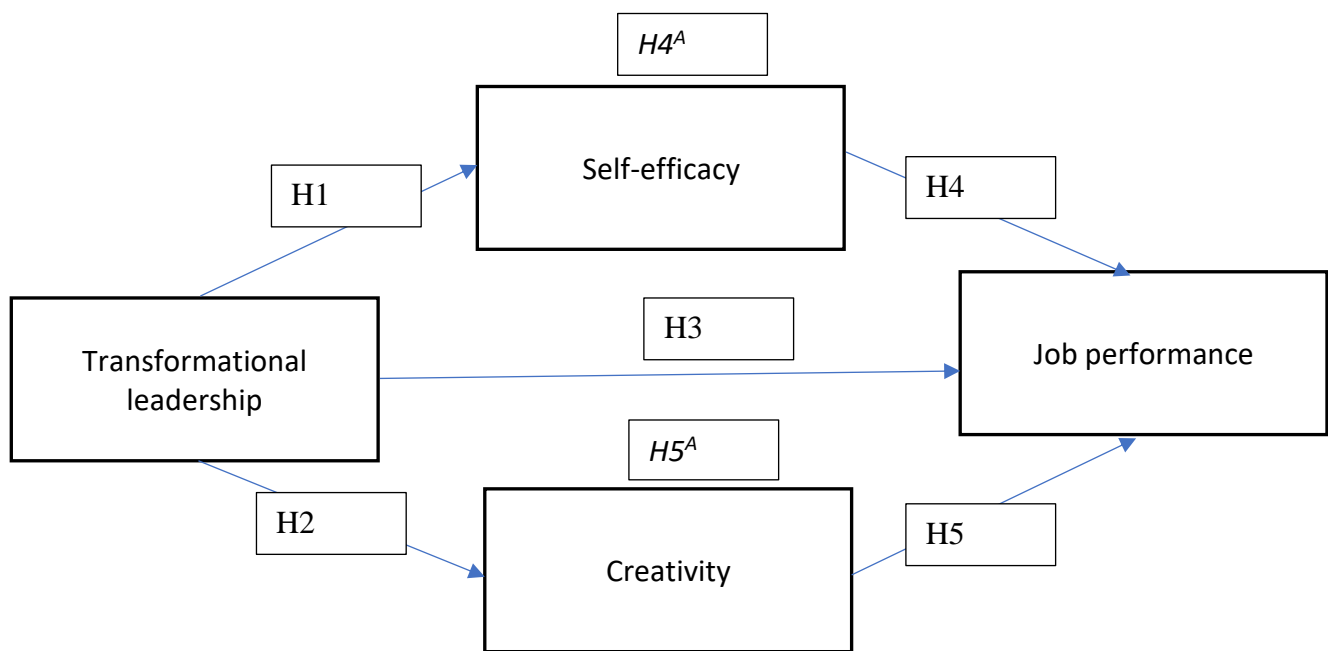
### 2.3 RESEARCH CONCEPT FRAMEWORK

The model employed in this study is grounded in a well-established theoretical framework, supported by numerous findings from previous research. It posits that transformational leadership has an impact on job performance within organizational contexts, despite encountering some variations in results across studies. Additionally, the study recognizes that job satisfaction and employee engagement play crucial roles in influencing employee performance. Prior research consistently demonstrates that higher levels of job satisfaction and employee engagement are associated with improved job performance.

In this particular study, Self-efficacy and Creativity are introduced as mediating variables between the effects of transformational leadership on job performance. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities to successfully accomplish tasks, while Creativity denotes the ability to generate novel and valuable ideas. It is hypothesized that transformational leadership may influence job performance by enhancing employees' self-efficacy and fostering a work environment that nurtures creativity.

**Figure 1**

*The hypothesized model.*



Source: Self-developed

### 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and salesperson job performance, as well as the mediating roles of self-efficacy and creativity in the context of Vietnamese SMEs. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used for data analysis to examine the proposed theoretical model.

The research sample comprised 467 employees working in Vietnamese SMEs. The questionnaires were distributed to 700 employees during their regular work hours after obtaining a list of employees' information from human resource managers of 63 Vietnamese SMEs. The authors personally explained the study's objectives and provided detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. All participants were fully informed and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

The questionnaire used in this study was carefully developed through an extensive review of relevant literature. To ensure linguistic accuracy and equivalence of meaning, the questionnaire was initially translated from English to Vietnamese. Subsequently, it was back-translated to English by two independent bilingual scholars. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of four main parts, namely ethical leadership, leader-member exchange, work engagement, and creative performance. Each part was designed to capture specific aspects of the research variables. Upon distribution, a total of 467 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 66.7%. Following a thorough review, 467 questionnaires were deemed complete and valid, qualifying them for further analysis. The utilization of rigorous translation and validation processes enhances the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, providing a robust foundation for the research outcomes.

### 4 MEASURES

#### 4.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In this study, we utilized a scale of five items adapted from Carless et,al (1998) to assess Transformational Leadership(Carless, 1998). After CFA, five items showed strong factor loadings above the acceptable threshold (0.50), All items were measured on a five-point scale



ranging from 1= “Not at all” to 5= “Very much”. A sample item is “increases employees’ level of enthusiasm” The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .919. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of Self-efficacy scale yielded a good fit ( $\chi^2(2) = .781$ , IFI = 1.002, GFI = 0.999, AGFI = 0.994, NFI = 0.999, TLI = 1.006, CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.000 và RMR = 0.005) and show that the scale is unidimensional and has high validity and reliability (Cronbach’s alpha=.847). This indicates good internal consistency and reliability for the Transformational Leadership scale, as the alpha coefficient exceeded the recommended threshold of .70.

#### 4.1.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy construct is measured using a 4-item scale (Schwarzer, Jerusalem, M. Johnston, & beliefs, 1995). After CFA, four items showed strong factor loadings above the acceptable threshold (0.50), All items were measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1= “Not at all” to 5= “Very much”. A sample item is “Handling unexpected situations effectively.” The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .919. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of Self-efficacy scale yielded a good fit ( $\chi^2(2) = .616$ , IFI = 1.002, GFI = 0.999, AGFI = 0.995, NFI = 0.999, TLI = 1.006, CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.000 và RMR = 0.003) and show that the scale is unidimensional and has high validity and reliability (Cronbach’s alpha=.872).

#### 4.1.2 Work creativity

The creativity construct is measured using a 7-item scale (Amabile & Grysiewicz, 1989). After CFA, four items (SC1, SC2, SC4, and SC5) showed strong factor loadings above the acceptable threshold (0.50), while the remaining three items (SC3, SC6, and SC7) were excluded from the analysis. We used a five-point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree”, to 5, “strongly agree”. A sample item is “I feel confident in my ability to come up with innovative solutions”. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of creativity scale yielded a good fit ( $\chi^2(2) = 7.115$ , (IFI = 0.903, GFI = 0.988, AGFI = 0.941, NFI = 0.991, TLI = 0.981, CFI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.090 and RMR = 0.010). and show that the scale is unidimensional and has high validity and reliability (Cronbach’s alpha=.0.922).

### 4.1.3 Job performance

Job performance was measured with six item version developed by (Liu et al., 2022). We used a five point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree”, to 5, “strongly agree”. A sample item is “Meeting deadlines and completing tasks on time.”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .983. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of Job performance scale yielded a good fit ( $\chi^2(681) = 2759.527$ , (IFI = 0.966, GFI = 0.966, AGFI = 0.946, NFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.966, CFI = 0.966, RMSEA = 0.077, RMR = 0.015) and show that the scale is unidimensional and has high validity and reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .882).

### 4.1.4 Control variables

We controlled for age, gender, education, and work tenure as these variables have been shown in previous research, such as Foote & Tang (2008), to impact individual and organizational variables, including job performance. By including them as control variables, we aimed to isolate the specific influence of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance (Foote & Li-Ping Tang, 2008).

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The means, standard deviations and zero-order Pearson correlations of all the key variables are presented in Table 1. Fig. 1 showed the research model of gender, age, education, tenure, Transformational, Self-Efficacy, Creativity and Job performance. As shown in Table 1, gender was negative related to Transformational ( $r = -.325$ ), Self-Efficacy ( $r = -.285$ ), Creativity ( $r = -.285$ ), and Job performance ( $r = -.518$ ). Age was positive related Transformational ( $r = .351$ ), Self-Efficacy ( $r = .331$ ), Creativity ( $r = .331$ ), and Job performance ( $r = .588$ ). Tenure was positive related to Transformational ( $r = .292$ ), Self-Efficacy ( $r = .268$ ), Creativity ( $r = .324$ ), and Job performance ( $r = .488$ ). Education was positive related to Transformational ( $r = .393$ ), Self-Efficacy ( $r = .420$ ), Creativity ( $r = .323$ ), and Job performance ( $r = .662$ ). And Transformational was positive related to Self-Efficacy ( $r = .681$ ), Creativity ( $r = .638$ ) and Job performance ( $r = .526$ ). Self-Efficacy was positive related to Creative ( $r = .689$ ), Job performance ( $r = .468$ ) and Creative was positive related to Job performance ( $r = .460$ ).

## 5.2 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The authors used SEM (structural equations modeling) to test direct and indirect effects using AMOS software (version 22). Figure 2 indicated the standardized structural coefficients. The all scales fit measures, multiple squared correlation coefficients of the variables, and significance levels of the path coefficients showed that the model fits the data well ( $\chi^2(463) = 1382.620$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\text{câu IFI} = 0.871$ ,  $\text{GFI} = 0.787$ ,  $\text{AGFI} = 0.757$ ,  $\text{NFI} = 0.818$ ,  $\text{TLI} = 0.861$ ,  $\text{CFI} = 0.870$ ,  $\text{RMSEA} = 0.080$  và  $\text{RMR} = 0.148$ ).

In Figure 2. Structural equation modeling was performed the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables of Transformational Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Creativity and job performance

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics, correlations and scale reliabilities.*

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	age	Gender	Education	Tenure	Trans	Self-Eff	Creativity	Job-per
age	2.4921	.94554	1							
Gender	1.4571	.49895	-.303	1						
Education	2.4349	.86954	.459	-.357	1					
Tenure	2.3778	.89237	.341	-.253	.354	1				
Trans	3.6259	.54629	.351	-.325	.393	.292	1			
Self-Eff	3.7357	.63800	.331	-.285	.420	.268	.681	1		
Creativity	3.7528	.63275	.331	-.285	.323	.324	.638	.689	1	
Job-per	3.6913	.64105	.588	-.518	.662	.488	.526	.468	.460	1

*Note*

(1). Cronbach alpha reliabilities for observed variables are in parenthesis in the diagonal

(2)\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

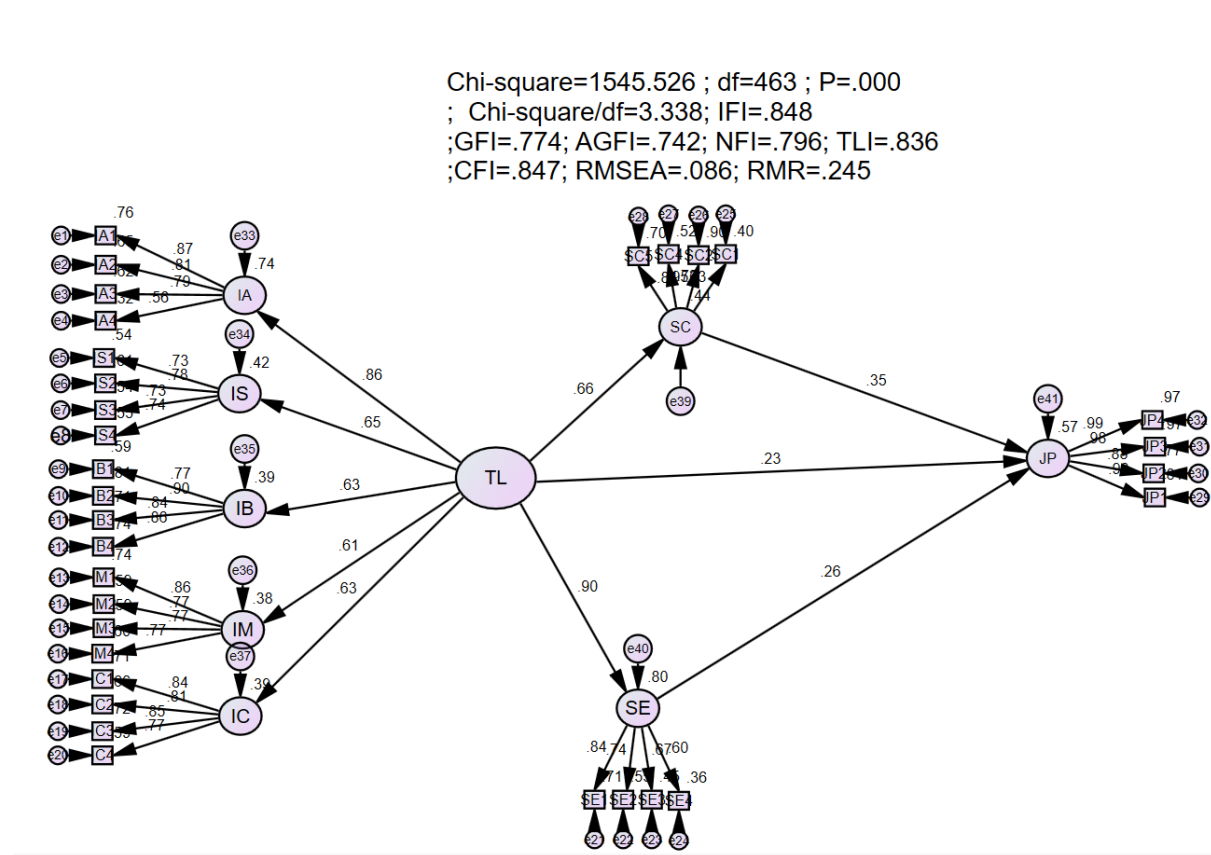
\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).  $N = 467$

(3) The square root of AVE for discriminant validity are in parentheses along the diagonal

Source: Self-developed

**Figure 2**

Results of structural equation model



Source: Self-developed

The standardized estimation results of the main parameters are presented in Table 1. These results demonstrate that all of these relationships are statistically significant at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the findings support the conclusion that the measurement scales for the conceptual variables in the model are valid because "each measurement is related to other measurements as theoretically expected".

**Table 2**

Structural model result (direct, indirect and total effects).

Effect from	To	Direct effects <sup>a</sup>	Indirect effects <sup>a</sup>	Total effects <sup>a</sup>
Transformational Leadership	Self- Efficacy	0.897***		0.897***
Transformational Leadership	Creativity	0.663***		0.663***
Transformational Leadership	Job performance	0.234***	0.467***	0.701***
Self- Efficacy	Job performance	0.260***		0.260***
Creativity	Job performance	0.352***		0.352***
Goodness of fit statistics	Chi-square = 1545.526; chi-square/df = 3.338; df = 463; P=0.000; IFI=.848; GFI=.940; TLI=.976; CFI=.979; RMSEA=.033			

Note: <sup>a</sup> Standardized Structural Coefficients: \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Source: Self-developed

In summary, the presented results provide strong statistical evidence for the significance of the relationships between the variables in the model, and they confirm the theoretical validity of the measurement scales used in the study.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute valuable insights into the impact of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance, with a focus on the mediating roles of self-efficacy and creativity in the context of Vietnamese SMEs.

Firstly, the results indicate that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on salesperson job performance. This finding aligns with previous research, emphasizing the crucial role of transformational leaders in motivating and inspiring their subordinates to achieve higher levels of performance. In Vietnamese SMEs, transformational leaders can serve as catalysts for salesperson productivity and effectiveness, fostering a positive work environment and promoting a sense of purpose among the sales team.

Secondly, the study reveals that self-efficacy and creativity play vital mediating roles in the relationship between transformational leadership and salesperson job performance. The positive influence of transformational leaders on self-efficacy beliefs and creativity among salespersons is evident, leading to enhanced job performance. By empowering their subordinates and instilling a belief in their abilities, transformational leaders can boost their sales team's confidence and effectiveness in handling challenging tasks.

Moreover, the validation of the measurement scales used in the study provides further support for the reliability and validity of the research instruments. The robustness of the findings is bolstered by the significant relationships observed between the measurement scales, as they align with theoretical expectations. This strengthens the overall credibility of the study and enhances confidence in the reported results.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretations, and the use of self-reported data may introduce common method bias. Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and employ multi-source data collection methods to minimize potential biases.

Practical implications of the study are noteworthy for Vietnamese SMEs. Understanding the significant impact of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance, as well as the mediating roles of self-efficacy and creativity, can guide SME leaders in cultivating a

supportive and empowering work environment. Implementing transformational leadership training programs and initiatives to enhance self-efficacy and creativity can result in a more engaged and effective salesforce, ultimately leading to improved sales outcomes and organizational success.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the crucial role of transformational leadership in fostering salesperson job performance in Vietnamese SMEs. By recognizing the significance of self-efficacy and creativity as mediators, this research provides valuable insights for organizational development and managerial practices. It contributes to the existing literature and serves as a foundation for future research in similar contexts, enhancing our understanding of leadership dynamics and their impact on employee performance.

## 7 CONCLUSION

### 7.1 STUDY LIMITATIONS

**Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to establish causal relationships between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, creativity, and salesperson job performance. Future research with longitudinal designs would provide stronger evidence of causality.

**Self-Reported Data:** The reliance on self-reported data may introduce common method bias, leading to potential inaccuracies or biases in the responses. Future studies could benefit from incorporating objective performance measures or obtaining data from multiple sources to mitigate this limitation.

**Sample Characteristics:** The study focused on salespersons in Vietnamese SMEs, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries or organizational contexts. Replicating the study in diverse settings and populations could enhance its external validity.

**Control Variables:** Although efforts were made to control for age, gender, education, and work tenure, there may still be unaccounted confounding variables that could influence the observed relationships.

## 7.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

**Mediation Mechanisms:** Investigate other potential mediation mechanisms between transformational leadership and salesperson job performance. Exploring additional psychological constructs, such as motivation or job satisfaction, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes.

**Moderating Factors:** Examine the moderating role of contextual factors, such as organizational culture or market dynamics, on the relationships investigated in this study. Identifying contextual variables that enhance or diminish the impact of transformational leadership would offer valuable managerial insights.

**Comparative Studies:** Conduct comparative studies between Vietnamese SMEs and larger organizations or different cultural contexts to explore potential differences in the effects of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance.

**Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of transformational leadership on salesperson job performance and explore how these effects evolve over time.

**Mixed Methods:** Employ mixed-method approaches to complement quantitative findings with qualitative insights, providing a richer understanding of the experiences and perceptions of salespersons under transformational leadership.

**Leadership Development Interventions:** Implement experimental interventions to assess the effectiveness of specific leadership development programs in enhancing transformational leadership behaviors and subsequently improving salesperson job performance.

By addressing these limitations and exploring future research avenues, scholars can further advance the knowledge base on transformational leadership's impact on salesperson performance, ultimately providing practical implications for organizations seeking to optimize their salesforce effectiveness and overall performance.

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