

## A Study of Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Personnel Creativity in Higher Education Centers

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and personnel creativity of Bojnord higher education centers. This reaserch is one of those applied survey researches based on correlative method. The statistical population of this research is comprised of all personnel in Bojnord higher education centers (Islamic Azad University, Payame Noor University and Medical Sciences University) who are 256 people. A sample of 155 people selected among the statistical population based on Krejcie and Morgan table and a relative stratified random sampling. In order to gather data, the researcher applies two questionnaires including multi-factor leadership questionnaire of Bernard M. Bass as well as creativity questionnaire of Randsip. In order to analyze data, the descriptive and inferential statistics approaches were applied. The analyzed data shown that the transformational leadership is highly effective on educating personnel creativity and there are significant and direct relationship among its elements (insight-giving, framing, effective behavior, ideal characteristics, intellectual stimulus, inspiring incitement) with personnel creativity. It implies that greater the manager possesses intelligence traits, insight-giving and other attractive and strong personality traits and considers his relationship way with personnel widely and notices to their different requirements and be more effective on them and create intellectual stimulus, in this case can cause them more cooperate to achieve the organizations goals, take more efforts and provide new ideas, innovative and creative approaches in performing their duties.

**Key words:** Leadership • Transformational Leadership • Interactional Leadership • Charisma • Inspiring incitement • Creativity

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### INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been ever mixed with human being [1]. It has been ever existed since primitive human had lived via haunting animals, or when some groups of nomad tribes had immigrated for finding food sources [2]. It is exciting time to understand the leadership as well as perform it. Now there is increasing awareness about this fact that the successes of organizations depend directly on employing human resources [3]. The present era was called the rapid changes era which is based on this thought structure that the information should be strengthened and the cooperation of innovative and creative human resources should be considered instead of operative human resources [4]. Creativity is required for survival of each organization and noncreative

organizations will be faded over the time [5]. Environment of organizations became more dynamic than before and it causes organizations seek to find responses for this dynamism. In order to succeed or even survive in such an environment, it is essential for organizations to move toward flexibility, dynamism and evolution and also avoid from immovability [6]. Inevitably, for being continued and survived, they should coordinate themselves with rapid and unprecedented changes of the present era and update themselves along with software and hardware changes of human resources. In this way, organizational leadership and management methods should be changed inevitably, because traditional methods of management and leadership are not so much effective in dynamic and changing situation of today [7]. Therefore, in order to overcome this unsecure situation and increase efficiency

and productivity in the present organizations, it is strongly required to have transformational people as leader and subsequently innovative and creative personnel who can face with problems and resolve them via their creative minds [8]. Importance of leadership issue in organizations caused researchers and philosophers seek to find traits and characteristics of successful leaders and attempt to state successful leader characteristics in the organization. One of the reasons for importance and consideration to leadership is that personnel of each organization believe that leaders have high authority and can support modifications and changes in organizations favorably [9]. Leaders who are skillful in analyzing the changes of an organization, in fact they would be progressing force in future [10]. At the present, organizations need leaders who possess personality traits and special attraction, high influence and wide prospect so that can create the required enthusiasm in subordinates for employing their extreme capacity and efforts to achieve organizational goals. Nowadays, such leaders are called. transformational leaders<sup>1</sup> [11]. Transformational leadership is a viewpoint based on which leader stimulate followers in the direction of the determined goals through specifying the required function and duties. And it is related to moral traits and long term goals [12].

**Transformational Leadership:** Evaluating effective stimuli on followers, satisfying their needs and contact way with them as perfect people are functions of this kind of leadership. World will need such transformational leaders. Those leaders who have some characteristics such as intelligence, extroversion, self-controlling, self-confidence, eloquence, speech attraction and appearance charming. Transformational leadership can change our organizations at their optimum mode, exhilarate them and energize the personnel who lost their potential and confidence against encountering with problem. Transformational leaders with having insight and awareness and personality traits can create high level requirements, values and morale in the subordinates. They utilize motivational relation- oriented techniques to create high performance in labour force. Transformational leaders are known as change factors [13]. Bass researches (1992) shown that transformational leaders are more distinguished and more successful than interactional leaders. For instance, those researches done on military officers in USA, Canada and Germany shown that

transformational leaders have been basically more successful, comprehensive and effective than interactional leaders. Based on a five-year study and through interviewing with 90 outstanding executive officers and also leaders of public sector organizations, Benis and Nanus (1985) found that transformational leaders, by submitting authority to the followers, can reinforce them and thereby assist the subordinates for improving the required merit to perform organizational goals [14]. According to a research by title of "transformational leadership and their performance and effect on creativity in the group" Jang emphasized that those people under the transformational leadership are significantly more creative than those people under pragmatic leadership. This kind of leadership, as a facilitating and provoking factor on personnel, influences on organization efficiency directly or indirectly [15]. As each organization attempts to reach the specific goals, in parallel, all units especially personnel and manager should be involved and coordinated. Because one of very important factors in realizing organizational goals is motivating personnel to use their hidden potentials and actuate their potential abilities and innovation [16]. Among significant features of successful organizations is perceiving and predicting environmental changes and reacting against these changes properly and rapidly [17]. One of the fundamental efforts for managing these changes is providing the appropriate ground for creativity and innovation and presenting new ideas by personnel. Noticing to creativity factor is very important for surviving, progressing and even preserving the current status of organizations, or for managing environmental complexities and changes [18]. Researches revealed that personnel creativity is regarded as effective factors on improving human resources performance in organizations [19]. Creativity and innovation such as other human features are seen in human being works and this is management and environmental condition which reveal this creativity factor [20]. Creativity appears as a mental state in psychology. As most of human activity is done in organizations, so the factor of creating and nurturing the creativity is placed under the science and art of management, in a way that managers can expedite manifesting creativity in the organization through providing proper ground, or can abort it through providing inappropriate situation [21]. In our society, despite of having apt human resources but creative abilities are wasted. The main reason is that the place of

creativity have not been specified and there is no ground for growth. For more elaboration, the phrase of "they can" should be considered particularly because the probability of this fact is very high in our current society. It is vital to pay attention to this issue in developed and under developed countries because we need apt and creative people for achieving economical, social, cultural and educational improvements. Therefore, it is required to investigate widely on creativity, its nature, the related methods of developing and nurturing it [22].

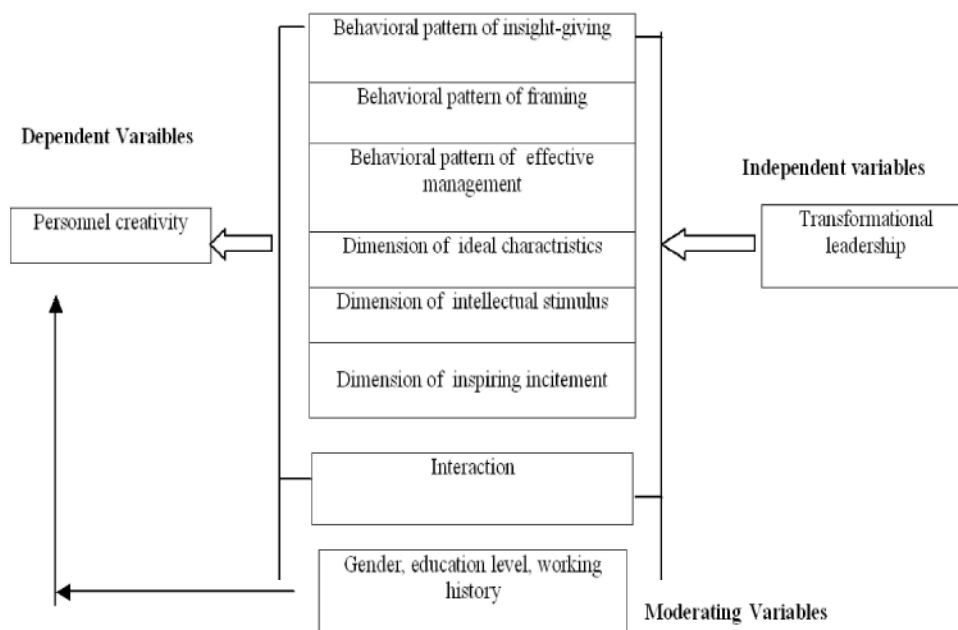
In view of all above, the present study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and personnel creativity in Bojnord higher education centers (Islamic Azad University, Payame Noor University and Medical Sciences University).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method is based on survey-correlative study. The statistical population of this research is comprised of all personnel of Bojnord higher education centers (Islamic Azad University, Payame Noor University and Medical Sciences University) who are 256 people. Among the statistical population, a sample of 155 people selected based on Krejcie and Morgan table and according to relative stratified random sampling [23].

Considering to the research type, the questionnaire was applied in this research for gathering data. The last edition of multi-factor leadership questionnaire made by Bernard M. Bass in 1985 was used for leadership variable. Prior to this research, different forms of this questionnaire was used for evaluating basic dimensions of transformational and interactional leadership which were slightly different with each other considering to the purpose of each research. Form No.1 which had been analyzed by Basiv Haket and Alen2 in 1993 was used in this research. This questionnaire contains 40 questions which 13 questions are related to interactional leadership and 27 questions are related to transformational leadership. Creativity evaluation questionnaire which designed and published by Randsip in 1979 was used for creativity variable. Regarding the validity of multi-factor leadership questionnaire, it should be noted that this questionnaire is standard and overseas ' researhes proved high validity of it. Based on a research done by Manandar and Wayton (1996), it has been declared that all questions of this questionnaire have the required validity ( $P(5/0 >)$ . They also reported Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.94 for the whole of questionnaire. Regarding the creativity questionnaire, it should be noted that as this questionnaire is satandard too, so its reliability confirmed by scholars. The researcher considered the approval of advisor and reader professors in this regard.

Theoretical pattern of research:



Based on the above pattern, transformational leadership components are including as follow:

**Giving Insight and Prospect:** These components convince personnel for reaching to the organization goals. This insight and prospect will prepare the organization or society to develop a better future [24].

**Framing:** Leaders define and determine the organization goal for their followers by using interesting and pleasant words. In order to obtain optimum result, in fact the relations, roles, processes and goals, organizational culture and strategies, expectations of beneficiaries or society, mission and main goals of organization should be parallel and complementary with each other [25].

**Effective Management:** Leader attempts to realize those beliefs concerning him which formed by others, of course, he behaves in a way that causes him be attractive and pleasant in others views. Most of effective management techniques are based on verbal behaviors which applied them for taking advantage from their information [26].

**Ideal Characteristics:** This is a description for those leaders who act as strong models for followers. Followers are known via leaders and want to compete with them. These leaders usually have high standards for moral and spiritual behaviors and do right tasks. They are reliable and deeply respected by followers and guide followers in realizing insight and mission [27].

**Intellectual Stimulus:** The transformational leaders apply intellectual stimulus for challenging creativity, thoughts, ideas of followers. It is required for leaders to lead followers for retesting traditional methods of solving problems and encourage them for finding creative and new approaches to accomplish tasks [28].

**Inspiring Incitement:** This means that managers use emotional symbols for attracting efforts of group members to reach something beyond his personal interests, in this way they can improve the followers' spirits for attempting to achieve goals [29].

**Interactional Leadership:** As per Burns (1978), interactional leadership is a leadership based on an exchange between leader and follower so that tendencies of two parties will be provided [30].

To test research hypotheses, the researcher applies pearson and spearman correlation coefficient test.

## **RESULTS**

A more careful examination of the experimental group' results suggests that there is a strong relationship between transformational leadership style and personnel creativity level. In a way that, insight-giving, ideal characteristics, intellectual stimulus, inspiring incitement, framing, effective behavior have respectively the highest relationship and correlation with personnal creativity level. In addition, there is a relationship between interactional leadership style and creativity level especially in respect of giving reward, but this relation is relatively weak.

## **DISCUSSION**

As data have normal distribution, pearson correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between transformational leadership and personnel creativity and this correlation value is equal to 0.445. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. The result of this hypothesis is in conformity with some other reseaches performed in this regard such as resarches of Bass (1997), Howol and Olive (1993), Manandar and Wayton (1996), Ingram (1996), Gilbert (1997) and Jang (2001).

H1. There is a relationship between component of insight- giving and personnel creativity level

As data have normal distribution, pearson correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of indight-giving and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.432. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. The result of this hypothesis is in conformity with some other reseaches performed in this regard including resarches of Burns, Bernard Bass, Gurdon, Helrigle, Slocome and many other scholars. They believe that leaders who have the prospect of future, not only they are future anticipators but also

Table 1: Pearson correlation test between transformational leadership and personnel creativity

Transformational Leadership		
Personnel creativity	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.445
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 2: Pearson correlation test between insight-giving and personnel creativity level

Behavioral pattern of insight-giving		
Personnel creativity	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.432
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 3: Spearman correlation test between framing and personnel creativity level

Behavioral pattern of framing		
Personnel creativity	Spearman correlation coefficient	0.392
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 4: Spearman correlation test between effective management and personnel creativity level

Behavioral pattern of effective management		
Personnel creativity	Spearman correlation coefficient	0.357
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

they are future makers and convey this insight and prospect to their followers. To turn this prospect to results, the transformational leaders require others' assistance and cooperation.

H2. There is a relationship between component of framing and personnel creativity level

As data have abnormal distribution, spearman correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of framing and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.392. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. As shown in Hersi Blanchard researches, the transformational leaders can be effective on motivating personnel and creating enthusiasm and incentive in them to achieve higher goals and also cause to realize the desirable results through framing process. To interpret the obtained findings from

analyzing the data of this hypothesis, it can be said that leaders with having framing characteristic can be effective on creating and flourishing creativity and innovation in personnel and can guide and lead them to improve themselves to higher level of capabilities and capacities and lead them to do efforts and services more than their given duties for improving and enhancing the productivity of organization.

H3. There is a relationship between component of effective management and personnel creativity level

As data have abnormal distribution, spearman correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of effective management and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.357. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. To interpret the obtained findings from analyzing the data of this hypothesis, although the lower value of personnel creativity allocated to this component among other components of transformational leadership, but as there is a direct and significant relationship it can be said that having effective behaviors including pleasant verbal behaviors and descriptions from transformational leader along with considering to changes of organization and society may lead to readiness for encountering with critical situation and necessity for integrating with each other to achieve organizational goals, higher efforts of followers, their desirable satisfactory, increasing group integration and having useful and new ideas.

H4. There is a relationship between component of ideal characteristics and personnel creativity level

As data have normal distribution, pearson correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of ideal characteristics and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.404. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. To interpret the obtained findings from analyzing the data of this hypothesis, it can be argued that the dimension of ideal characteristics has the most relationship with personnel creativity level in comparison with other studied components. In other words, ideal characteristics of transformational leadership

Table 5: Pearson correlation test between ideal characteristics and personnel creativity level

Dimension of ideal characteristics		
Personnel creativity	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.404
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 6: Pearson correlation test between intellectual stimulus and personnel creativity level

Dimension of intellectual stimulus		
Personnel creativity	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.402
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 7: Spearman correlation test between inspiring incitement and personnel creativity level

Dimension of inspiring incitement		
Personnel creativity	Spearman correlation coefficient	0.398
	Significance level	0.000
	Number	155

Table 8: Pearson correlation test between intercational leadership and personnel creativity level

Dimension of intercational leadership		
Personnel creativity	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.015
	Significance level	0.044
	Number	155

such as inspiring pride and honor to members, behaving in a manner which cause others' respect, may cause personnel feel merit and authority, be assured and undertaken the goals, have opportunity and ability to create creativity and new ideas. And it can assist them in achieving more difficult goals and resolving new and different problems.

H5. There is a relationship between component of intellectual stimulus and personnel creativity level

As data have normal distribution, pearson correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of intellectual stimulus and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.402. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. As per Bass findings in his researches, through intellectual stimulus on followers, the leader can motivate them to detect new solutions and

rethink on solving organizational problems. In fact, the leader behavior make a challenge for followers which causes personnel attempt again on their under process task and rethink about a task which they can do it better. To interpret the obtained findings from analyzing the data of this hypothesis, it can be argued that, the intellectual stimulus has the most relationship with personnel creativity level than other studied components, of course after the dimension of ideal characteristics. Based on reinvestigating the basic assumptions to ask about their relations, the transformational leader recommended new thinking way on how to perform and complete tasks, encouraging followers and personnel on untraditional thinking to deal with traditional issues, persuading them to look at problems from different aspects and providing the required ground for creating creativity and innovation in personnel. In this case, followers' mistakes are not criticized and creativity is encouraged freely. Leaders encourage followers to attempt for presenting new ideas, but they emphasize on rationality as well.

H6. There is a relationship between component of inspiring incitement and personnel creativity level

As data have abnormal distribution, spearman correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between component of inspiring incitement and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.398. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.000 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the desirability of coefficient. As per Hersi Blanchard (1997), it is not important if personnel can not enjoy from their works even all different technical systems run very good. It is worthy not refrain any perceivable efforts for maintaining incentive even during erosive struggles. Motivating and enhancing incentive in followers is occurred via their feelings. Inspiring incitement emphasizes on inner incentives and feelings not on daily exchanges between leader and followers. To interpret the obtained findings from analyzing the data of this hypothesis, it can be said that inspiring incitement is one of those components which have high average value in creating creativity in personnel and the transformational leader can lead to make creative ideas by inspiring personnel on being optimistic toward future and stating an interesting and attractive idea about future and noticing to their incentives in higher levels. And the transformational leader can invigorate and strengthen the organization members.

H7. There is a relationship between interaction of leaders and personnel creativity level

As data have normal distribution, pearson correlation coefficient was used for calculating correlation. As shown in the above summarized test results, there is correlation between intercational leadership and personnel creativity level and this correlation value is equal to 0.015. Validity level of correlation coefficient test is equal to 0.044 which is less than error level of 0.05 and represents the above relation is relatively weak. The result of this hypothesis is in conformity with some other researches which have been done in this regard, including Howel and olive (1993), Kark and Shamir (2000), Ingram (1996), Jang (2001) and Javedani (2002). Most of these researches concluded that there is a positive relationship between interactional

leadership and many organizational variables especially after its provisional reward, but this relationship is weaker than the relationship of transformational leadership with organizational variables. To interpret the obtained findings from analyzing the data of this hypothesis, it can be said that although there is a significant relationship between interaction and personnel creativity but this relationship can not be too strong. In other words, provisional reward to personnel against their effective efforts may enhance their interest and endeavor. But this aim can not be reachabable through straight supervision on personnel activity and management based on exception as one of intercational leadership dimensions. And in this case, the sufficient ground for flourishing new ideas can not be provided.

Average distribution table of transformational leadership and personnel creativity level

		Behavioral pattern of insight-giving	Behavioral pattern of effective management	Behavioral pattern of framing	Dimension of leadership ideal characteristics	Dimension of inspiring incitement	Dimension of intellectual stimulus
		Standard deviation± Average	Standard deviation± Average	Standard deviation± Average	Standard deviation± Average	Standard deviation± Average	Standard deviation± Average
Creativity level	Creative	13/5±2/5	10/5±1/5	12/5±2/5	23±1/5	17±3	16/5±3
	Upper intermediate creativity	14±1/5	10/5±1/5	13/5±1/5	20±3	16/5±4	17±4/5
	Intermediate creativity	11±3/5	8/5±2/5	10/5±2/5	16/5±6	13/5±4	13±4
	Lower intermediate creativity	7/5±4/5	6/5±3	8/5±3	12/5±6/5	11±4	10±4/5
	Non creative	7/5±3/5	6±3	6/5±3	11/5±5/5	10±4	10±4

According to the data of above table about grading the creativity level and its relationship with each of transformational leadership components, it is observed that in the row of upper intermediate creativity, the characteristic of "intellectual stimulus dimension" has the highest average value and "behavioral pattern of effective management" has the lowest average value. In other rows, the highest average value is related to leadership ideal characteristics and the lowest average value is related to behavioral pattern of effective management. Considering to the above table and referring to transformational leadership components, it can be said that the dimesion of ideal characteristics has the highest average value in relation to personnel creativity level.

**CONCLUSION**

Increasing creativity in organizations can lead to improving the quality and quantity of services, reducing charges, preventing sources' wastages, decreasing bureaucracy procedure and subsequently increasing efficiency and productivity and creating incitement and

job satisfactory in personnel. The most important feature of the present era is insecurity, complexity, globalization and increasing technological changes. For achieving the success in this circumstance, it is required to change the organizational tasks and activities and management way especially leadership of organizations. As chang and transformation is inevitable in the present organizations, hence the first essential step is recognizing and nurturing transformational and aware managers and having the transformational leaders is prerequisite for creating change. Obtained results of this research on Bojnord higher education centers (Islamic Azad University, Payame Noor University and Medical Sciences University) revealed that management and leadership style and governing status of the organization has highly positive effect on personnel approach toward creativity and creating new ideas against facing with crises and difficulties and improving productivity of organization.

In order to success and perform effective role in the organization, managers and leaders of organizations should have viewpoint and attitude toward environmental variables as well as should consider the organization and

management as one system and should investigate personnel behavior based on this attitude and select leadership style and method based on current situation and reality, nature of work, duties and characteristics of personnel. Thus, successful organizations need leaders who believe in transformation in the organization and determine the proper direction and future trend of the organization, guide people to that way and motivate personnel for transformation. Through creating new ideas and new perspectives, the transformational leaders put new path for growth and flourishing in organizations and they would promise for improving organizations' performance. So as found by comparing traditional and transformational leaders' activities, although environmental insecurity, instabilities, modifications and changes effect on organizations but it is an urgent need to have transformational leaders so that organizations' performance can be increased. Transformational leadership attempts to predict environmental changes by providing good opportunities for improving the performance of present organizations which can not stop the rapid changes. For being successful, organizations need transformational leaders to create incentive for change and by continuous investment, depict the desirable future for developing personnel in order to reach desirable ideals.

Overall, in the light of the obtained results of this study, the following suggestions are proposed by the researcher for further investigation in this area of study.

- Considering to the research main hypothesis which shown that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and personnel creativity level, it is recommended that:
- Administrators and officers put in- service training courses for educating transformational leaders and managers at their priorities;
- It is recommended to provide organizations' managers with adequate books, suitable educational films and written experiences of successful organizations who have transformational leadership style.
- In those professions which need exact and rapid decision- making, managers take this matter into consideration that personnel should be employed based on having creative thinking ability and innovation and creativity capacity;
- Organizations' managers should notice to their roles and effects on selecting leadership style and design some plans for increasing personnel creativity;
- Considering to the obtained result of first subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between insight-giving and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that managers to attempt for depicting a perspective in the organization and conveying and inspiring it in personnel;
- Considering to the obtained result of second subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership framing and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that managers and leaders define and determine their organization goal by wording interesting and exciting terms for its followers;
- Considering to the obtained result of third subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership effective management and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that leader to behave in a way that make him attractive and pleasant for others, in this case others will form their beliefs about him;
- Considering to the obtained result of fourth subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leaders' ideal characteristics and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that in order to select and appoint managers in organizations, their charisma and ability for influence on personnel should be noticed;
- Considering to the obtained result of fifth subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between intellectual stimulus and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that managers arrange some consulting meetings and collect opinions and ideas of personnel regarding organizational problems and get some solutions from personnel, in this way it can persuade personnel to think about challenges of organization and present some new solutions. And it can persuade personnel to increase their reliability and their cooperation, prevent their thinking stringency and enhance innovation and creativity level.
- Considering to the obtained result of sixth subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership inspiring incitement and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that managers apply emotional symbols practically to absorb



members efforts for achieving something higher than their personal interests, and in this way improve the followers' spirit to strive for achieving goals.

- Considering to the obtained result of seventh subsidiary hypothesis which shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between interaction, especially provisional reward and personnel creativity level, so it is recommended that reward system and personnel valuation should be designed upon their cooperation, ability for innovation and creativity in the organization

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