
Yuni Siswanti¹, Joko Susanto¹
¹Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Background - The COVID-19 pandemic impacts public health and the Indonesian people’s economic conditions, education, and social life. Vocational high school graduates who have been looking for work in the last two years have experienced significant disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Competition in the labor market is very high and coincides with the worker who has also experienced termination of employment (PHK) from the company.

Research Purpose - This study tests and analyzes the influence of empowering leadership on individual creativity, moderated by competence.

Research Methodology - Research conducted survey method on vocational high school graduate or equivalent in the Yogyakarta Special Region (Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Municipality, Bantul, Kulonprogo, and Gunungkidul). Sampling was done by convenience sampling and data collection by distributing questionnaires (google form). The number of respondents who filled out and returned the questionnaire was 108 people. The data analysis technique used in SPSS 24. Test the instrument with a test of validity (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) and reliability by looking at Cronbach Alpha. Hypothesis testing using simple regression (H1 test) and tiered regression test (H2 test).

Research Result / Contribution - The results of this study found that: there are several limitations in this research that require further research. (1) there is an influence of empowering leadership on individual creativity, (2) this influence is moderated by competence. This research has practical implications for leaders, and the discussion results show that further research still needs to be discussed.

Keywords: empowering leadership, individual creativity, competence

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will impact public health and the economic conditions, education, and social life of the Indonesian people. This pandemic has caused several regional governments to enforce Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policies which have implications for limiting community activities, including economic activities, educational activities, and other social activities. This condition is also experienced by alumni of vocational high schools throughout Indonesia. Vocational high school graduates who have been looking for work in the last two years have experienced significant disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, vocational high school alumni who graduated this year experienced teaching difficulties in the latter part of their studies. The immediate impact they experience is a major distraction in the final judgment they should receive. However, under any conditions, they still pass in this heartbreaking global recession. The labor market conditions that tend to be problematic are a new obstacle for graduates. Competition in the labor market is very high and

Yuni Siswanti, Joko Susanto

Empowering Leadership and Individual Creativity

Empowering leadership is defined as a circumstance in which a leader contributes to followers’ authority, autonomy, motivation, and other advantages (Siswanti & Muafi, 2020; Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Sims et al., 2009; Muafi et al., 2019). The features of empowering leadership behavior, according to Martin et al. (2013), facilitate members’ autonomy and competence. Aburuman Research (2016); Zhang & Bartol (2010); Zhang & Zhou (2014); Ekmecelioglu & Zbag (2014) found that empowering leadership is an important factor on staff creativity. The findings of Fong and Snape’s (2015) study show that empowering leaders has an impact on staffs’ willingness to participate in the creative process because leaders tend to build followers’ confidence, emphasize the essence of leadership and duty processes, and give them the...
Yuni Siswanti, Joko Susanto

Empowering leadership has a positive effect on individual creativity.

H1: Empowering leadership has a positive effect on individual creativity

Empowering Leadership-Individual Competence-Creativity

Wibowo et al. (2007) define competence as the ability to complete a job or task based on skills, knowledge and the work attitude required by the job. Competence, according to Veithzal (2003), is a skill, skill, and ability. Competent is the root term, which implies "capable, capable, skilled." Competence refers to a person's qualities or characteristics that enable him to be effective at his job.

Research by Fong & Snape (2015), Duan, Tang, Li, Y., Cheng, & Zhang (2020) show that organizational support in leaders who can empower members will affect individual creativity. The research recommendation of Duan et al. (2020) states that many factors may influence the strong impact of leadership empowerment on individual creativity. One of them is personal competence. Therefore, this study wants to examine the role of competence in moderating the impact of leader empowerment on individual creativity.

H2: Empowering leadership affects individual creativity moderated by competence

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method uses a survey by distributing questionnaires to alumni of vocational high school or equivalent in Yogyakarta Special Region covering Sleman, Bantul, Kuto Progo, Gunung Kidul, and Yogyakarta Municipality.

Population

The population in this study is the alumni of vocational high school or equivalent in Yogyakarta Special Region who are currently working, totaling 108 people.

Measurement

Instrument measures empowering leadership using the ELQ instrument (Arnold et al., 2000), 38 items. Individual creativity was measured by 13 items adopted from the creativity measure of Tierney et al. (1999). Personal competence adopted the 20 items Spencer & Spencer instrument (1993). All instruments were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree).

Instrument Testing

The instrument test was carried out by testing the validity using confirmatory factor analysis and reliability testing. Cronbach Alpha showed the results of the reliability test. According to Hair et al. (2019), the limit of the reliability test is 0.7, whereas if z = 0.6, it can be accepted in exploratory research.

Hypothesis testing method

Hypothesis test (H1) using simple regression. The H2 test uses a tiered regression.
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (person)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>20 – 25</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 – 30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience (years)</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 – 6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Status</td>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumlah</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Table 1 exhibits that the larger part of respondents from vocational high school alumni aged between 20 to 25 years is 64.82%. Women dominated respondents by 58.3%. The longest working period of 1-3 years is 44%, and most respondents are unmarried (71.29%).

Validity and Reliability Test Results

The results of the CFA test, all instruments for the three variables were declared valid because their values were above 0.6 (loading factor >=0.6). Therefore, and each item was grouped according to its variables. The reliability test results showed that the three research variables were reliable because Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients > 0.6.

Descriptive Test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Empowerment (X)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.6441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kompetence (Z)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>.5731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Creativity (Y)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>.7237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data processing

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows that the descriptive average of the variables is high because it has an average value above 4.00. In general, it can be said that vocational high school alumni in Yogyakarta have a high perception of the empowering leadership they have experienced so far, high individual competence, and creativity.
Hypothesis Test Results

Table 3. The Effect of Leadership Empowerment on Psychological Empowerment Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.439 (.258)</td>
<td>4.734</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Empowerment (X)</td>
<td>.536 (.059)</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td>8.233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Individual Creativity (Z)

The leadership empowerment variable has a significant value of 0.000 < 0.05, as shown in Table 3 (test stage 2). It suggests that empowering leaders has a positive and large impact on the creativity of working vocational high school graduates, indicating that H1 is supported.

Table 4. Moderation Regression Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LE → IC</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>8.233</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE, C, Interaction → IC</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>4.276</td>
<td>7.276</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data processing

In the stepwise regression test, it is known that the R Square value of the second stage of the regression test is 0.058, and the R Square of the stage 1 regression is 0.37. There is an increase in the influence of leadership empowerment on individual creativity when there is personal competence. Thus H2 is supported, meaning that competence plays a role in moderating the impact of leadership empowerment on individual creativity.

Discussion

The hypothesis 1 test, which claims that empowered leadership has a beneficial impact on individual creativity, was found to be true. The results of this research support the research of Conger & Kanungo (1988); Frank, & Liu (2018); Aburaman (2016); Zhang & Bartol (2010); Zhang & Zhou (2014); Fong & Snape (2015); Duan., Tang., Li, Y., Cheng., & Zhang (2020); Malik (2021). Çekmecelioglu & Zbağ (2014) Ekmeceili & Zba (2014) studied the influence of psychological empowerment on individual creativity, focusing on four cognitions (competence, influence, self-determination, and meaningfulness). According to their findings, psychological empowerment has a significant impact on individual creativity. Employees will be more imaginative and work harder if they find their employment worthwhile. Unique creativity has a good association with competence and effects. In the face of the present COVID-19 pandemic, vocational high school alumni in Yogyakarta Special Region are also experiencing it. They endeavor to make their work more meaningful, which is accompanied by a rise in self-competence and self-determination awareness, both of which have an impact on employees’ high creativity.
Hypothesis 2, which states that leadership empowerment positively affects individual creativity, moderated by competence, is supported. This research succeeded in answering the research recommendations of Duan et al. (2020), which stated that many factors probably influenced the strong influence of leadership empowerment on individual creativity. One of them is personal competence. Vocational high school graduates who work in MSMEs and companies/industries who feel high leadership empowerment will continually improve their creativity. They make this effort to produce a good performance and be maintained as employees during the current pandemic. When vocational high school graduates already have adequate competence to meet the organization’s needs, the impact of leadership empowerment on developing individual creativity is much stronger. The competencies possessed are manifested in broader skills in carrying out work, sufficient knowledge and understanding of their work, high work values, interests, and professional work attitudes.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusion
Empowering leadership positively affects individual creativity, and personal competence moderates the influence of empowering leadership on individual creativity.

Research Contribution
The managerial contributions of this research are: leaders/managers can try to increase employees’ creativity by empowering them to do their tasks. Individual creativity can be developed when the leader gives each employee/personal freedom to express their ideas. On the other hand, personal competencies can be pursued by leaders/managers through various ways such as: providing training opportunities, continuing studies to a higher level for individuals who are considered to have high intellectual intelligence and good school interests, bringing in instructors or experts to provide appropriate training with today’s needs, as well as sending employees to other organizations to learn so that their competence is increased. When competence rises, it will increase the relationship of leadership empowerment to individual creativity. Individual creativity can affect personal achievement so that it has a beneficial effect on the company.

Research limitations and recommendations
This study only took respondents from vocational school graduates or graduates from peer schools. The population is still quite small. More research should be done on alumni with higher education levels, such as a diploma or university alumni, who have a large number of respondents and live outside of Yogyakarta Special Region.

This study only includes individual competence as a moderating variable. Further research should develop other moderating variables that might influence the relationship of leadership empowerment to individual creativity, such as personality, self-efficacy, locus of control, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational culture, employee engagement, and personal characteristics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The authors would like to thank the Institute for Research and Community Service at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Yogyakarta, Indonesia, for providing funds for this research.
REFERENCES


Yuni Siswanti, Joko Susanto


