



# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION; TOWARD AN ELDERLY-FRIENDLY CITY

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## ABSTRACT

**Abstract:** The article examines the role of transformational leadership in public sector innovation, specifically in addressing the challenges of managing older people to build an elderly-friendly community. The research focuses on the leadership of Jambi Mayor in employing innovation to realize Jambi as an Elderly-Friendly City. This is a descriptive qualitative study that aims to identify new information related to the transformational leadership of Jambi Mayor in innovating an Elderly-Friendly City. The authors identified transformational leadership as a major style in carrying out innovation. The study found that Jambi City is continuously promoting the importance of creating elderly-friendly cities and communities through the leadership of its Mayor. The study found that transformational leadership practices played a significant role in the process of making Jambi City an Elderly-Friendly City. The mayor motivated civil servants to improve their attitudes and assumptions towards public health services. The research concludes that leadership styles have a direct impact on the level of innovation adopted and the success or failure of strategic responses.

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## INTRODUCTION

Jambi City is committed to creating an elderly-friendly environment. To achieve this, Jambi City must develop effective strategies. The goal is to ensure that older adults can be happy, prosperous, active, and productive. Policymakers should focus on developing an elderly-friendly city using the 21 leading indicators developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). These indicators are used to establish an elderly-friendly community. All of them are the results based on the 2013 Elderly-Friendly City Assessment (Verma & Huttunen, 2015).

The health sector faces a challenge in promoting the wellbeing of older individuals. The health sector faces a challenge in promoting the wellbeing of older individuals. Specifically, providing inclusive health services is a priority. Kota Jambi has undergone significant improvements since it was declared a smart city in 2017 (Saadah, 2021). One of the key visions of Jambi City's Smart City initiative is Smart People (Saadah, 2021), which includes inclusive development as one of its indicators. Inclusive development involves considering the interests of diverse backgrounds in the development agenda, including the needs of the elderly community.

Public sector innovations have changed the treatment and perception of the elderly. Jambi City has implemented several infrastructures and programs to improve the welfare of the elderly, such as building

green open spaces with facilities for them and a complete integrated service post that provides specific services to increase their independence. The Jambi City Government is committed to enhancing the well-being of the elderly in every development program. Respect for the elderly and honoring parents are fundamental values in Jambi City, as emphasized by the Mayor's invitation.

The Jambi City government is committed to meeting the needs of the elderly population, as demonstrated by their mission to create an Elderly Friendly City. The Jambi City Government aims to create an Elderly Friendly City by providing special facilities for the elderly. These facilities include special lanes for the elderly in public services such as government offices, hospitals, health centers, and licensing service outlets.

Jambi City has implemented measures to become more elderly-friendly, including the creation of city parks and green open spaces that provide facilities for the elderly, such as those found in the Tugu Keris Siginjai area and Taman Jomblo. Additionally, the Jambi City Government offers health services specifically for the elderly, such as fitness check-up programs and assistance with nutrition and home renovation for elderly, veterans, and widows who pioneered independence. Additionally, the Public Health Center offers an elderly clinic that provides exceptional services for senior citizens. The Jambi City Government also supports economic empowerment for the elderly through productive economic assistance, ensuring they maintain their dignity and independence in their old age.

Jambi City is committed to promoting the creation of elderly-friendly cities and communities under the leadership of its Mayor. The Mayor's transformational leadership practices were evident in the process of Jambi City becoming an Elderly-Friendly City. The Mayor motivated civil servants in Jambi to change their attitudes and assumptions towards public health services.

Public sector innovations have changed the treatment and perception of the elderly. These innovations are closely tied to the leadership of the Jambi City government, which aims to create an elderly-friendly city. The mayor aims to transform the Jambi City Government by inspiring individual effort and raising awareness of the importance of organizational outcomes to become an Elderly-Friendly City. This will activate higher order needs and encourage individuals to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze how transformational leadership is utilized in public sector innovation to achieve the goal of a Jambi Elderly-Friendly City. This article presents a summary of the role of transformational leadership in promoting public sector innovation to achieve the goal of creating an Elderly-Friendly City in Jambi.

Transformational leadership approach is considered the most suitable style to nurture followers' attitudes in the context of organizational change (Bakker et al., 2022). Transformational leadership had a stronger effect on project success than transactional leadership (Abbas & Ali, 2021). Over the years, a number of research findings have been reported on the relationship between particular leader behaviors and/or leadership styles and creativity in organizations (Gao et al., 2021; Guay & Choi, 2015; Mumford et al., 2002; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

Leaders supported constructive problem-solving and followers' self-efficacy, and followers displayed higher levels of creativity (D. et al., 2017). Oldham and Cummings also found that employees produced more creative work when they were supervised in a supportive, non-controlling manner (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). There are several reasons to believe that transformative leadership will boost employee creativity and innovation. First, transformational leaders go beyond just trading contracts for desired performance by actively engaging followers' personal value systems (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). Transformational leaders raise followers' understanding of the importance and values associated with desired outcomes, raise their performance expectations, and increase their willingness to transcend their self-interests for the sake of the collective entity by articulating an important vision and mission for the organization. Second, through giving intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders inspire followers to think "beyond the box" and to engage in generative and exploratory thought processes.

To summarize, there is extensive theoretical justification for expecting leaders to play a significant role in developing an innovative organizational culture and fostering creativity in firms. Furthermore, the importance. Novel services, technology, organizational structures, managerial techniques, procedures, or policies introduced by government agencies to solve unique difficulties confronting the organization, nation, or society are examples of public sector innovation (Putra et al., 2021). One of the most crucial aspects impacting the success or failure of public sector innovation is leadership.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: The first section will discuss the background of the article. Section approaches will include information on methods such as search strategy, interview, and observation methods. Section results and discussion will present results and will go through the finding as well as discussion. Finally, there is a conclusion to this article.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research focuses on the leadership of the Jambi Mayor to employ innovation in realizing Jambi is Elderly-Friendly City. The authors drew the components of transformational leadership as a significant style in carrying invention. This research is a descriptive qualitative study conducted to identify new information related to the transformational leadership of Jambi Mayor to innovate as an Elderly-Friendly City. The type of this research, based on its implementation, is development research for developing practical models or formations. The authors collected the primary data through structured or unstructured interviews and observations. Data from various sources, such as news from the media, government regulations, awards, and assessments from related stakeholders, were taken to support primary data. These data were used as materials to support the research analysis.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Leadership is gaining popularity among academics and practitioners in public sector management, (Sazzad et al., 2021) and is among the core concepts in public administration. (Chapman et al., 2016) With the increased availability of research data, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep track of the conditions under which leadership makes or does not make a difference in the public sector. Leadership

in the public sector is favorably and consistently correlated with positive results, such as performance, and negatively connected with poor outcomes, such as turnover.(Wright & Pandey, 2010).

Academics and practitioners have recently been more interested in public sector innovation. In many industrialized Western democracies, (Borins, 2008) public sector innovation has become a political and administrative priority, and it is quickly spreading to poorer countries. Public organizations can improve public service quality and performance by applying innovation. (Damanpour & Schneider, 2009) Governments rely heavily on successful innovation(Walker et al., 2002) in the use of resources and technology to achieve effectiveness and efficiency(Sung et al., 2017).

The significance and benefits of public sector innovation have compelled national governments all over the world to establish innovation policies in order to improve public services(Kusumasari et al., 2019). The Indonesian government also pledges to foster public service innovation through a national regulatory framework(Pradana et al., 2022). The Local Government Regulation Number 38 Year 2017 governs how local governments conduct local innovation. Local government is likely the most prominent performer of innovation in the Indonesian public-sector.(Pratama, 2019) Jambi City is one of the best performers in the sector of public service innovation. The city of Jambi received the 'TOP 25 Innovation' award with an innovation for the Clinic for the elderly at the Putri Ayu Health Center in 2015. The award is an achievement obtained by the Jambi City Government, especially for agencies and stakeholders in the health sector and the entire community of Jambi City.

This innovation is one of the several commitments of the Jambi city government to create an elderly-friendly city. In 2009 the Putri Ayu Community Health Center was appointed by the Jambi City Health Office as an age-friendly health center. Commitment to treat the older with courtesy and compassion, dissatisfaction, and patient complaints must immediately get a solution for service improvement. The age-friendly health center is a health center that provides health services to older people, which include promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services. The benefits are emphasized on aspects or proactive elements, ease of service process, politeness, according to cooperation standards with cross-sectoral components.

To follow up on this, the head of the Putri Ayu Health Center sparked the idea of an elderly clinic to make it easier for elderly patients to get various types of health services at once in only one room and no longer need to bother waiting in line. This shows that transformational leadership in public sector innovation can take the form of top-down innovation initiated by executive leadership and bottom-up innovation started by civil servants.

Innovation tends to be “led by politicians” in response to crises, particularly in a significant issue. This review explores these challenges for leaders and decision-makers and evaluates the general ability of the leadership role in innovation processes across the Jambi development agenda. Besides that, transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential and exceed their own expectations. This approach emphasizes a leader's ability

to empower and encourage their followers to take ownership of their work, develop their skills and capabilities, and become leaders themselves.

According to the interviews conducted at the Putri Ayu Elderly Clinic, the clinic was inaugurated in July 2014. That year, the Putri Ayu Health Center was the only health center with a special clinic for older people in Jambi City. Still, over time in 2021 now, many health centers have more senior clinics, such as the Simpang IV Sipin health center and many more.

At the elderly clinic, services are carried out separately from counter services and treatment to pharmacies; the service takes place in one room on the first floor; this is done so that older people do not have to climb stairs again. This clinic has six workers: two doctors, two nurses, and one medical record officer and pharmacist.

Over time, the elderly clinic is not only limited to health services in one room. The clinics developed various activities involving the older group. Health workers play an active role in motivating and encouraging older people to access health services, including exercise for older people every Friday at the Museum Field, which is located in front of the health center. There is also counseling, consultations, or an integrated health post for older people every month.

This fact shows that the leader of the city of Jambi is a visionary who can inspire and guide their followers towards a shared vision and common goals to become elderly-friendly city. Transformational leaders are led by example, display high levels of integrity and ethical behavior, and demonstrate a genuine interest in their followers' personal growth and development. The Putri Ayu health center renovated one of the toilets into a unique toilet for older people. There is also a handrail facility in the hallway next to the health center entrance so that older people can walk freely. There are also nutritional health workers so that elderly patients can also consult on nutrition as a support for therapy. But during the current pandemic, activities outside the home are limited to reduce the spread of COVID-19 because older people are more vulnerable to COVID-19. Putri Ayu Health Center maintains and continues to carry out updates for the elderly clinic, all for the convenience of elderly patients who want to seek treatment.

The innovation of the Putri Ayu Elderly Clinic at that time was going well. It led the city of Jambi to win an award from the central government for the success of the Jambi City Government in organizing a Healthy City in 2017, which was handed over directly by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the Mayor of Jambi also won the Ksatria Bhakti Husada award and the TOP 25 Innovation award with the innovation of the Putri Ayu Health Center Elderly Clinic in 2015.

This award is an achievement obtained by the Jambi City Government, especially for agencies and stakeholders in the health sector and all Jambi City people who have contributed to Jambi City winning the title of the 6th Healthy City in Indonesia. Hard work, innovative work, and sincere work of all Jambi City Government apparatus, especially the Health Service and related stakeholders and the Healthy City Forum, including, of course, the role of the community and RT heads throughout Jambi City. Apart from being an

achievement, this award must also be used as a motivation for its staff and all stakeholders in the health sector to continue to work wholeheartedly to provide the best health services to the community.

A few months ago, the Putri Ayu Health Center played a role in the success of the simultaneous movement of vaccination week for the elderly (elderly) throughout Jambi Province at the Indoor Tennis Court of the Jambi City Education Office, on Tuesday morning 8 June 2021. Elderly people always seem to have a special position in the hearts of people. a mayor of Jambi, Syarif Fasha with his deputy dr. Maulana. The form of love for senior citizens, he proved in various forms of attention and concrete actions. As seen in the event held in commemoration of the 2021 National Elderly Day, Fasha and Maulana shared the task of celebrating the elderly in two different locations. Taking place at the Jambi City National Education Tennis Court, hundreds of elderly people from various areas of Jambi City received donations of compassion and free vaccinations from the Mayor of Jambi, who in 2019, the central government has named a National Figure Caring for the Elderly.

The Jambi City Government's steps to create an elderly-friendly city did not stop there, the Jambi City Government through the Deputy Mayor of Maulana, formed the Elderly Regional Commission (Komda) which worked under the coordination of the Jambi Province Elderly Regional Commission. Komda is tasked with ensuring there is a guarantee for the elderly to receive services and assistance in the economic field so that the elderly can remain productive and independent. This is happening because transformational leadership is generally considered to be a more empowering and sustainable approach to leadership.

The Jambi City Government also provides health services for older people, particularly by holding a fitness check-up program for older people and providing assistance for them or veterans and widows who pioneered independence in the form of nutrition fulfillment and home renovation activities. In addition, there is also an elderly clinic at the health center to provide exceptional and excellent services for older people. The Jambi City Government also helps older people be economically empowered through productive economic assistance so that they remain empowered and dignified in their old age. This achievement cannot be separated from the mayor's role as a leader in realizing Jambi as an elderly-friendly city through various transformational and innovative programs. Overall, transformational leadership is a powerful approach that can lead to significant improvements in organizational performance, team member engagement, and overall satisfaction.

## **CONCLUSION**

Calling back to the motivation of this study, which is aimed to examine the role of transformational leadership in public sector innovation, specifically in addressing the challenges in managing older people to build an elderly-friendly community, some key important findings can be summarized. The main finding of this article is that leadership styles can influence the level of innovation adopted and the success or failure of the strategic response. Transformational leadership is a powerful approach that can lead to significant improvements in organizational performance, employee engagement, and overall satisfaction.

More research in this area, particularly on transformational leadership as a source of innovation leading models could be helpful.

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