Ambidextrous Leadership On Innovation Performance : The Mediating Role of Employee Creativity At PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus

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ABSTRACT

Research Aims: This study aims to test and analyze the effect of ambidextrous leadership on innovation performance with employee creativity as an intervening variable.

Design/methodology/approach: This research uses a quantitative approach involving 48 employees at PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus Retail Function SBM Lamongan Gresik. The sampling technique used a saturated sample of 48 respondents. The statistical analysis used in this research is SEM PLS with the help of SmartPLS 3.2.9 software.

Research Findings: The findings of this study indicate that ambidextrous leadership has no significant effect on innovation performance. Ambidextrous leadership has a significant positive effect on employee creativity. Employee creativity has a significant positive effect on innovation performance. Employee creativity in this study can mediate the influence of ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This research provides new insights into ambidextrous leadership on innovation performance through employee creativity.

Keywords: Ambidextrous leadership, innovation performance, employee creativity

Introduction

The progress of the business world in the current era of increasingly rapid globalization means that companies are trying to maintain competitive advantage (Gerlach et al., 2020). In the global environment, companies or organizations face several complex and conflicting problems, one of which is global competition as pointed out by Kassotaki (2019). Efforts to develop companies to be able to compete in today's increasingly competitive corporate environment require the potential utilization of human resources which requires every organization to be able to compete competitively in global competition. An organization's performance in managing resources can be used to determine the level of success (Ma et al., 2019). Organizations that have innovation through creativity are an important factor in achieving success and competitive advantage. One of the complex climates in the workplace today shows that creativity is a valuable tool for gaining a competitive advantage as stated by Jung et al (2023).
Leadership style is seen as one of the important things in determining employee creativity and organizational growth to achieve innovation performance. The diversity of empirical studies from previous researchers regarding leadership and innovation can be concluded according to Rosing et al. (2011), that an appropriate leadership model is needed, namely ambidextrous leadership for innovation, where a leader can show explorative and exploitative behavior to his followers to carry out innovation performance with employee creativity.

Research proving the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance was conducted by Gerlach et al., (2020); Jia et al., (2022); Rosing et al., (2011); Zacher & Rosing, (2015); Khan et al., (2022) which resulted in that ambidextrous leadership has a positive impact on innovation performance. This happens because of the high level of employee resilience and employees trust their managers or supervisors at work. In contrast to the results of research conducted by Haider et al., (2023) which states that there is no relationship between ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance. Other findings of ambidextrous leadership with opening and closing behavior can develop employees' creative ideas, and encourage employees to innovate (Jain, 2023).

Companies operating in the trade sector require high levels of creativity and innovation to increase company productivity. PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus is a trading company in the oil and gas sector that focuses on fuel for industrial purposes. Sales Branch Manager (SBM) is a position responsible for the management and development of Pertamina sales. The company provides innovations both for service and through the "definitely right and excellent" program for service at gas stations and also "Pertamina Way" for service.

The leader of PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus retail function in the SBM section of Lamongan and Gresik areas provides an understanding and the importance of innovating both for individuals and organizations in the company. Innovation performance can foster creativity in employees is part of the important role of a leader who can encourage his followers. Human resources such as employees have an important role in collaboration and orientation and are committed to individuals, teams, and retail functions to create synergies for innovation performance. Based on the above views, this research is interesting and important to study the effect of ambidextrous leadership on innovation performance through employee creativity.

Literature Review

Ambidextrous Leadership

Leadership, in general without mentioning a particular style, plays an important role in organizational change. Organizational change is a necessity for organizations to survive. Not just to live today, but to prepare for life in the future (Wijayati et al., 2018). One of the long-standing concepts in organizational studies is that the long-term success of an organization depends on its ability to make good use of its current
capabilities while simultaneously exploring fundamentally new competencies. (Ma et al., 2019).

In organizational management, managers are often faced with leadership situations with opposing tensions or paradoxes. Leaders are required to consistently integrate and coordinate two opposing but complementary leadership behaviors to strengthen the interaction effect. The leader's behavior is a closing behavior in which the leader can sanction mistakes, which both opening behaviors can tolerate simultaneously. This contradictory yet complementary leadership style is defined as ambidextrous leadership (Ma et al., 2019; Souza-Luz & Gavronski, 2020).

The ambidextrous leadership style is very important to encourage innovation and creativity, taking into account the current uncertain situation and developing ambidextrous trends in organizational behavior. (Muhammad et al., 2021). According to Rosing et.al. (2011), an ambidextrous leadership is a leader who can efficiently apply different behaviors to meet dynamic demands in the innovation process. Based on cognitive perspective studies, it can be seen that ambidextrous leadership must have the ability to apply opening and closing leadership behaviors and behaviors flexibly.

According to ambidextrous leadership theory, there are three elements for innovation: behavior to encourage exploration, behavior to encourage exploitation, and flexibility over time. These leadership behaviors can switch between the 2 behaviors when necessary. Open leadership behaviors refer to leader behaviors that encourage subordinates to do things differently and experiment, provide opportunities for subordinates to think and perform autonomously, and support subordinates' efforts to deal with the current situation. Closing leadership, on the other hand, is characterized as leader behavior that reduces variation in subordinate behavior by taking necessary actions, setting explicit guidelines, and evaluating goal achievement (Rosing et al., 2011; Zacher & Rosing, 2015).

**Innovation Performance**

Innovation performance indicates the success of a creative idea that can be implemented. The complexity of the innovation process includes 2 requirements, namely creativity and implementation. Employee performance is the result of effort achieved in work performance, both in terms of quality and quantity, which is carried out concerning the job objectives set by the company. (Rahman & Kistyanto 2019; Rahman et al., 2020). Meanwhile, implementation requires a focus on the usefulness and completion of the product appropriately and efficiently (Bledow et al., 2011).

According to (Yuan & Woodman, 2010) innovation performance is the self-will of someone in the organization to introduce, propose, and apply new ideas, products, and procedures to their work. Innovation needs to be done by developing new products, services, and methods so that organizations or companies can increase their competitive advantage.
Employee performance is the result of work achieved by an employee from participating and contributing to carrying out tasks by responsibilities (Hadi et al., 2023). Employee performance can be interpreted as the results or achievements obtained by an employee in carrying out his duties and responsibilities at work (Prasetyo & Kistyanto, 2022). According to (Hammond et al., 2011), team innovation can be referred to as the team's ability to generate new and original ideas (creativity) and the ability to put these ideas into practice to produce useful results (implementation).

**Employee Creativity**

In general, creativity can be defined as the ability to provide new perspectives and generate new ideas that have meaning. Creativity also includes the use of diverse skills, abilities, knowledge, perspectives, and experiences by employees to generate new ideas for decision-making, problem-solving, and efficient task completion. (Cheung & Wong, 2011).

According to some researchers, creativity requires employees to develop fresh or practical solutions to a problem in addition to generating new product and service ideas. Creativity is important not only for satisfying customers but creativity is also for business success and continuity. The definition of creativity generally includes the development of new concepts, products, practices, services, or procedures that have potential benefits. (Farr et al., 2003; Shalley et al., 2004). However, team innovation requires more than just creativity. Its implementation involves selling ideas to other people and groups and making ideas available in the marketplace.

In some studies, creativity is considered a personal characteristic with features that include broad areas of interest and high energy levels. According to (Barratt et al., 2011; and Shalley et al., 2004) Creativity in the workplace is essentially the process of generating new ideas, methods, and products that are practical and considered essential for business innovation. The ability of individuals to generate new ideas, innovative concepts, or solutions that are original and valuable in the context of their work (Nuzul & Kistyanto, 2020). Employee creativity is also defined as a process that exists in each employee who can create and grow new ideas and ideas.

**Hypothesis Development**

**Ambidextrous Leadership And Innovation Performance**

Opening and closing leader behaviors are positively related to innovation performance. Creativity and implementation are important requirements of the innovation process. Leaders improve employee performance depending on the requirements and enable the integration of creativity and implementation (Rosing et al., 2011). According to (Zacher & Rosing, 2015) ambidextrous leadership using the concepts of exploration and exploitation shows there is a relationship to innovation performance. In this case, ambidextrous leadership is important to have a type of opening behavior and closing behavior. This is in line with previous research conducted by Gerlach et al., (2020) which states that ambidextrous leadership is
positively related to innovation performance because leaders can encourage their employees to develop new ideas and ideas by applying opening behavior and closing behavior. Previous research shows that ambidextrous leadership has a positive impact on innovation performance (Jia et al., 2022).

H1: ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on innovation performance.

Ambidextrous Leadership And Employee Creativity

Ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity are important not only for satisfying customers but also for business success and continuity. According to some researchers, creativity requires employees to develop fresh or practical solutions to a problem in addition to generating new product and service ideas (F. Zhao et al., 2023). From the organizational element, it can be concluded that ambidextrous leadership has a positive influence on employee creativity. Ambidextrous leadership, which is described as a key component of effective organizations, influences followers by encouraging them to develop and achieve goals that are broader or higher than those agreed upon and builds their confidence to exceed expectations that are implicit or clear in exchange agreements. (Wu et al., 2022). Previous research conducted by Rosing et.al., (2011) said that ambidextrous leadership is related to employee creativity.

H2: ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on employee creativity

Employee Creativity And Innovation Performance

The important role of every employee is to creativity within themselves can create and develop creative ideas to improve innovation performance. In addition, employee creativity is an important factor in product development in the company, where employees who have creativity tend to produce innovative ideas so innovation performance in employees will increase (Lyu et al., 2022). Creativity owned by employees not only includes new ideas generated by product, process, and service innovations by employees but also translates new ideas into practice in the company. The creativity that exists in each employee has a positive influence on innovation performance, where an employee contributes to the innovation process and develops their creative ideas to improve innovation performance (S. Zhao et al., 2020).

H3: Employee creativity has a positive effect on innovation performance

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach to research, which is to analyze the ambidextrous leadership variable on innovation performance through employee creativity. The ambidextrous leadership variable is measured using indicators from Rosing et al. (2011) namely (1) Opening behaviour (2) Closed behaviour (3) Exploitation (4) Exploration (5) Flexibility. The innovation performance variable is measured using indicators from (Jong & Hartog, 2008), namely (1) Opportunity exploration (2) Idea generation (3) Idea championing (4) Idea implementation. And finally, employee creativity variables are measured using indicators from (Cheung &
Wong, 2011), namely (1) Fluency of ideas (2) Originality of ideas (3) Flexibility in generating ideas (4) Problem-solving. The population used is employees of PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus Retail Function SBM Area Lamongan and Gresik with a sample of 48 employees. The method used to determine the sample is nonprobability sampling with a saturated sampling type. Data using a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was taken through the distribution of online questionnaires. This research was processed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the SmartPLS 3.2.9 application.

**Result**

**Respondent Description**

In this study, respondents used employees of PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus Retail Function SBM Area Lamongan and Gresik, totaling 48 respondents. There are 36 male employees (75%) and 12 women (25%). For age, there are 3 employees 21-30 years (6.3%), and 45 employees 31-40 years (93.8%). For the latest education, there are 48 S1 / Diploma employees (100%). For marital status there are 28 married employees (58.3%), and 20 employees are not married (41.7%). And for the length of service, there is 1 employee <3 years (2.1%), 40 employees 3-6 years (83.3%), 7 employees >6 (14.6%).

**Measurement Model**

In the first step, we ran the measurement model in SmartPLS 3.2.9 to ensure that the constructs are properly correlated based on the proposed variances. Based on the proposed variance, convergent and discriminant validity were examined to assess the measurement model in this study. To evaluate convergent validity, the factor loadings of each item were examined at the first stage. According to (Ghozali, 2014: 39) All indicators can be considered valid if they meet a correlation value greater than 0.70. However, if the indicator loading ranges from 0.50 to 0.60, it can be considered quite valid. Can be seen in Outer Loading All Variable Items in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Outer Loading All Variable Items](image.png)

Composite reliability (CR) was assessed to check internal consistency in this study. Hair et al. (2020) suggested a cut off value of 0.70 for CR. In this study, the CR for all items ranged from 0.945 to 0.957, exceeding the recommended value of 0.7.
Furthermore, Cronbach’s alpha (CA) can strengthen the reliability test results of the CR results obtained from the CR results. Or it can be said that the CA value is to evaluate internal consistency. The CA value in this study ranged from 0.936 to 0.52 and was above 0.70. Finally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was examined to establish convergent validity in the study. According to Hair et al. (2020), AVE represents the overall mean value of the squares of the indicators associated with the research constructs. AVE value of 0.50 would indicate that 50% of the items provide sufficient explanation of the construct (Hair et al., 2020). In this study, the AVE values for all constructs are below the range of 0.796 to 0.813, which exceeds the recommended value of 0.5. Can be seen Specified Measurement Model in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable and scale item</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>0.957</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>3.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.01</td>
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<td>AL.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.03</td>
<td>0.877</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.04</td>
<td>0.849</td>
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<td>AL.06</td>
<td>0.717</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.07</td>
<td>0.704</td>
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<td>AL.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.09</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AL.13</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Performance</td>
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<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.936</td>
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<td>KI.15</td>
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<td>KI.16</td>
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<td>KI.17</td>
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<td>Loadings</td>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>KI.18</td>
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<td>KI.19</td>
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<td>KI.20</td>
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<td>KI.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>KI.22</td>
<td>0.778</td>
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<tr>
<td>KI.23</td>
<td>0.782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee creativity</td>
<td>0.813</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>KK.25</td>
<td>0.770</td>
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<tr>
<td>KK.26</td>
<td>0.766</td>
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<td>KK.27</td>
<td>0.843</td>
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<td>KK.28</td>
<td>0.844</td>
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<td>KK.29</td>
<td>0.760</td>
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<td>KK.30</td>
<td>0.802</td>
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<tr>
<td>KK.32</td>
<td>0.849</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The results of the respondents' answers were then interpreted using the three-box method (Ferdinand, 2005: 292). Based on the Likert scale answer selection criteria, the range of five must be divided by three to produce a range of 1.33 (1.00 - 2.33 = low; 2.34 - 3.67 = medium; 3.68 - 5.00 = high) then used as the Likert scale answer selection criteria. Based on respondents' assessment of the research variables (Ambidextrous Leadership = 3.72; Innovation Performance = 4.15; Employee Creativity 4.12), the three latent variables are categorized as high.

Structural Model Assessment

It has been proposed to report the path coefficients, p-values, and t-statistics in the structural model to evaluate the significance of the hypotheses (Rahman et al., 2020). Assessing the structural model by looking at the significant value to determine the effect between variables through the bootstrapping procedure. Table 2 shows the results of the hypothesis testing of direct effects and indirect effect relationship.
Table 2. Hypothesis Testing for Direct Effect and Indirect Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>T-Stats</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambidextrous Leadership $\rightarrow$ Innovation Performance</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td>0.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambidextrous Leadership $\rightarrow$ Employee Creativity</td>
<td>0.357</td>
<td>2.916</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambidextrous Leadership $\rightarrow$ Employee Creativity $\rightarrow$ Innovation Performance</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>2.724</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level Significance (5%); t-statistics $\geq$ 1.96; P-value $\leq$ 0.05

The previous H1 discussion, ambidextrous leadership is not related to innovation performance. The results of path analysis show no relationship ($\beta = 0.084$, t-statistic = 0.852, p> 0.05), so H1 is rejected. Meanwhile, the acceptance of hypothesis H2 shows that ambidextrous leadership has a significant positive effect on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.357$, t-statistic = 2.916, p < 0.05). Hypothesis 3 is also supported because the relationship between employee creativity has a significant positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.771$, t-statistic = 12.724, p < 0.05). Furthermore, for the results of statistical analysis of the effect of mediation, the results showed that employee creativity positively mediates the effect of ambidextrous leadership on innovation performance ($\hat{\beta} = 0.275$, t-statistic = 2.724, p < 0.05), so H4 is accepted. Based on these results H1 is rejected, while H2, H3, and H4 are accepted.

Discussion

The overall objective of our study is to examine ambidextrous leadership on innovation performance through employee creativity. We found that ambidextrous leadership does not affect innovation performance. While ambidextrous leadership on employee creativity has a significant positive effect, employee creativity on innovation performance has a significant positive effect, and it was found that employee creativity mediates in this model.

The research findings reveal that ambidextrous leadership does not affect innovation performance. This rejects the results of previous research, namely research (Zacher & Rosing, 2015) and (Rosing et al., 2011) which argue that it has a strong effect on innovation performance, while the results of the study are by previous research from Haider et al. (2023) and Lee et al. (2020) which state that there is no relationship between ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance. This happens because of the descriptive statistical results of covering behavior indicators that cannot have an impact on innovation performance. Based on the results of interviews at PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimalin Retail Function SBM Lamongan & Gresik stated that the ability of employees has not been able to create, solve problems and implement innovative ideas, and there are...
differences in the workplace between the office and the field. This affects the performance of employees cannot increase.

Ambidextrous leadership has a significant positive effect on employee creativity. This research is supported by previous research from (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2023), Jain, (2023), (Gerlach et al., 2020), (Katou, 2021), and Lee & Kim, (2021) which states ambidextrous leadership in employee creativity. Confirmed in the results of statistical analysis of the age of employees who belong to the millennial generation. Coupled with the support of employee interview results, which state that joint involvement and collaboration make employees think creatively, as well as the role of leaders who combine explorative and exploitative perspectives so that employees can see the value in developing new ideas and utilizing existing resources.

The results on employee creativity on innovation performance have a significant positive effect. This research is in line with research from (Tai & Mai, 2016), (Shalley et al., 2004), (S. Zhao et al., 2020), and (Suifan et al., 2018) state that there is a positive relationship between employee creativity and innovation performance. The results of descriptive statistical analysis show that all employees at the S1 / diploma education level can develop new ideas and provide problem-solving. This is supported by the results of employee interviews which say that employees can provide new ideas by optimizing the process of marketing products. Thus it can be concluded that more employees who have creativity will have a positive impact on innovation performance.

The hypothesis regarding the mediating role of employee creativity in the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance is significant. The results of this study indicate that good employee creativity from Management stimulation or a leader. This research is in line with research (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2023), (Du et al., 2021), (Guo et al., 2018) stating that the opening and closing behavior of ambidextrous leadership can encourage employees to create and develop new ideas to improve innovation performance. The results of the analysis show that most employees belong to the millennial generation and have an undergraduate/diploma education level who can create and develop creative ideas, and provide problem-solving. The important role of leaders is to encourage employees to explore and exploit ideas by thinking out of the box, generating new ideas, and actively participating in the innovation process.

**Conclusion**

Ambidextrous leadership is very important to apply with opening and closing behaviors to feel employee creativity and innovation performance. This study examines ambidextrous leadership at PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus Retail Function SBM Lamongan & Gresik Section. The results showed that ambidextrous leadership does not affect innovation performance. While ambidextrous leadership on employee creativity has a significant positive effect, employee creativity on
innovation performance has a significant positive effect, and it is found that employee creativity mediates between ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance.

**Limitation and Future Research Direction**

This research has several limitations. First, we only sampled employees of PT Pertamina Patra Niaga Jatimbalinus Retail Function SBM Lamongan & Gresik. This limits the generalizability of our results to other samples. Second, given the cross-sectional nature of this research design, causal relationships between variables cannot be determined. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to test the hypotheses. All the questionnaires we used in this study were self-reported. It is better to use a combination of self-report questionnaires and objective assessments. Finally, future researchers can consider psychological well-being and cultural factors as the development of the research model.

**References**


