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INNOVATIVE WORKER: EXPLORING THE MEDIATION OF COGNITIVE DEPENDENCY FACTORS BETWEEN LEADERSHIP SUPPORT AND WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIP

Ismail Haji Ali, Muhammad Fadhil, Jafar Basalamah*
Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: This research aims to examine the impact of leadership support and workplace friendship on employees' innovative behavior, as well as the mediating effect of cognitive dependency. This study utilizes 200 responses from employees at global ride-hailing firm, Grab. The partial-least-square structural-equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method is executed to analyze the hypotheses. The findings suggest the positive correlation between workplace friendship and innovative behavior, with cognitive dependency acts as a mediator between these two constructs. In particular, the role of cognitive reliance might be regarded as a significant determinant of employee behavior. This paper is a valuable resource for academics studying cognitive reliance, a topic that is often overlooked in past researches.

Keywords: Leadership support; Workplace friendship; Innovative behavior; Cognitive dependency

INTRODUCTION

In the present era, companies employ several forms of innovation to improve their global competitiveness (Yang et al., 2020). These companies employ interactive learning to engage all relevant stakeholders in the acquisition of knowledge, resources, and new technologies in the market (Xiao et al., 2020). Without a doubt, this type of strategy, whether done individually or as a group, relies on effectively managing intellectual assets and maintaining a sustainable cooperation network. These are essential for developing innovations that companies may employ to adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of global business environments (Ghosh et al., 2020). Presently, the company employs conventional techniques to modify employee behavior, considering employees' creative behavior is crucial for contemporary organizations (Al-Hawari et al., 2019). Individual creativity is a crucial factor that enhances innovation, promotes efficient work practices, and provides a competitive edge for a firm (Wang & Lounsbury, 2021). Creativity is commonly defined as the process of generating original and valuable ideas (Nazir et al., 2020). It also involves the capacity to produce work that is both new and beneficial (Renkema et al., 2022). Due to its role in driving innovation, growth, and competitiveness (Saeed et al., 2019), firms prioritize investing significantly and seeking effective methods to foster employees' creativity (Shea et al., 2023), particularly in the face of competitive and dynamic business settings. Service providers want to cultivate employee innovation in order to give superior services (Quratulain et al., 2020). Employees in service businesses can provide significant value by effectively generating, leveraging, and executing innovative ideas (Marikyan et al., 2023). Creativity is a crucial factor that contributes to the development and competitiveness of service firms (Cao & Zhang, 2020).

Various research has demonstrated that the style of leadership significantly impacts the innovative behavior of employees (Wills & Raven, 2020). In recent times, there has been an increasing focus on researching the impact of a leader's personality on employees' behavior (Gregory, 2023). However, the influence of leadership support has not received significant attention in research (Rybnicek et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the present study utilizes social cognitive theory to develop a theoretical framework that emphasizes the specific circumstances and mechanisms through which workplace friendships influence employees' innovative behavior (Omuris, 2019). Establishing friendships in the workplace can enhance a person's experience of connection and gain support from fellow workers, hence fostering positive individual psychology (Yunus & Ernawati, 2018). Consequently, this reduces the probability and expense of unsuccessful inventive conduct and enhances the probability of employees participating in creative behavior (Saeed et al., 2019). The present study focuses on the importance of innovative behavior in the long-term survival and sustainable growth of organizations, particularly in the face of intense competition. Previous studies have emphasized the significant influence of interpersonal interactions between employees on their work productivity (Bala et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, as research on workplace friendship has progressed, there has been a focus on the detrimental consequences associated with it, including the spread of gossip, instances of sexual harassment, favoritism, and nepotism. Consequently, an increasing number of empirical studies have sought to examine this paradoxical phenomenon (Yang et al., 2020). Omuris, (2019) found that professional friendships can, in certain situations, diminish employees' loyalty and organizational productivity. Furthermore, research has shown that activities like gossip, which are not directly related to work, can promote collaboration and unity among individuals while also creating a sense of distance from others (Hashmi et al., 2023). The apparent contradiction revealed implies the necessity of investigating the limits and parameters of workplace friendship, which contribute to achieving favorable results in the workplace (Shea et al., 2023). Our objective is to examine the role of cognitive reliance as a mediator, while also examining the impact of leadership support on the consequences of workplace friendships.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Leadership Support and Employee Innovative Behavior

As per the social information processing theory, the attributes, interactions, behaviors, and sentiments of leaders have an impact on how employees perceive and behave (Fischer & Sitkin, 2022). Similar to (Day et al., 2016), when leaders are perceived as having significant authority and charisma, their subordinates tend to idolize and depend on them. Companies can exhibit their recognition of innovation by relying on either the encouragement of supervisors or the support of leadership. "Leader involvement" refers to the extent to which employees regard their leaders as actively participating in the creative process (Mostafa, 2019). When employees perceive that their superiors value, support, and reward their efforts, they are more inclined to exhibit innovative behavior (Berson et al., 2018). Tan, (2019) discovered that employees perceive their creative behavior to be beneficial solely when their supervisors are receptive to feedback and open to suggestions for development. Furthermore, some scholars propose that innovative supervisors have the ability to cultivate the creativity of their subordinates by employing original and innovative approaches in issue definition and by establishing creative objectives for them (Chang et al., 2011). In accordance with the study conducted by (Gu et al., 2018), supervisors who promote and sustain cooperative interpersonal connections have the ability to impact employees' involvement in the creative process by improving their self-efficacy. Besides, (Renkema et al., 2022) argue that individuals who possess greater self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit creativity when they have a clear understanding of their superiors' expectations for their creative activities. Employees participate in innovative behavior when supervisors have well defined expectations for innovation (Zaitouni & Ouakouak, 2018).

Hence, it is imperative for leadership support to have a substantial correlation with the creative behavior of employees (Xiao et al., 2020). However,

the consequences of leadership support may differ depending on individual personality qualities. Several studies argue that conscientiousness, a key component of the Big Five behavior traits (Ding et al., 2020), is associated with individuals' creativity and their ability to work under close supervision. Therefore, conscientious employees who lack support from their colleagues and are closely monitored are likely to demonstrate lower levels of creativity.

H1. Leadership support has significant impact on employee's innovative behavior

Workplace Friendship and Employee Innovative Behavior

Workplace friendship is an informal interpersonal interaction between employees that is distinct from instrumental ties such as mentoring or supervisor-subordinate relationships (Ding et al., 2020). According to Cao & Zhang, (2020), Researchers suggest that friendships produced in the professional setting transcend mere casual acquaintanceships. These friendships are characterized by a common feeling of resemblance, reciprocal commitment, trust, and spontaneous advantages. Significant research shows the concept that workplace friendships have a substantial and beneficial impact on organizational behavior, job performance, employee commitment, job uncertainty, and willingness to express perspectives (Bubonya et al., 2017). Prior research on workplace friendship mostly concentrates on attitudinal and outcome factors, with limited attention given to behavioral process variables such as inventive conduct.

In recent times, there has been significant focus on the inventive conduct of employees by both academics and professionals. This is due to its important role in ensuring the sustained survival of organizations through diverse business environments (Lin, 2010). According (Flett et al., 2002), social cognitive theory posits that an individual's conduct is influenced by their thoughts and perceptions, as well as the social context in which they exist. Utilizing social cognitive theory, fostering strong workplace friendships is expected to enhance employees' propensity to share resources and provide mutual support, ultimately resulting in a harmonious work environment and improved problem-solving abilities among employees (Renkema et al., 2022). The corporate atmosphere is the primary determinant of employees' innovative behavior, as indicated by the evidence presented by (Lal, 2015). While, (Alfes et al., 2013) obtaining regular feedback from peers can enhance employees' inventive behavior, as suggested by certain scholars. Following the definition of workplace friendship, employees who have strong relationships with their colleagues will engage in more frequent communication and receive regular feedback on innovative ideas from their friends at work. Receiving regular feedback from colleagues increases the likelihood of engaging in innovative behavior and enhances the quality of innovation. Furthermore, it has been shown that there is a correlation between a conducive and encouraging environment that fosters creativity and support, and the overall performance of organizations, particularly in creative occupations (Fındıklı & Bayarçelik, 2015). Conversely, the lack of a close relationship might give rise to feelings of anxiety and potentially contribute to engaging in antisocial conduct (Zaitouni & Ouakouak, 2018). Hence, we propose that fostering friendships in the workplace promotes

inventive behavior. Workplace friendships facilitate the acquisition of novel information and abundant skills from coworkers, hence aiding individuals in accomplishing innovative tasks.

H2. Workplace friendship has significant impact on employee's innovative behavior

Cognitive Dependency as Mediator

Cognitive dependency is a component of follower dependence, as outlined by Harrison and Rainer in 1992. Employee dependency comprises two components: cognitive dependency and motivation dependency. Similarly, We classified subordinates' dependence on their superiors into two degrees (Yang et al., 2020). Cognitive reliance is precisely described as the degree to which employees rely on their leader for activities related to information processing, including emotions, perception, memory, imagination, and cognition. The perception process in the SIP model pertains to the correlation between the characteristics of leaders and the perceptions and attitudes of followers (Avcı Çayir & Kalkan, 2018). Throughout this process, followers collect knowledge regarding the characteristics of their leaders and develop their own perceptions of them. For instance, individuals who follow narcissistic leaders may admire their attractiveness and impressive presence and feel motivated to associate themselves with them. The relationship between the attitudes and desires of followers and their conduct is a process of evaluation (Al-Hawari et al., 2019). Followers show a tendency to rely on leaders and conform to their directives and anticipations. This theory delineates cognitive dependence as the mechanism through which managers' narcissism impacts the behavior of employees. Therefore, we have chosen to focus on cognitive dependency to clarify how leadership support affects the creativity of followers.

Workers want assistance from leaders who have the capacity to assist them in achieving their goals and improving their sense of self-worth (Tan, 2019). According to (Saeed et al., 2019), The more the authority and competence of leaders, the more reliant their followers become on them. Employees rely on leaders not only because they admire the leaders' qualities, but also because this admiration fosters a deep experience of identity with them (Parry, 2013), but also because leaders have control over the resources that subordinates need to utilize in their work (Emerson, 1962). When supervisors and employees are relatively distant, they mainly acquire limited and negative information about their superiors (Kathleen et al., 2017). Reduced engagement between employees and their leaders leads to an increased emphasis on superficial qualities of leaders, such as charisma. Employees will concentrate on this information to evaluate the attributes of their superiors as capable leaders. Given this understanding, employees tend to believe in their superiors and may even unquestioningly admire them.

H3. Leadership support will positively and significantly effect on employee's innovative behavior through cognitive dependency

H4. Workplace friendship will positively and significantly effect on employee's innovative behavior through cognitive dependency

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The population in this research is Grab's employee in Makassar. Therefore, in this study, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is based on the purpose of the quantitative approach (Sharma et al., 2023). Where abouts 200 online questionnaires were distributed to Grab employees as a result of the company's efforts to improve working conditions and foster innovative thinking among all employees and supervisors. The sample included 152 men and 48 women, with as many as 82 people aged 25-29 years, 68 people aged 31-40 years, and the remaining 50 people over 41 years old. In addition, approximately 123 respondents have married. Out of the whole workforce, there are approximately 9 workers who hold managerial positions in the field of Human Resources. Additionally, there are 15 people who work as supervisors, while the remaining 176 people are classified as staff members. Respondent data distribution can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent

Gender	N	%
Female	152	76%
Male	48	24%
Age (Years)		
20-30	82	41%
31-40	68	34%
>41	50	25%
Status		
Married	123	62%
Unmarried	77	38%
Job Role		
HR Managers	9	4%
Supervisor	15	15%
Staff	176	81%

Measurement Instrument

Firstly, Leadership support was measured using a five-item indicator that have been developed by (Zaitouni & Ouakouak, 2018) Where, (1) My supervisor actively promotes and underscores the importance of creativity among staff. (2) My supervisor holds a high regard for their capacity to think and act creatively. (3) My supervisor grants participants the freedom to approach problem-solving from various perspectives. (4) My supervisor acknowledges and incentivizes participants who demonstrate creativity in their work. (5) My supervisor publicly acknowledges individuals who have creativity.

Secondly, The measurement of workplace friendship was conducted using a six-item indicator developed by (Abdulmuhsin & Tarhini, 2020). Participants responded to all items on a five-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree," 5="strongly agree"). Where the items are; (1) I have the opportunity to become acquainted with my coworkers in the workplace; (2) I am able to collaborate with my teammates to resolve work-related issues; (3) I can engage

in informal communication with my teammates; (4) I have supportive friendships with my workers; (5) I engage in social activities with my partners outside of work; (6) I have confidence in the trustworthiness of my colleagues.

In innovative behavior, participants rated the level of their innovative behavior using six-item indicator by (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Where the item is; I consistently attempt to discover innovative strategies and techniques, consistently generate original ideas, and actively engage in communication with others to introduce new concepts. To effectively implement new ideas, I must diligently seek out the necessary resources. To effectively execute innovative concepts, it is imperative that I formulate a suitable strategy. Overall, I possess an ability for originality and creativity.

The final variable is cognitive dependence, which was altered by modifying this indicators (Yang et al., 2020) on the basis of the cognitive dependency scale that was developed by (Flett et al., 2002). This study specifically chose the cognitive reliance dimension, which consists of a scale with five items. where, Item 1: I struggle to operate effectively without the supervision of my immediate superior. Item 2: I experience enhanced job performance in the presence of my immediate superior. Item 3: In the event that my immediate superior was to be substituted, I would experience a sense of lacking guidance from any individual. Item 4: I do not challenge the instructions given by my immediate superior. Item 5: I acknowledge and comply with the perspectives of my immediate superior without questioning them.

Data Analysis

This research also used structural equation modelling to analyze the data (Edeh et al., 2023). Taking consideration, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership support and workplace friendship and innovative behavior in employees, as well as the treatment of cognitive dependency variables, to determine long-term potential advantages. We also used PLS software to see the results of the data, where this study examines Alpha Cronbach's alpha (CA), total correlation, and confirmatory factor analysis in order to improve reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for each specialized construct (Sharma et al., 2023).

RESULTS

The data were examined using a distinct two-step methodology. The first phase of the study aimed to validate the dependability, converging accuracy, and distinguishing accuracy of the measurement model. Subsequently, in the following phase, the analysis moved its attention to the structural model to precisely determine the amount and orientation of the connections between the theoretical factors (See Table 3).

According to (Sharma et al., 2023), all CR (Construct Reliability) and CA (Composite Average) measures, In order for research employing the SEM PLS method to be considered to have internal consistency dependability, the standard criteria must above the suggested minimum level of 0.70. These statements are corroborated by (Ringle et al., 2018) Research with a CR value of 0.70 is deemed

credible. To establish convergent validity, it is necessary for the standardized value of the indicators to be at least 0.708 of the threshold value. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each indicator should be at least 0.5 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Outer Model Criteria

Constructs	Item	Loadings	CR	Cr. Alpha	AVE	VIF
Leadership support	LS1	0.751				
	LS2	0.766				
	LS3	0.845				
	LS4	0.737	0.883	0.840	0.558	0.6714
	LS5	0.734				
	LS6	0.826				
Workplace Friendship	WF1	0.7136				
	WF2	0.7379				
	WF3	0.8559				
	WF4	0.7254	0.905	0.877	0.581	0.9501
	WF5	0.8736				
	WF6	0.893				
Cognitive Dependency	CD1	0.8681				
	CD2	0.7383				
	CD3	0.8681				
	CD4	0.7809	0.899	0.857	0.645	7.1882
	CD5	0.7563				
Innovative Behavior	IB1	0.8698				
	IB2	0.7874				
	IB3	0.7139	0.844	0.755	0.576	5.326
	IB4	0.7247				

Source: Smartpls 3 Adapted Output

Table 3. Path Revelation

R^2 Innovative Behavior		0.784
Hypothesized Paths	*t*-value	Decision
Leadership Support > Innovative Behavior	0.9501	Not Supported
Workplace Friendship > Innovative Behavior	5.326	Supported
Leadership Support > Cog. Dependency > Innov. Behavior	0.6714	Not Supported
Workplace Friendship > Cog.Dependency > Innov. Behavior	2.709	Supported

Source: Smartpls 3 Adapted Output

In this study, it was found that the Workplace Friendship (WF) variable has a significant impact on Innovative Behavior (IB) among Grab employees in Makassar City. The results also revealed that the influence of WF on IB occurs through Cognitive Dependency (CD), as explained in Table 2. More specifically, the results in the table show that all indicators for WF, IB, Leadership Support (LS), and CD variables have passed the validity test with construct values greater than 0.6. One indicator that stands out is "LS3" in the Leadership Support variable, which achieved a value of 0.845. This illustrates how important it is to maintain or improve interpersonal relationships to build employee trust and loyalty among respondents, Grab employees in Makassar City. While "WF6" stands out with the highest value in the WF variable. This reflects the importance of informal communication and interaction between employees. This contributes to the performance of employees while they are working. Finally, in testing the indicators for CD and IB, "CD1" and "IB1" obtained high values of 0.869. This

reflects flexibility and increased creativity in using individual problem-solving skills to develop and implement new ideas, strategies, products, and services. These factors are essential to improve employee performance in achieving maximum company goals.

The findings of this study bring exciting information. The results of the data analysis show that the Leadership Support (LS) variable cannot significantly impact the level of Innovative Behavior (IB) of employees at Grab Makassar City. Despite the initial expectation that leadership support would positively influence employee innovation, this study implies that the influence of LS is less than previously thought. This study involved careful measurement and a rigorous statistical analysis process, with the significance value (p-value) for each tested variable being lower than the pre-set significance level. This means that these results are unlikely to be coincidental or the result of errors in analysis. This indicates that the correlation between Leadership Support and the level of Innovation needs to be more vital to ensure a significant relationship exists. In this context, the findings of this study can be an essential consideration for Grab management in Makassar City. To increase the level of Innovation among employees, there is a need to consider other factors that may have a more significant influence. Although LS is an essential element in a positive work environment, the results of this study highlight the need for further exploration of other factors that may increase Innovation in this organizational context.

DISCUSSION

The study underscores the importance of a holistic understanding of how employee attitudes and leadership support the optimal achievement of corporate goals. The main findings can be summarized as follows: In this study, vital factors potentially influence Innovative Behavior, namely workplace friendship and cognitive dependency. It is important to note that although Leadership Support plays a significant role, it is not enough to achieve optimal Innovative Behavior. The results of research conducted by Abdulmuhsin and Tarhini, (2020) and Cao and Zhang (2020) confirmed that Workplace Friendship positively affects Cognitive Dependency, and correspondingly, Cognitive Dependency significantly impacts Innovative Behavior. To put it simply, Cognitive Dependency acts as a mediator in the relationship between Workplace Friendship and Innovative Behavior.

This study reveals that numerous factors, including workplace friendship and Cognitive dependency, determine employee innovative behavior among Grab employees in Makassar City. The statistical analysis results indicated that workplace friendship was shown to have the most meaningful impact among these components, demonstrating that workplace friendship, the bond and close contact between employees, has a crucial role in fostering Innovative Behavior in the workplace. Meaningly, Good workplace creates a positive and supportive atmosphere for employees, influencing creativity and innovation. Several factors emphasize the importance of workplace friendships in shaping Innovative Behavior.

Workplace friendship increases employee engagement. Colleagues who have good relationships are more likely to collaborate effectively. They feel comfortable sharing ideas and supporting each other. This strong cooperation supports idea exchange and innovation in the work environment. In the context of camaraderie, employees are more comfortable taking risks and experimenting with new concepts without fear of judgment or embarrassment. Lower stress levels are experienced in environments where workplace camaraderie exists, and reduced stress levels can lead to increased creativity and innovation, as individuals can focus on their thoughts more clearly and remain relaxed. Workplace camaraderie can inspire; coworkers often provide a fresh outlook and inspire creative thinking. Informal discussions with coworkers are often where many brilliant ideas are born.

Furthermore, workplace friendships help build trust; trustworthy coworkers help build a culture of trust in the workplace. In an environment of trust, employees feel safe sharing innovative ideas without fear of being stolen or misused. Workplace camaraderie becomes an additional source of motivation. Employees encourage and support each other in achieving their goals and becoming more productive. This additional motivation energizes employees in their pursuit of innovation and creativity. Workplace companionship is a strong foundation for increasing Innovative Behavior in the work environment, creating an innovative work culture where employees feel supported, motivated, and comfortable sharing and developing new ideas.

FURTHER STUDY

The implementation of leadership support has shown a reverse contribution in improved staff work. In this case by making employees have an innovative attitude either directly or through variable moderation (cognitive dependency), this can be maintained in order instead to create a work environment that supports each other among existing teams. Furthermore, researchers observed a lack of positive responses from employees in this case when it came to leadership support variables. It is important to think about this because work must be able to involve all elements of employees both in teams and individuals with the creation of innovative in the workplace of course this is able to increase the innovative attitude of the employees. It is necessary to focus and develop a strategy or policy to foster leadership support to increase team innovation. In other words, it may play a role in increasing employee participation in the future in order to achieve a new breakthrough.

This research was summarized using structured composing guidelines, but it still has some limitations that were encountered during its preparation. Initially, because respondents were limited to employees of the Grab office in Makassar, South Sulawesi province, further research involving other offices is required to generalize the study's findings. This study remains a self-report investigation utilizing a questionnaire. For future research, it is recommended that researchers broaden the scope of variables relating to other aspects of human resources in order to assess the reliability of the findings from this study. This can be achieved by evaluating the research model with additional variables.

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