

Humble Leaders and Innovative Behaviors, the Role of Psychological Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted at PT. Gora Mandau Sawit with the aim of examining the role of psychological empowerment in mediating the influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior. Research population conducted by researchers are all employees of PT. Gora Mandau Sawit, totaling 100 people, using the total sampling method, the sample for this study was 99 people (minus the researchers). Analysis of the research data used descriptive statistics and verification analysis, as an analytical tool used the Structural Equational Model which was processed with SmartPLS2 Software. The results of the analysis prove that at PT. Gora Mandau Sawit, the more effective the humble leader, the more likely he is to increase innovative behavior, and the humble leader influences the innovative behavior of employees through the mediation of psychological psychological empowerment

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Introduction

Leaders are recognized for the unique talents and skills they bring to their teams; there is a sense of belonging when they share something in common with their peers. It's important for leaders to get this balance right, because questioning too much uniqueness can wipe out an employee's sense of belonging. However, altruism is one of the attributes of a leader who can balance the interests of their employees and those of others (Bhatia and Arun, 2020). Leadership gradually influences the work life of employees (Qian et al., 2018) and is seen as an important Social and Situational factor influencing employee responses at work (Williams et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018 a). Social context is a “bundled” material that enables the kinds of mental models that lead to resilience” (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011, p. 247; Cooper et al., 2019, p. 89). Leadership has an important role in the employee self-development process (Harland et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2016).

Humility is a lasting and stable human quality whose roots lie in an “improving others” orientation (Chancellor and Lyubomirsky, 2013). Previously, modesty was seen as a personal weakness (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005) associated with “shyness, lack” of ambition, passivity, or lack of self-confidence” (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) view humility as “a mandatory strength for leaders and organizations who have it, and a dangerous weakness for those who don't.” Nielsen, Marrone and Slay (2010) view humility as “a desirable personal quality which is “understanding oneself through awareness of personal identity, strengths, and limitations”. Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell (2013) define

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"humility" as an interpersonal characteristic that includes a willingness to see oneself accurately; appreciate the strengths of others and contributions; and openness to new ideas and feedback (p. 1518). Owens and Hekman (2012) generalize three categories of humble leader behavior: (a) acknowledge limitations and mistakes, (b) acknowledge followers' strengths and contributions, and (c) model teaching abilities.

In practice, humble leaders often perform well in managing organizations. For the organization as a whole, leadership humility means not only embodying certain personal qualities but also acknowledging and appreciating the knowledge and guidance of the superego (Standish, 2007). When leaders behave humbly in daily interactions with their subordinates, such humble leader behavior will have an interpersonal influence on the attitudes and behavior of subordinates. Indeed, previous research has reported that humble leadership can improve employee job satisfaction, job engagement and task performance (Mao, Chiu, Owens, Brown, & Liao, 2018; Rego et al., 2017; Wang, Owens, et al., 2018). However, it is less clear whether humble leadership can encourage innovative behavior. Aligned views of leaders as one of the most important factors in driving innovative behavior (Salas Vallina et al., 2018). However, literature on humble leadership and employee innovation is sparse and relationship mechanisms have not been well studied (Jeung and Yoon, 2016; Hariono et al., 2022). Although humility is recognized as a core trait of servant leadership and participative leadership, humble leadership as a new type of independent leadership has not been a focus of academic interest for a long period (Owens et al., 2011). Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate whether humble leaders significantly increase employee innovative behavior and to identify conditions under which humble leadership is more or less effective, as well as investigate whether humble leaders operate differently in relation to mediation. psychological empowerment.

Innovation is a process that involves both the generation and implementation of ideas. Thus, a variety of specific behaviors are required on the part of the individual. While some people may be expected to exhibit all of the behaviors involved in an innovation, others may exhibit only one or a few types of behavior. Please rate each of your subordinates to what extent he/she:

1. Seeks new technology, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas;
2. Generate creative ideas;
3. Promoting and championing ideas to others;
4. Investigate and secure the funds needed to implement new ideas;
5. Develop adequate plans and timelines for the implementation of new ideas; and
6. Is innovative (Scott and Bruce, 1994).

Psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational construct embodied in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Together, these four cognitions reflect an active, not a passive, orientation to work roles. By active orientation, it means an orientation in which an individual wants and feels able to shape his role and work context. The four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995; Abdillah & Rahmat, 2022; Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef-morgan, 2017; Rahmat & Handayani, 2022; Supriadi et al., 2022).

Theoretical Support

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovation is a process that involves both the generation and implementation of ideas. Thus, a variety of specific behaviors are required on the part of the individual (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Welbourne et al. (1998) suggested that the role of innovator is at the heart of organizational adaptability and should therefore be included as a criterion in evaluating employee performance. They saw it as distinct from the other four core work roles an employee typically takes on, including the roles of worker, organizational citizen, team player, and career accomplishment. Janssen (2000) further asserts that innovative behavior has long-term effects that improve organizational functioning and generate psychological social benefits for individual employees in the long run. Innovative work behavior is defined as the creation, introduction, and application of new ideas or ideas in work, groups, or organizations to improve the performance of individual, group, or organizational roles (Janssen, 2000).

Humble Leader

Humility is a stable and enduring positive human quality whose core characteristic is an "improving the other" orientation (Chancellor and Lyubomirsky, 2013). In the past, modesty was considered a personal weakness (Morris et al., 2005) and was associated with "shyness, lack of ambition, passivity, or lack of self-confidence" (Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 393). The emphasis on these negative aspects of the individual shifts to positive organizational psychology, which highlights the positive strengths of individuals. Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) consider humility a "critical strength for leaders and organizations that possess it, and a dangerous weakness for those without it." Niensendkk. (2010) define the concept of humility as "a desirable personal quality that is understanding oneself through awareness of personal identity, strengths, and limitations" (p. 34). Owens et al. (2013) defines "humility" as an interpersonal characteristic that connotes a willingness to see oneself accurately; appreciation of the strengths and contributions of others; and teachability, or openness to new ideas and feedback".

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is an intrinsic task motivation that manifests itself in four cognitions that reflect an individual's orientation towards his work role (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). Empowerment according to Bowen and Lawler (1992) "sharing with frontline employees' information about organizational performance, information about rewards based on organizational performance, knowledge that allows employees to understand and contribute to organizational performance, and gives employees the power to make decisions that affect direction and performance organization." Meanwhile, Zemke and Schaaf (1989) identified employee empowerment as encouraging and beneficial for exercising initiative and imagination.

Research Framework

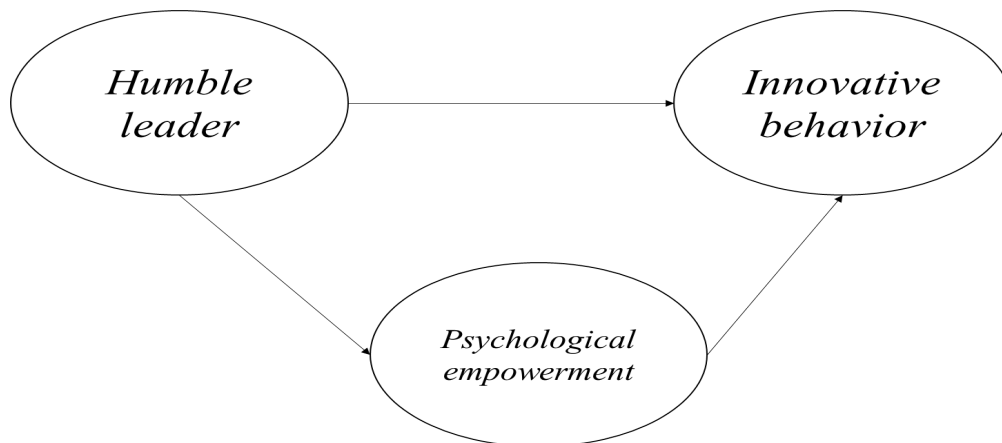


Figure 1. Research Framework.

Research Method

Quantitative Method

This study uses a quantitative method by explaining that the research paradigm emphasizes understanding of problems in social life based on the conditions of reality or natural settings that are holistic, complex and detailed. The nature of this research is descriptive and verificative, describing the characteristics of the variables studied and testing the truth of a hypothesis. This descriptive method examines the role of psychological empowerment in mediating the influence of humble leadership on innovative behavior. An analysis of the verification method was carried out to test the hypothesis using a statistical test tool, namely Structural Equational Modeling (SEM) PLS (Uma Sekaran, 2006, in Handayani, 2020: 86). Research population conducted by researchers are all employees of PT. Gora Mandau Sawit, totaling 100 people, using the saturated sample method, the sample for this study was 99 people (minus the researchers).

Results

Analisis SEM-PLS

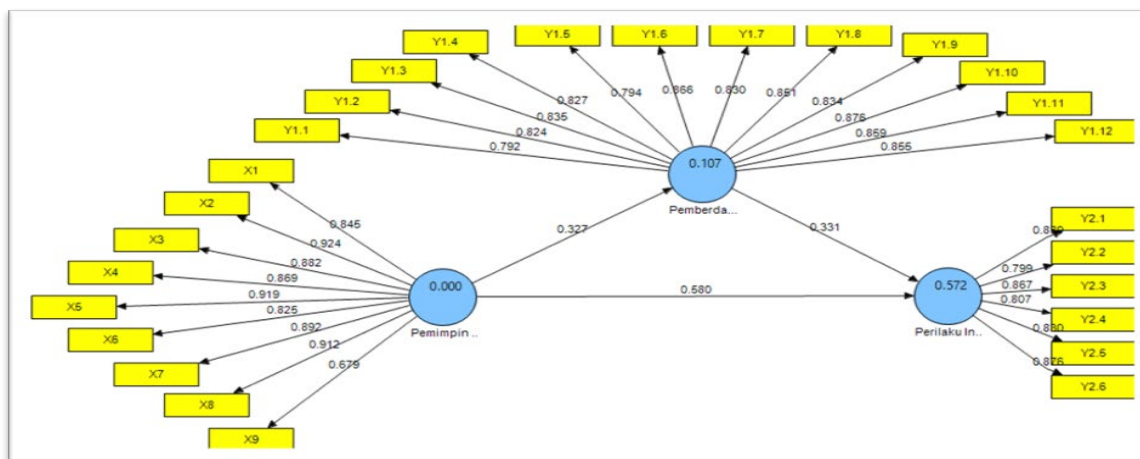


Figure 2. Path Chart.

Significance Test Results

Table 1. Significance Test Results

Hypothesis	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Note:
Humble Leader > Psychological Empowering	2,883	0,114	Received
Humble Leader > Innovation Behavior	10.214	0,057	Received
Psychological Empowering > Innovation Behavior	5,528	0,060	Received

Notes. Data Olahan, 2023

The relationship between humble leaders and psychological empowerment is 0.327 with T statistics of 2.883. The test results show that the path coefficient is positive and T statistics > 1.64. This shows that there is a positive and significant influence of humble leaders on psychological empowerment.

The relationship between humble leaders and innovative behavior is 0.580 with T statistics of 10.214. The test results show that the path coefficient is positive and T statistics > 1.64. This shows that there is a positive and significant influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior.

The relationship between psychological empowerment on innovative behavior is 0.331 with T statistics of 5.528. The test results show that the path coefficient is positive and T statistics > 1.64. This shows that there is a positive and significant effect of psychological empowerment on innovative behavior.

Test Results Directly and Indirectly

Table 2. Test Results Directly and Indirectly

Eksogen	Endogen	Path Coefficient
Humble Leader	Psychological Empowering	0,327
Humble Leader	Innovation Behavior	0,580
Psychological Empowering	Innovation Behavior	0,331

Notes. Data Olahan, 2023

The variable that has the largest total coefficient on innovative behavior is a humble leader with a total coefficient of 0.580. Thus, a humble leader is the variable that has the most influence or has the most dominant influence on innovative behavior.

Dominant Influence

Table 3. Dominant Influence

Eksogen	Endogen	Path Coefficient
Humble Leader	Psychological Empowering	0,327
Humble Leader	Innovation Behavior	0,580
Psychological Empowering	Innovation Behavior	0,331

Notes. Data Olahan, 2023

$$\text{Equation 1 : } Z = 0.350 X$$

The direct effect coefficient of a humble leader on psychological empowerment is 0.327 indicating that a humble leader is positive and significant on psychological empowerment. This means that the more effective the humble leader, the more likely it is to increase psychological empowerment.

$$\text{Equation 2 : } Y = 0.194 X + 0.735 Z$$

The direct effect coefficient of a humble leader on innovative behavior is 0.580 indicating that a humble leader is positive and significant on innovative behavior. This means that the more effective the humble leader, the more innovative behavior tends to increase.

The direct effect coefficient of psychological empowerment on innovative behavior is 0.331 indicating that psychological empowerment is positive and significant for innovative behavior. This means that the higher psychological empowerment tends to increase innovative behavior. The indirect effect coefficient of humble leaders on innovative behavior through psychological empowerment is 0.108 indicating that humble leaders have a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior through psychological empowerment. This means that the higher the psychological empowerment caused by the more effective humble leader, tends to increase innovative behavior.

Discussions

Humble Leadership and Innovative Behavior

The influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior is known that the path coefficient of the relationship between humble leaders on innovative behavior is 0.580 with T statistics of 10.214. The test results show that the path coefficient is positive and T statistics > 1.64, that there is a positive and significant influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior, so that H1 is accepted.

Head of PT. Gora Mandau Sawit actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical, admits when he doesn't know how to do something, acknowledges when his employees have more knowledge and skills than himself, notices the strengths of his employees, shows appreciation for the unique contributions of his employees, willing to learn from others others, as well as being open to the ideas and suggestions of others will determine and shape the innovative behavior of its employees. PT employees Gora Mandau Sawit behaves that they are always looking for new technologies, processes, techniques and/or product ideas, generate creative ideas, promote and champion ideas to others, investigate and secure the funds needed to implement new ideas, and develop adequate plans and timelines for the implementation of new ideas.

This research confirms Zhou and Yenchun's (2018) study in How Humble Leadership Fosters Employee Innovation Behavior that humble leadership has a positive effect on employee innovation behavior; at the same time Yang, et al (2019) with the theme Humble Leadership And Innovative Behavior among Chinese Nurses: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement supporting humble leaders is very important for increasing innovative nurse behavior.

Mediation of Psychological Empowerment on the Relationship of Humble Leadership and Innovative Behavior

The influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior through psychological empowerment obtained a path coefficient of 0.108 and T statistics of 2.556. The test results show that the path coefficient is positive and T statistics > 1.64. This shows that there is a positive and significant

influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior through psychological empowerment. Therefore, psychological empowerment is stated to be able to mediate the influence of humble leaders on innovative behavior, H2 is accepted.

Owens, et al. (2013) defines "humility" as an interpersonal characteristic that connotes a willingness to see oneself accurately; appreciation of the strengths and contributions of others; and teachability, or openness to new ideas and feedback". Humble leadership is a behavior-based leadership style and consists of three core dimensions (Owens & Hekman, 2012; Owens et al., 2013). They display attitudes such as manifesting a desire to see themselves accurately, value the strengths and contributions of others, and teach. Humble leadership behavior through the construction of motivation which is manifested in four cognitions, such as meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Together, these four cognitions reflect an active, not a passive, orientation to work roles. With an active orientation, it means an orientation in which an individual wishes and feels able to shape the role and context of his work, in this case innovative behavior (Spreitzer, 1995). Innovation is a process that involves both the generation and implementation of ideas, such as seeking new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas, generating creative ideas;

Promote and champion ideas to others, Investigate and secure the funds needed to implement new ideas, and develop adequate plans and timelines for the implementation of new ideas. (Scott and Bruce, 1994). These findings confirm the statement of Ali, et al., (2020) Impact of Humble Leadership on Project Success: The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment and Innovative Work Behavior that humble leadership has a significant effect on psychological empowerment; humble leadership has a significant effect on innovative work behavior.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, the authors draw conclusions regarding the role of psychological empowerment in mediating the influence of humble leadership on innovative behavior, namely:

1. The more effective the humble leader, the more innovative behavior tends to increase.
2. A humble leader influences the innovative behavior of employees through the mediation of psychological psychological empowerment.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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