THE ROLE OF LEARNING AGILITY AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND COLLABORATIVE BEHAVIOR

[*]Irma Himmatul Aliyyah, & Raden Ahmad Idham

Faculty of Psychology, University of Mercu Buana

[*]Corresponding e-mail: irma.himmatul@mercubuana.ac.id

Abstract. The objective of this study is to determine the effect of psychological empowerment on collaborative behavior with the learning agility as a mediator among PT. Kazeto employees. The urgency of this research is to reveal other factors that can improve individual and company performance. Population in this study were all employees of PT. Kazeto, 250 people, from the head office and 3 branches. This research used a comparative quantitative approach with accidental sampling method. The results of first hypothesis showed that there is an effect of learning agility on collaboration behavior among PT. Kazeto employees. The relation between the variables of learning agility and collaboration behavior showed a path coefficient value 0.636 with a T value 9.009. This value is greater than t table (1.960). This means that the hypothesis was accepted. The second hypothesis showed that there is an effect of psychological empowerment on collaborative behavior with learning agility as a mediator. Indirect effect showed T Statistics of psychological empowerment on collaborative behavior is 7.419 with P Value is 0.000. This mean that the hypothesis is accepted.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Collaborative Behavior, Learning Agility.

INTRODUCTION

Today's business environment is changing rapidly. Changes can be seen from the many new business variants and advanced technology. Changes were made to meet the needs of consumers with fast service, low costs, and high quality products. In order to survive, organizations must adapt quickly and effectively. Organizations that can respond and meet consumer needs appropriately will become excellence organization (Wendler, 2015).

In the era of rapid change, one of the organizational strategies is how to make employees able to work together. Individuals are encouraged to integrate diverse perspectives and develop them into a shared perspective (Wandler, 2015). An organization will be successful if it is able to get the individuals involved with each other to solve problems together, even though these employees have different experiences, values and knowledge. Profit and non-profit organizations require their employees to cooperate intensively together and able to provide more work result than working independently (Olcott & Kathleen, 2019, Duran & Amandi, 2011, Taylor. 2014, Olasina, 2016). To fulfill consumer needs can be met by collaboration based on mutually agreed organizational values (Taylor, 2008).

According to Taylor (2008) collaboration is a division of power and authority that is carried out in a non-hierarchical manner. Effective collaborative behavior is characterized by employee understanding, cooperation in making problems solutions and leadership in groups.
However, the current phenomenon shows a low tendency of collaborative behavior. Senior leaders from various companies in the world state that collaboration among employees is still low, thus threatening the success of the company (www.raconteur.net, 2015). Only 25% of senior executives are able to achieve effective collaboration within the company (Cross, Rob & Grant, 2016).

According to Deloitte (2018) as many as 84% of the company's top leaders have not displayed collaborative behavior, even though collaboration is believed to be one of the priorities of the human resources department in various companies. Added by Deloitte (2018), as many as 77% of the integration process in collaboration failed. As a result, only 18% of workers believe that companies care about collaboration issues. Therefore, as much as 50-70% of collaboration processes are failed (Harper & Norelli, 2007).

Cross, et al (2016) revealed that only 3-5% of workers can become successful collaborators. The low collaboration behavior is explained by Bosworth (2014), because many individuals since childhood are directed to win the competition rather than carry out collaborative behavior. Organizations and educational institutions give more awards to individuals

who are the best in their groups, compared to individuals who are able to work together effectively.

One of the factors that influence collaborative behavior according to Goleman (2012) is psychological empowerment. Collaborative behavior can be created if individuals know the strengths and contributions that can be made, so that it will lead to respect for other individuals. Collaborative behavior will also be created if individuals feel empowered when they realize that they will be able to contribute and influence the environment. Agranoff and McGuire (2003) stated that individuals who have high psychological empowerment will show high collaboration behavior. The above research is reinforced by subsequent research which shows that the factor that influences individual collaboration behavior is how much goal alignment between individuals and collaborative teams (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2008; McGuire & Silvia, 2010; Page, 2008; Provan, Kenis, & Human, 2008). The amount of alignment between personal goals and work team goals shows the level of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 2008).

Individuals need to be agile to overcome various paradoxes in collaborating. Collaboration requires individuals who have psychological empowerment to be more agile in overcoming obstacles to collaborative behavior. This paradox also requires organizations to enable individuals to be agile when collaborating (Connelly, Zhang, & Faerman, 2008).

The term learning agility (learning agility) was introduced by De Meuse as a psychological construct (De Meuse, 2010 & Ferry 2018). Working agility is the ability to adapt well to managing changes and uncertain conditions, such as the current business situation (Ferry, 2018, McCann, et al. 2009, Thomson, 2007, Kac, et al. 2015, De Meuse, 2008).

The characteristics of an agile individual according to De Meuse (2015) are focusing on work, critical thinking, being able to adapt, trying to achieve work targets, liking change, realizing the strengths that can be used at work, and being open to input and criticism.

Regardless of the situation encountered, individuals who have high work agility will contribute a lot to work groups because they are motivated to

obtain optimal work results (De Meuse, 2008). This is because agile individuals who are able to see opportunities in every change and challenge they face, will continue to be optimistic and try to achieve common goals (Sumukadas & Sawhney, 2014).

Agile individuals have full self-awareness of the situation at hand, so they can understand their role in the organization (De Meuse, 2017). Self-awareness of the role that is owned creates a commitment to work together and collaborate with other individuals. (Douglas, 2013; Castro, et al. 2008; Kim et al. 2011; Joo & Shin, 2010 & Hanaysha, 2016).

An agile individual is willing and able to perform high no matter how difficult the conditions are. When the work environment changes, individuals who have work agility will learn the demands of change, adapt, and still show high performance as a form of commitment in meeting collaboration goals (Yan, 2016 & Hechanova, et al. 2006).

In the process of collaboration, individuals must quickly set common targets in order to accommodate their own interests and those of the work team, while at the same time prioritizing the work team. Therefore, the ability to set fast and realistic personal targets with the organization is needed in order to display collaborative behavior (Connelly, Zhang & Faerman, 2008). This ability shows the characteristics of an agile individual (De Meuse, 2015).

The explanation above shows that individuals who have learning agility will show collaborative behavior as a form of self-commitment in achieving work targets given by the organization (Taylor, 2008 & Chedid, et al. 2019).

The relationship between psychological empowerment and learning agility is linear. Psychological empowerment is a condition in which individuals have a deep meaning for what they do, have alignment of personal goals and organizational goals, have the required work competencies, and have a positive impact on the work environment (Spreitzer, 2008).

Individuals who have deep meaning for their work show concern for and understand individuals related to their scope of work (Julie, et al. 2010). Individuals who do not have deep meaning for the situation at hand tend

to be apathetic (Thomas & Velthhouse in Taylor, 2008). Not understanding the diversity of other individuals means not being agile in dealing with various characters.

Individuals who have high empowerment are able to control situations (Guangrong, 2010) so they can be critical in solving the problems they face (Kac, et al. 2015, Chiang, et al. 2012, Shauna, et al. Timothy, et al. 2012). Being critical in solving problems is one of the characteristics of work agility.

Individuals who feel competent to solve the problems they experience together with other individuals, will try to solve problems together. This is in accordance with previous research which states that individuals who consider themselves competent will try to achieve the targets set with the various obstacles they face (Wickramasinghe, et al. 2018).

It can be said that psychological empowerment influences individuals to be agile at work, so that individuals can then demonstrate collaborative behavior (De Meuse, 2015 & Shauna, et al. 2008).

With the explanation above, it can be seen that psychological empowerment will have a bigger role in collaborative behavior if individual self-empowerment and organizational roles are able to make individuals in it have work agility. That is, both variables can increase their influence on the organization if mediated by learning agility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Behavior
To solve the problems will be better by working together in a work group rather than working alone. Working together requires efforts to integrate different points of view and build a common understanding of the problems at hand. Sharing useful information for all parties is the essence of collaboration.

The definition of collaboration is the process of building the concept of task problems, distributing responsibility among group members, sharing expertise, and negotiating information. (Bossche, et al. 2016). According to Taylor (2008), collaborative behavior is the ability to solve problems

together by understanding and motivating the individuals involved in it, setting common goals and giving what is owned, bridging differences and directing the achievement of common goals.

Taylor (2008) explains the behavioral aspects of collaboration are:

- Aspects of interpersonal understanding, namely:
  - Empathy. Behavior that demonstrates the ability to understand individual views and the needs of other individuals, so as to develop close relationships at various levels, with various areas of expertise.
  - Understanding motivation. Behavior that shows the ability to motivate other individuals by understanding the motives of the parties involved and being able to make strategies to encourage other individuals while working.
- Aspects of cooperation and cooperation, namely:
  - An inclusive perspective on achievement. Behavior that shows the ability to be able to have a shared perspective by finding common goals that benefit all parties and recognizing achievement as a joint achievement.
  - Altruistic perspective. Behavior that shows the ability to give what is owned without expecting anything in return, namely by sharing information and capabilities with other individuals, being able to adjust to the needs of oneself and other individuals, and not expecting rewards for the effort made.
  - Conflict resolution. Behavior that demonstrates the ability to resolve conflict, by assuming that conflict is an opportunity to gain new perspectives, convey ideas easily understood, so as to be able to work together to win together in resolving the conflict at hand.
- Aspects of team leadership, namely:
  - Bridging the differences. Behavior that demonstrates ability by respecting the views of other individuals in problem-solving discussions, referring individuals who are more skilled when needed, and treating other individuals equally.

o Create the same line. Behavior that shows the ability to create common threads/ideas, create common goals, and direct the parties involved in achieving common goals.

Learning Agility

Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), define learning agility as the willingness and ability to learn new competencies, in order to be able to display the right performance, the first time you encounter a problem, or when you are in a variety of new situations. Agile individuals will continuously seek new challenges, actively seek feedback from other individuals to grow and develop and tend to be reflective.

According to Burke, Roloff and Mitchinson (in De Meuse, et al. 2017) the notion of learning agility is the individual's ability to develop new effective behaviors based on new experiences and easily move from one idea to another.

De Meuse, et al. (2015) stated that learning agility is an individual's ability to adapt quickly and learn from experience and apply the lessons learned to deal with new situations.

According to De Meuse (2015) aspects of learning agility are:

- The cognitive perspective is that individuals are able to think critically and strategically, approach organizational situations from a higher point of view, and focus on various inputs rather than just one or two perspectives.
- Interpersonal understanding describes an individual's ability to interact effectively with various employees, being able to understand motivation, values and goals, both strengths and limitations, and influencing them to have good performance.
- The ability to adapt to change describes individuals who like change, have curiosity, have a desire to learn new ideas and ways of acting. Individuals are constantly looking for innovative approaches to getting their learning done.
- Results-oriented individuals set personal and organizational goals that are challenging, resourceful, and can produce extraordinary results in new jobs that have never been done before.

- Self-understanding is that individuals are able to understand themselves, their capabilities and weaknesses, beliefs, values and what they feel, as well as personal goals related to the learningplace.
- Receiving input, namely the extent to which individuals listen and receive feedback from other employees, then take corrective action to improve performance.
- Focus is the degree to which employees fully care about the external environment, approach the environment, are nonjudgmental, and are able to regulate emotions effectively.

Psychological Empowerment

Individuals need motivation to achieve goals in life. The construct of psychological empowerment is related to the concept of motivation in individual work settings.

According to Conger and Kanungo (in Spreitzer 2008) psychological empowerment is the scope of authority that can be obtained by being given power by the social system so that top management has the opportunity to think strategically and innovatively.

It is said by Thomas and Kanugo (in Spreitzer 2008) the notion of psychological empowerment is intrinsic motivation in work which is manifested in individual work orientation in the environment.

According to Spreitzer (2008) psychological empowerment is a psychological condition experienced by individuals in controlling the work environment. From the description of the definition of psychological empowerment above, in this study what is meant by psychological empowerment refers to Spreitzer's theory (2008), namely the psychological conditions experienced by individuals in controlling the work environment.

Spreitzer (2008) reveals aspects of psychological empowerment are:

- Meaning, namely the level of conformity of values, beliefs, needs, personal work orientation with the organization. Meaning is a value regarding work goals, which are believed to be ideal rewards by employees.

- Competent, namely the confidence and ability to display performance in accordance with the skills possessed.
- Self-goal, namely the feeling of having the ability to choose work, and autonomy in starting and carrying out work processes.
- Influence, namely the magnitude of the impact of the strategy, administration, and work operations on the work situation.

RESEARCH METHODS

Total subjects in this study were all employees of PT. Kazeto, totaling 250 people, consisting of employees at the head office and employees at 3 (three) branches. This research uses a comparative quantitative approach, and the technique used for sampling is Accidental Sampling.

RESULTS

In this study, it was revealed that learning agility has a significant effect on increasing collaboration behavior. This is in accordance with research from Celefato and Christofeber (2019) which shows that collaboration requires agile thinking when collaborating, because the collaboration process is a complex process. In order to collaborate, individuals must be agile in positioning themselves quickly when situations change in the collaboration process. Therefore, individual agility in understanding environmental changes is needed so that collaboration behavior is appropriate (Leach, 2006).

This study reveals that psychological empowerment does not directly influence collaboration behavior. Psychological empowerment can influence collaborative behavior if it is mediated by learning agility. This research is in line with the research of Adamson, et al (2014), that individuals must be able to demonstrate agile interaction skills in order to be able to collaborate more. Merely having psychological empowerment, especially clear goals or work orientation, is not enough to be able to display collaborative behavior. Individuals who have psychological empowerment must be able to analyze problems, make corrections, add opinions and develop joint solutions in collaboration.

Other research shows that psychological empowerment cannot directly influence collaboration behavior. In collaboration, individuals who have high psychological empowerment will be faced with a conflict whether to be independent or interdependent. On the one hand, individuals are

required to show their abilities but on the other hand they must be able to meet environmental and organizational demands that may be different from their own goals. Therefore, it takes agility to work to be able to place oneself in meeting the demands of oneself and the demands of the group, so that empowered individuals can display collaborative behavior (Connelly, Zhang, & Faerman 2008).

In collaboration, individuals on the one hand must be active, but on the other hand must support group members. That is, individuals who have psychological empowerment cannot simply show their strengths and competence. Psychological empowerment will reduce the vulnerability of employees from conditions that can make themselves they are pressured by the demands of work (Wardani, 2020). Then, employee can be more agile. One side, individuals must promote their ideas, but on the other hand they must also encourage other individuals to convey their ideas. Individuals must quickly and agilely realize the situation that is happening (Connelly, Zhang, & Faerman 2008).

Conelly, Zhang, Faerman (2008) further explained the role of learning agility in mediating the role of psychological empowerment and collaborative behavior. Collaboration requires respect and an equal attitude with other individuals. However, the fact is that individuals who collaborate show different attitudes. It is mainly displayed by individuals who have power and authority. Not every individual has the same feelings and the same roles. One party has a very large role and the other party is smaller. Therefore, individuals who have psychological empowerment must be able to make themselves agile by focusing on realizing their strengths and contributions to give to the group, so that the group can achieve common goals. Recognizing the strengths that can be given, and focusing on what is done is the hallmark of an agile individual.

Scientifically, findings about the influence of psychological empowerment on learning agility have been revealed in many previous studies. Research from Bica and Silva (2020) shows that individuals who feel involved in organizational work processes will have high learning agility. Other findings show that individuals who have psychological empowerment are easier to adapt to changes in the work environment, so that individuals are more agile at work.

CONCLUSION

- The results of testing the hypothesis show that there is an effect of learning agility on collaboration behavior among employees.
- The results of hypothesis testing show that there is no effect of psychological empowerment on collaborative behavior.
- The results of testing the eighth hypothesis show that there is an effect of psychological empowerment on learning agility.
- The results of testing the hypothesis show that there is an effect of psychological empowerment on collaborative behavior with learning agility as a mediator.

Informed Consent Statement
N/a

Conflict of Interest
The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Statement
N/a

Author's Contribution
All author has satisfactory contributed to this study.

Data Availability Statement
N/a

REFERENCES

Adamson, D., Dyke, G., Jang, H., & Rosé, C. P. (2014). Towards an agile approach to adapting dynamic collaboration support to student needs. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 24(1), 92–124. doi:10.1007/s40593-013-0012-6

Baker, M. & Reiner, M. (Eds.). Dialogue and instruction. Modeling interaction in intelligent tutoring systems (pp. 39-55). Berlin, Germany: Springer-Verlag

Calefato, F., & Ebert, C. (2019). Agile collaboration for distributed teams softchnology. IEEE Software, 36(1), 72–78. doi:10.1109/ms.2018.2874668

Conger, J. A. & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: integrating theory and practice. *Journal Academy of Management Review*, Volume 13: 471-482.

De Meuse, K. P. & Hostager, J. T. (2008). The effects of a diversity learning experience on positive and negative diversity perceptions. *Journal Psychology*. Volume 23: p.127– 139. DOI 10.1007/s10869-008-9085.

De Meuse, K. P., Dai, K., Hallenbeck, G. S., Tang, G. & King, Y. (2015). Using learning agility to identify high potentials around the world. Korn Ferry Institute.

De Meuse, K. P., Guangrong, D. & Swisher, V. (2012). Leadership development: exploring, clarifying, and expanding our understanding of learning agility. *Journal Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, p.280–315.

De Meuse, K. P., Karunaratne, Bernadine, Alexander & Aileen. (2012). The federal agility fix: developing the next generation of leaders. Korn Ferry Institute.

Goleman, D. (2006). Social Intelligence: The new science of human relationships. Random House Publishing Group. Google-Books-ID: mEKCDGXHVmMC.

Goleman, D. (2012). Emotional intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ. Random House

Lombardo & Eichinger. (2012). Exploring, clarifying, and expanding our understanding of learning agility. Article in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. DOI: 10.1111/j.1754-9434.2012.01445Publishing Group.

Olcott, Kelly, C. & Hinchman, Kathleen. (2019). Collaboration*, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* Vol. 63 No. 2 pp. 125–126 doi: 10.1002/jaal.1002.

Spitzer, S. T., (2018). The power of collaboration. the career press, inc. Wayne, N.J.

Spreitzer, (2008). Taking stock: a review of more than twenty years of research on empowerment at work. Organizational behavior.

Taylor, H. G, (2008). Identifying collaborative competencies. *Journal of Public Personnel Administration*. Vol 28. No2. DOI 10.1177/0734371X08315434.

Taylor, H. G. & Haddock, B. A. (2014). Public service motivation and willingness to collaborate an examination in the context of homeland security. Evidence-based HRM: a Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship. Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 80-95. DOI 10.1108/EBHRM-07-2013-0018.

Taylor, H. G. & Morse S.R. (2016). Collaborative leadership development for local government official exploring competencies and program impact. *Journal Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 71-102.

Taylor, H. G. (2006). Preparing leaders for high stakes collaborative action: darrell darnell and the departement of homeland security. Public administration review; 66, S1; Pro Quest pg. 159.

Taylor, H. G. (2008). Learning indicators and collaborative capacity: applying action learning principles to the U.S. Department of Homeland Source: Public Administration Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 125-146.

Wardani, L. M. I., & Amaliah, A. (2020). The role of psychological empowerment as mediator between psychological capital and employee well-being. Journal of Critical Reviews, 7(13), 291-296.

Wendler, R. (2015). Development of the organizational agility maturity model. Federated conference on computer science and information systems pp. 1197–1206. DOI: 10.15439/2014F79