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LEADERSHIP AS A MODERATOR: THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-EFFICACY AND BEHAVIORAL INTEGRITY ON INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence *self-efficacy, behavioral integrity,* and leadership towards *individual creativity* on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bali. A quantitative approach was used through a survey of 474 respondents consisting of managers and employees, with analysis using *Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM). The results of the study show that *self-efficacy, behavioral integrity,* and leadership have a positive and significant influence on individual creativity. These findings confirm that employee self-confidence, consistent behavioral integrity, and good leadership practices can encourage increased creativity. However, the analysis also indicates that leadership does not act as a moderating variable in the relationship between *self-efficacy* and *behavioral integrity* with *individual creativity,* but rather has a direct influence on creativity. Theoretically, this research strengthens the perspective *socio cognitive theory* which explains creativity as the result of the interaction between personal and environmental factors. Practically, the implications of this research encourage SME leaders to strengthen leadership capacity, foster employee self-confidence, and uphold behavioral integrity as strategies to increase competitiveness through individual creativity.

Keywords: self-efficacy, behavioral integrity, leadership, individual creativity, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are a strategic sector supporting the strengthening of the national economy (Arsawan et al. 2023). However, SMEs face various challenges, particularly related to their ability to survive amidst the dynamics of change in the current industrial environment (Božiková and Šnircová 2016). Therefore, the concept of sustainable competitiveness is needed to maintain the sustainability and existence of SMEs. Three main dimensions—potential, performance, and process—are considered priorities in realizing sustainable competitiveness (Karman and Savanevičienė 2021). The application of sustainable development principles is believed to strengthen economic resilience, reduce disparities, and promote equality. This aligns with the direction of government policy as outlined in the 2024 Government Work Plan

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submitted at the National Development Planning Conference (Bappenas 2023).

Thus, if the development of sustainable competitiveness pillars is not implemented, SMEs are expected to experience weaknesses in facing increasingly intense competition. Therefore, employee creativity is a crucial factor in increasing the efficiency and ability of SMEs to respond to existing opportunities (Wang et al. 2016). Several studies have examined the importance of developing employee creativity in the SME context (Aristana, Arsawan, and Rustiarini 2022; Aristana, Puspitawati, and Ismayanthi 2023; Mittal and Dhar 2015; Riana et al. 2020). These development efforts have been conducted through two perspectives: the individual perspective (Aristana et al. 2025; Deogro Lee 2015; Rizwan and Siddiqui 2021) and the organizational perspective (Al-Ajlouni 2021; Jaiswal and Dhar 2017; Saether 2019; Zhu and Chen 2014). However, most studies still discuss the two separately, thus their measurement is considered less comprehensive. This condition is in line with the study of organizational behavior theory which emphasizes the importance of the contribution of individual behavior to the organization, as well as the role of the organization in providing support to employees (Manoppo 2020; Yammarino and Dansereau 2009).

Research into employee creativity cannot be separated from the role of leadership as the authority holder in an organization. (Ryan and Tipu 2013) emphasized that leadership is closely related to both individuals and organizations in achieving shared goals. From an individual perspective, a leader is required to accommodate personalities that reflect the personal characteristics of employees (Shafi et al. 2020; Sintaasih, Riana, and Aristana 2020). Positive leadership has been shown to significantly influence individuals, particularly through encouragement, increased self-confidence, inspiration, and optimization of personal potential (Liu, Siu, and Shi 2010). Approaches to developing these aspects include individual-based approaches (Chiang, Hsu, and Shih 2015; Sung and Choi 2009).

Meanwhile, from an organizational perspective, leaders have strategic authority in establishing policies aimed at maximizing various organizational components to support creativity (Amabile and Pratt 2016; Guimarães et al. 2016; Li, Zhang, and Guo 2021). Ghosh (2015) emphasized that effective leadership must be able to ensure organizational readiness to encourage creativity so that it can produce relevant and beneficial innovations, especially for SMEs.

Specifically, this research focuses on the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, considering several key reasons. First, SMEs are small-scale business entities engaged in production activities, making creativity an essential factor in producing products that differentiate themselves from competitors. This is due to the relatively easy-to-imitate characteristics of

SME products and their tendency to be homogeneous with similar businesses. Second, SMEs contribute significantly to economic growth, particularly in terms of employment. Indonesia itself has enormous human resource potential, as reported by the (Badan Pusat Satatistik Provinsi Bali 2021), which recorded a workforce of 140.15 million in August 2024. Thus, Indonesia possesses abundant intangible assets, particularly in the form of creativity, that can be explored and developed. Third, SMEs have received support from creative and competent employees in their fields, thus providing significant opportunities to enhance and develop their existing creative potential.

Addressing this phenomenon requires a more comprehensive assessment, utilizing multiple perspectives and benchmarks, in how employees are treated. This is crucial, considering that employees are an internal resource with strategic potential to be explored and thus able to make significant contributions to business progress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio cognitive theory

Socio cognitive theory was first developed by (Bandura 1986) in response to the limitations of the stimulus-response perspective in explaining individual behaviour. According to Puozzo & Audrin, (2021), this relationship is influenced by three interrelated factors: (1) the environment; (2) the individual, who is influenced by cognitive and emotional experiences; and (3) the individual's own behavior. Furthermore, socio cognitive theory is also understood as a framework that explains that knowledge is the result of interactions between individuals and social resources (inter-psychological process), which then changes the individual's cognitive structure (intra-psychological outcomes. This process is known as appropriation (Billett 1998). In this context, appropriation serves as a crucial mechanism for successful knowledge acquisition and has implications for future competency development (Wu et al. 2017; Zamani et al. 2020). In business literature, the concept of appropriation emphasizes the appropriateness of various components that reflect the complexity of the business model (Andries and Debackere 2013). One strategic step in this process is the creation of creative ideas, which are often characterized by dynamics in the form of tensions (Lewis et al. 2002), paradoxes (Miron, Erez, and Naveh 2004), contradictions (King, Anderson, and West 1991), and dilemmas (Benner and Tushman 2003) (Juliasa et al. 2025). This complexity emphasizes the importance of collaboration between individuals and organizations in driving increased organizational capabilities. From the individual perspective, key factors required include behavioural integrity (behavioural integrity) (Gatling et al. 2017; Palanski, Kahai, and Yammarino 2011) in rice efficiency (self-efficacy) (Mittal and Dhar 2015; Naz et al. 2020).

Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Integrity and Individual Creativity

Creativity theory is understood as a process of interaction between personal identity and situational factors (Amabile and Pillemer 2012). Early studies focused more on the role of creative personality as a determinant of

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creativity (Dul, Ceylan, and Jaspers 2011; Kim, Hon, and Crant 2009). As research on creativity progressed, it also identified other factors, such as intrinsic motivation (Gong, Huang, and Farh 2009) and the influence of knowledge (Park and Bennett 2014). Thus, individual creativity can be viewed as the result of two main approaches: the organizational approach and the creative approach. And individual approach. This view is in line with Socio cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that creativity is a form of behavioral response to received stimuli (Bandura 1986). Previous research on situational antecedents highlights aspects such as challenge, support, organizational encouragement, supervision, and autonomy as forms of organizational support for creativity (Amabile et al. 1996, 2006). On the other hand, an individual approach cannot be ignored. Several studies have shown that personal factors play a significant role in determining the level of creativity (Asad et al. 2021; Náfrádi, Nakamoto, and Schulz 2017; Stolz et al. 2022). Furthermore, an individual approach cannot be ignored. Several studies have shown that personal factors, particularly self-efficacy, play a significant role in determining creativity levels (Wang, Tsai, and Tsai 2014). However, measurement of other personal aspects, such as behavioural integrity, is still limited. However, behavioural integrity is believed to foster trust (Gatling et al. 2017), strengthen commitment (Saleem et al. 2019), and encourage prosocial behavior (Hsu and Lai 2023). Based on this description, this study formulates the first and second hypotheses as follows:

H1: Self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on individual creativity. H2: Behavioral integrity has a significant positive effect on individual creativity.

Leadership and Individual Creativity

In the 20th century, a significant shift occurred in the management discipline, with leadership beginning to occupy a central position as the most widely discussed topic in various reference sources (Sandbakken 2006). The study of leadership has evolved through various phases, giving rise to various theories highlighting different approaches, such as goal-oriented, involving, And engaging (Dulewicz and Higgs 2005). However, to date, a comprehensive understanding of the nature of leadership and how to achieve it has not been fully developed. Maria Stock et al. (2017) assert that leadership can be viewed as a mechanism for creating organizational openness, which in turn serves to reduce the barriers between the organization and consumers. Drawing on this perspective, this study emphasizes the role of leaders as drivers of organizational openness.

In general, transformational leaders have the ability to awaken employees' potential through empowerment, which ultimately improves their performance (Al-Husseini and Dosa 2016; Jha 2014). Gyensare et al. (2016) added that transformational leaders who provide personal attention, treat subordinates individually, train, and mentor, can foster a sense of appreciation and create an emotional closeness with the leader. Bass (1985)

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even emphasized that leadership is an important foundation for successful innovation. Conceptually, transformational leadership plays a role in encouraging innovative behaviour, which in turn impacts organizational performance (Sattayaraksa and Boon-Itt 2015). Matzler et al. (2008) also emphasized that the transformational leadership approach is one of the most effective strategies for strengthening company management. Empirical findings show that transformational leadership contributes significantly to increasing employee innovative behavior (I. Wayan Edi Arsawan et al. 2022; Nusair, Ababneh, and Bae 2012). This is in line with the view that transformational leaders encourage psychological empowerment so that employees' innovative behaviour can develop (Abukhait, Bani-Melhem, and Zeffane 2019; Yamin 2020).

Leadership approaches have been widely recognized as effective strategies for enhancing employee creativity (Tse, To, and Chiu 2018). Furthermore, leadership influences employee motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation. Findings by Al-Mansoori & Koç (2019) and Minh-Duc & Huu-Lam (2019) indicate that leadership increases employee satisfaction, which in turn increases employee engagement. Further studies have corroborated these findings, showing that leadership positively impacts intrinsic motivation (Al Harbi, Alarifi, and Mosbah 2019; Ivashkevich, Gaponik, and Koren 2001). Similarly, the higher the leadership practices, the greater the employee's intrinsic motivation (Chen and Huang 2009). In general, transformational leaders have the ability to unlock employees' potential through empowerment, ultimately improving their performance (Al-Husseini and Dosa 2016; Jha 2014). Gyensare et al. (2016) added that transformational leaders who provide personal attention, subordinates individually, train, and mentor can foster a sense of appreciation and create emotional closeness with the leader. Bass (1985) even emphasized that leadership is a crucial foundation for successful innovation. Conceptually, transformational leadership plays a role in encouraging innovative behaviour, which in turn impacts organizational performance (Sattayaraksa and Boon-Itt 2015). Matzler et al. (2008) also emphasized that a transformational leadership approach is one of the most effective strategies for strengthening corporate management. Empirical findings indicate that transformational leadership contributes significantly to improving employee innovative behaviour (Aristana et al., 2024; Arsawan et al., 2022). This is in line with the view that. Based on previous findings, the third and fourth hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

H3: Leadership has a positive and significant influence on individual creativity.

H4: Leadership moderates the relationship self-efficacy and behavioural integrity with individual creativity

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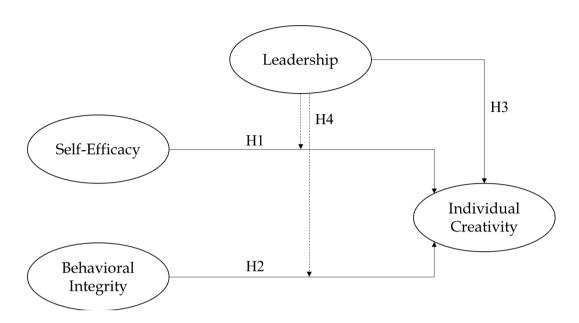


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework Of The Research

METHODS

Data and Sampling Methods

This research was conducted in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector in Indonesia, focusing on SMEs operating in Bali Province. This study specifically highlights SMEs that have achieved a level of business stability, based on several considerations. First, SMEs are a major source of job creation and income, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. Second, SMEs face increasingly dynamic competitive challenges due to large business expansion and global economic instability (Arsawan et al., 2022), thus requiring strategies to maintain competitiveness. Third, individual creativity is a crucial requirement in developing products and services (Danyliuk et al. 2020), although in practice, creativity in SMEs tends to be dominated by the owner or entrepreneur (Nolan and Garavan 2016). Therefore, business leaders or owners are seen as having a strategic role as facilitators in enhancing individual creativity.

The study population consisted of 616 SMEs spread across nine regencies/cities in Bali Province. The sample size was determined based on the formulation by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), resulting in a sample size of 237 SMEs. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. From each SME, two respondents, representing management and employees, were selected to complete the research questionnaire. The purpose of using managers and employees is to obtain perceptions of creativity from two data sources so as to reduce data bias that may occur due to self-assessment. Thus, the total number of participants involved in this study was 474 people. The data collection process was carried out from

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September to December 2024 through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms, supported by in-person visits to the research locations.

> Table 1 Respondent Demographics

Respondent Demographics						
Cł	naracteritic	Frequency	Percent			
	Male	156	32.91			
Gender	Female	318	67.09			
	≤ 20 years	125	26.37			
	21 - 30 years	256	54.01			
	31 - 40 years	79	16.67			
	41 - 50 years	11	2.32			
Age	> 50 years	3	0.63			
	Elementary school	11	2.32			
	Junior high school	95	20.04			
	Senior High School	340	71.73			
	Diploma	23	4.85			
Education	Bachelor	5	1.05			
	< 1 years	40	8.44			
	1 - 5 years	303	63.92			
	6 - 10 years	110	23.21			
Experience	> 15 years	21	4.43			
	Total	474	100.0			

Sources: Data analysis

Data Analysis

This study used Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). PLS was chosen because it is a powerful analytical method for describing and testing complex research models (Hair et al. 2017). The SEM-PLS analysis technique in this study was conducted with the assistance of Smart PLS software version 3.2.9.

Result

Outer Model Measurement

Model testing in this study begins with data quality analysis through outer model measurements. First, convergent validity is determined based on the value outer loading which must be greater than 0.7 (OL > 0.7). Second, an evaluation of the discriminant validity of each construct is carried out by comparing the square root values. Average variance extracted(\sqrt{AVE}) with correlations between other latent constructs. A construct is declared valid if the AVE value is greater than 0.5 (AVE > 0.5). The test results show that all values outer loading and AVE are above the threshold of 0.7 and 0.5, as presented in Tables 2 and 3. In addition, confirmation of discriminant validity was also carried out using the Heterotrait - Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value. A construct is declared to meet discriminant validity if the HTMT value is below the threshold of 0.80

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(HTMT < 0.80). The test results show that all constructs meet these criteria, as shown in Table 3. Next, the construct reliability is tested using the value rho C And Cronbach's Alpha (CA), which is stated as reliable if both are greater than 0.7 (CR/rho_C > 0.7). Based on the measurement results, the

value rho C is in the range of 0.889-0.938, while the value Cronbach's Alpha is in the range of 0.33-0.916. Thus, the test results can be concluded to have met the reliability criteria and are free from random errors.

> Table 2 Measurement model quality criteria

Measurement model quality criteria								
Variable	Item	OL	CA	rho_A	rho_C	AVE		
Behavioral Integrity	BI1	0.845	0.916	0.927	0.931	0.628		
	BI2	0.805	-					
	BI3	0.809	-					
	BI4	0.710	-					
	BI5	0.729	-					
	BI6	0.828	-					
	BI7	0.779	-					
	BI8	0.823	-					
Individual Creativity	IC1	0.891	0.912	0.914	0.938	0.793		
	IC2	0.850	-					
	IC3	0.868	-					
	IC4	0.949	-					
Leadership	LEAD1	0.820	0.833	0.837	0.889	0.667		
	LEAD2	0.772	-					
	LEAD3	0.800	-					
	LEAD4	0.871	-					
Self-efficacy	SE1	0.846	0.879	0.880	0.917	0.734		
	SE2	0.834	-					
	SE3	0.838	-					
	SE4	0.907	-					

Sources: Data analysis

Table 3 **Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

Variable	Behavioral Integrity	Individual Creativity	Leadership	Self-efficacy
Behavioral Integrity				
Individual Creativity	0.760			
Leadership	0.478	0.633		
Self-efficacy	0.676	0.808	0.506	

Sources: Data analysis

Inner Model Measurement

The next stage is measuring the structural model (inner model), which is investigated by examining the path coefficients and the coefficient of determination (R square / R2). A path coefficient value approaching one

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indicates a stronger relationship between variables (Hair et al. 2017). Prior to this, the R² value is tested, which represents the proportion of the endogenous variable's variance that can be explained by the exogenous variable. The rule of thumb regarding the acceptance level of the R² varies. Chin (1998) proposed a more detailed classification, namely an R² of 0.67 (substantial), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.19 (weak). Based on the analysis, the endogenous variable, individual creativity, had an R² value of 0.806 and an Adjusted R² of 0.802, which can be categorized as substantial, and the model was declared to have a good fit.

Table 4
Effect size

Eliou Sieu					
Variable	f^2	Remark			
Behavioral Integrity -> Individual Creativity	0.269	Moderately			
Leadership -> Individual Creativity	0.175	Small			
Self-efficacy -> Individual Creativity	0.602	Substantial			

Sources: Data analysis

The effect size (f²) value was measured to evaluate the strength of the relationship in the structural model, namely through a combination of endogenous constructs with predictor variables (Hair et al. 2017). According to (Cohen 1988), the f² value can be categorized into three levels: small effect (0.05), medium effect (0.20), and large effect (0.40). The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 4. Based on the test results, it was found that leadership has a relatively weak influence on individual creativity; behavioral integrity has a moderate relationship with individual creativity and self-efficacy has a substantial relationship with individual creativity. These findings indicate that all variables show interactions in the constructed model.

Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the bootstrapping method, using a one-way approach (*one-tailed test*) at a significance level of 5%. Thus, the t-value is declared significant if it meets the criteria of t > 1.96 and p < 0.05. The summary of the results of the hypothesis testing is shown in Table 5 and Figure 2. The research findings show that self-efficacy, behavioral integrity, and leadership show a positive and significant influence on individual creativity (H1 = 0.602; p > 0.000; H2 = 0.269; p > 0.000; H3 = 0.175; p > 0.000), so that the hypothesis H1 to H3 is supported. Furthermore, the role of leadership as a moderator of the influence of self-efficacy, behavioral integrity on individuals. The results show that leadership does not play a moderating role (H4: -0.055; p < 0.249; 0.055; p < 0.233), so that H4 is not supported.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing

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Relationship between variables		Mean	STDEV	T	P
				Statistics	Values
Self-efficacy -> Individual Creativity	0.602	0.600	0.075	8.058	0.000
Behavioral Integrity -> Individual	0.269	0.269	0.068	3.952	0.000
Creativity					
Leadership -> Individual Creativity	0.175	0.174	0.043	4.085	0.000
Self-efficacy*Leadership -> Individual	0.055	0.050	0.075	0.731	0.233
Creativity					
Behavioral*Leadership -> Individual	-	-	0.081	0.677	0.249
Creativity	0.055	0.055			

Sources: Data analysis

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the direct influence of self-efficacy, behavioral integrity, and leadership on individual creativity. The results of the quantitative analysis indicate a significant influence of the intervention on self-efficacy, behavioral integrity, and leadership on individual creativity. This finding indicates that the higher the self-efficacy and behavioral integrity and the better the leadership implemented, the higher the individual creativity of employees. In other words, it confirms that an individual's belief in their own abilities (self-efficacy) is an important foundation for fostering creativity. Employees who are confident in their abilities are more likely to take risks, try new approaches, and generate creative ideas. This finding supports previous research that suggests selfefficacy has a positive impact on creativity (Ma et al. 2013; Newman et al. 2018). Likewise, behavioral integrity, namely the congruence between words and actions, has been shown to significantly influence creativity. When integrity is maintained, trust and a safe psychological climate are created, so employees feel freer to express creative ideas without fear or doubt. These results support previous studies (Gatling et al. 2017; Saleem et al. 2019). On the other hand, SMEs require effective leadership so that leaders can play a vital role in inspiring, facilitating, and supporting employees to be creative. Leaders who are able to empower teams, set an example, and encourage innovation will create a work environment conducive to the emergence of individual creativity. This study provides support to previous studies where creativity requires appropriate leadership (Islam and Asad 2021; Náfrádi et al. 2017; Stolz et al. 2022; Wang et al. 2014).

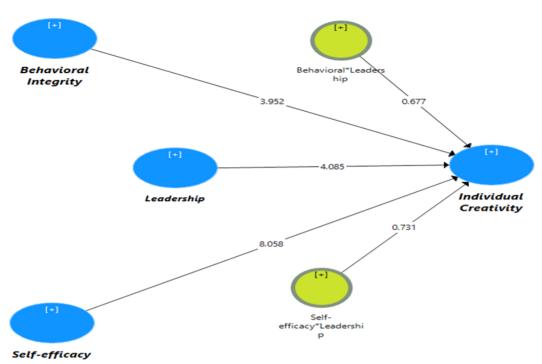


Figure 1 **Result Model Analysis**

Another finding of this study is that leadership does not moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural integrity and individual creativity. This result indicates that leadership has a direct influence on individual creativity, but does not interfere with the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural integrity and individual creativity. In other words, leadership does not strengthen or weaken the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural integrity with individual creativity. Thus, even though the leadership style applied is appropriate to the work conditions, it does not change how self-efficacy and behavioral integrity influence creativity. These findings confirm that leadership is indeed important, but it stands as an independent factor that directly influences creativity, not as a moderator of the relationship between other variables. These results indicate that self-efficacy and behavioural integrity. The explanation is sufficiently strong in explaining creativity without the need for leadership reinforcement. Creativity grows from internal factors (selfconfidence) and personal values (integrity) that operate independently, while leadership plays a parallel role, not as an additional driver. This finding is inconsistent with previous research that found leadership to be a driver of behaviour (Aristana et al. 2024; Carmeli and Paulus 2015; Sungu, Weng, and Xu 2019).

According to socio cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a powerful personal factor driving creative behaviour. Research showing the significant influence of selfefficacy on creativity supports this theory's core position. Meanwhile, behavioural

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integrity: Behavioural integrity can be viewed as cognitive frame or normative beliefs that guide action. In socio cognitive theory, this reinforces personal standards and self-regulation, which plays an important role in producing creative behaviour. Leadership (does not moderate). In socio cognitive theory, the social environment (including leadership) plays a role as enabler or modelling agent who provide examples and support. However, your findings indicate that leadership plays a more direct role as a driver of creativity rather than as a moderator of personal factors behaviour. This means that self-efficacy and integrity are strong enough to drive creative behaviour independently (self-regulated behaviour). The environment (leadership) remains important, but it works independently, rather than strengthening personal factors (Aristana et al. 2024; Huang 2019).

Practical Implications

This research provides important implications for SME management, particularly in enhancing individual employee creativity. strengthening self-efficacy needs to be a primary concern through training programs, providing positive feedback, and creating a work environment that encourages the courage to experiment. This step is believed to strengthen employee self-confidence in generating innovative ideas. Second, behavioural consistency (behavioural integrity) must maintained by both leaders and employees. Alignment between words and actions will build a climate of trust, so employees feel safer expressing creative ideas. Implementing a clear code of ethics and enforcing organizational discipline can strengthen this culture of integrity. Third, leadership has been shown to directly influence creativity, so SME leaders need to adopt a more transformational, entrepreneurial, innovative leadership style and empowering.\ The primary focus of leaders is to create a supportive work climate, facilitate the innovation process, and encourage active employee involvement in generating new ideas. Thus, developing employee creativity in SMEs depends not only on the role of leaders but also on strengthening internal factors such asself-efficacy and behavioural integrity. These two channels operate in parallel and need to be managed simultaneously to make an optimal contribution to business sustainability.

Conclusion

This study aims to analysed the influence self-efficacy, behavioural integrity, and leadership towards individual creativity in the context of SMEs in Bali. The results of the quantitative analysis show that these three variables have a positive and significant influence on individual creativity. This finding confirms that the higher the employee's self-confidence (selfefficacy), the more consistent the integrity of the behaviour shown, and the better the quality of leadership applied, the higher the level of creativity that can be produced. Furthermore, the results of the study show that leadership does not act as a moderator in the relationship self-efficacy And behavioural integrity with individual creativity. This indicates that leadership plays a more direct role in encouraging creativity, rather than as a reinforcement of the relationship between individual factors and creative

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behaviour. Theoretically, this finding broadens understanding within the frame work. Socio cognitive theory by emphasizing that individual creativity is formed from the interaction between personal factors (selfconfidence and behavioural integrity) and environmental support (leadership). Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of simultaneously strengthening internal and external factors to create more creative employees in facing the dynamics of business competition.

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