

“Unleashing Creative Potential” How Gritty Leadership and Learning Agility Foster Innovative Performance?

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Abstract

The leadership role remains an area that requires more attention in the domain of creative performance. Drawing on social learning theory, the study tested the direct effect of a leader's grit on creative performance and learning agility, and learning agility on employee creative performance. Additionally, explored the underlying mechanism of learning agility between gritty leadership and employee creative performance. A time-lagged survey of hotel employees (n=247) was conducted. SPSS software was utilized for descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Theoretical model has been investigated and tested by using structural equation modeling (SEM). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and hypotheses testing were done by utilizing SmartPLS4. The study findings showed that gritty leadership is positively related to creative performance and learning agility. Furthermore, learning agility positively influences employee creative performance. The results also revealed that learning agility mediates the relationship between gritty leadership and employee creative performance. This study expands on the importance of leadership by assessing the underlying mechanism. Managers in the hospitality sector should adopt this leadership style to promote employee learning agility, which may ensure creativity in the performance of employees. The study limitations and future research directions are also discussed.

Keywords: Gritty Leadership; Learning Agility; Creative Performance; Hospitality Industry

In recent years, Pakistan has become a popular and emerging destination for investment in tourism (Dawn, 2017). According to the reports of Pakistan Hotels Association (PHA) the business of hotels in Pakistan reported a growth of 9.7 % (PHA, 2015). Furthermore, hotels in big cities like Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, and Multan demonstrated a rising and expanding trend, following the formal operations of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as revealed by the secretary general of Pakistan Hotels Association (The Express Tribune, 2016). Further, there has been a significant and vibrant shift in the business world with an increase in the contribution of the services sector as compared to the manufacturing business (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2018; Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2017; Australian Trade and Investment Commission (ATIC), 2017; & United Nations Conference on Trade & Development, 2014). In this manner, according to Akkoç, Atlay, and Turunc (2013), Zhang, Waldman, Han, and Li (2015), and Bisharat et al. (2017), achieving the advanced challenges of business and organizational goals is greatly aided by effective leadership.

In today's complicated, advanced, and highly competitive work environment, it is important to overemphasize the value of competent personnel in difficult interactions with customers. Talented employees exhibit originality and creative work behavior, assess customer satisfaction and loyalty, and help the hotel business achieve larger profit margins and competitive advantage (Tajidini et al., 2020; Madera et al., 2017). According to Yuan and Woodman (2010), a business or work unit's creative behavior stems from an employee's ambition to produce novel concepts, methods, and approaches. According to Tajeddini et al. (2020), human elements such as creativity and leadership inspire hotel personnel to perform creatively. A study by Khlystova et al. (2022) revealed that for a demanding and continuously changing work environment, it is important to have a unique and different service design to meet and address the challenging demands of the guests in the hospitality industry. The reason is that in the business of hospitality, the responsibilities are challenging and the work environment frequently shifting, evolving, and unpredictable (Lisovich, Wang, & Nguyen, 2021). Like, a study by Bavik (2016) found that creativity and innovation have been integrally related to the organizational culture of the hospitality industry. A study by Ottenbacher (2007) revealed that investing and spending on human resources promotes innovative thinking and creativity. Similarly, the management of innovation and creativity is a non-technological aspect that refers to the development and use of creative concepts, processes,

practices, and instruments that improve an organization's competitiveness and performance (Birkinshaw et al., 2008).

The understanding of leadership is now necessary in order to put forth consistent effort. Several leadership styles like servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1998), where the focus of the leader was to improve the followers growth and well-being. In addition, the transformational leadership style (Bass & Riggio, 2006) with its intention to bring changes in follower's attitudes and behaviors. These were passive leadership styles, but the 21st century needs an active leadership style that can keep up with obstacles and a competitive environment. Supervisors and managers need a distinct leadership style that guarantees the success of their subordinates. Leadership demonstrates perseverance and passion in their endeavors. According to Duckworth (2016), a leader with grit is one who "maintains effort and interest despite failure, working rigorously towards challenges, perseverance and passion towards long-term goals." Leaders with grit adhere to two principles: preventing unpleasant experiences and consistently enhancing skills and expertise (Buszka, 2020). As it is highlighted that, the hospitality industry work environment is more challenging, demanding, complex and advanced. So, gritty leadership style carries those characteristics. Therefore, the present study is more interested to explore the impact of gritty leadership in hospitality sector. This is more suitable and appropriate leadership style as irrespective of challenges and failures leaders as managers, team leaders or supervisors keep going and show passion and perseverance to achieve the objectives.

Today's complex and creative world is full of uncertainty, volatility, ambiguity, and complexity, and gritty leaders have features that make it easier for them to lead effectively in this environment (De-Rue et al., 2013). As Vardiman et al. (2006) concluded that effective leaders often come up with creative solutions to problems, adapt to changing work settings and market situations, and maintain elevated performance standards. Hence, by demonstrating highly developed creative performance, gritted leaders foster an environment where managerial and non-managerial staff members can positively impact the organization. Zhang, Gong, Zhong, and Zhao (2017) defined the word "creative performance" as "a person's capacity for coming up with innovative and useful ideas at work." People's imaginative contributions lead to the development of novel concepts, products, or services for the advancement of the business (Bishop, 2021). Creative performance is the essential and main source for promoting innovation in company groupings. Managerial and non-managerial staff members can both benefit from using creative performance as a method to foster creativity at work (Karatape et al., 2020).

There is limited extant literature which reveals effects of leadership on innovation and creativity, even though it is a major source of competitive advantage (Hassi, 2019; Khosravi et al., 2019; Volberda, Bosch, & Heije, 2013). Thus, present study intended to explore the impact of gritty leadership on employee creative performance. Furthermore, the study aims to look into the relationship between gritty leadership and learning agility. Curiously, learning agility is described as the readiness and capacity to learn from experience and then apply acquired abilities in novel circumstances for successful performance (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). It is a person's capacity and willingness to continuously learn new information (Amato & Molokhia, 2016). Agile learners also have a tendency to be eager to learn, test out hypotheses, and recognize lessons acquired in order to enhance their capacity to deal with difficulties. So, the present study is in favour of examining the effect of gritty leadership on learning agility.

Extant literature has sufficient clue that learning agility leads to creative performance. A number of studies have shown that great performers are more likely to be those who are more inclined to learn from their leaders. Additionally, they might appear more qualified as compare to other employees (Connolly, 2001). Employees with low skill levels face the possibility of being replaced by technological improvement (Dahlin, 2019). Individuals can take a variety of steps to survive and compete successfully in the current work environment (Bakker, Arnold, & Michael, 2010). These steps include being more proactive, creative, and innovative, having the skills necessary to perform their jobs, and being committed to producing work of a high standard. So, therefore there is a need to investigate the effects of learning agility on employee creative performance in hospitality industry for unique outcomes.

To proceed further, the study inclined to investigate the underlying mediating role of learning agility between gritty leadership and employee creative performance. Extant literature offer sufficient evidence that learning agility played its role on multiple angles. Like, learning agility as an outcome variable as well as predicting variable. In several research studies learning agility played its mediating role (Tripathi & Sankaran, 2021; Park, Lim, & Lee, 2022; Tripathi & Kalia, 2024). But little attention has been given to investigate the learning agility as explanatory mechanism between gritty leadership and employee creative performance in hospitality industry in context of Pakistan. So, therefore, the present study is interested to assess the mentioned relationship for unusual outcomes.

Social learning theory (SLT) presented by Bandura (1977) is being used as underpinning theory for this study. It outlines three important components: modeling, imitation, and observational learning. Muro and Jeffrey's (2008) identified that social learning theory (SLT) reveals a few crucial elements of sustainable resource management and targeted behavioral changes. The primary objective of this theory is to gain knowledge from individuals' interactions with one another. It is regarded as a means of bridging the gap between behaviorist and social cognitive theories (Muro & Jeffery, 2008). People learn by copying, emulating, and observing the behavior of others, especially those that they look up to as role models. As per the social learning theory, individuals who follow gritty leaders are likely to adopt these qualities after experiencing their perseverance and passion. This, in turn, can boost their approach of learning agility, ultimately leading to enhanced creative performance.

The current study contributes to the literature in number of ways. First, this study aims to examine the relationship between gritty leadership and creative performance. Additionally, the study is unique as it aims to find out the mediating effect of learning agility in the hospitality industry i-e in the context of Pakistan. Second, this research study will give more valuable insight that how leader's grit (managers) develops and transforms the learning capability of an employee which will lead to bring creativity in employee performance. This research can give understanding and guide both the managers and employees of the hospitality sector of Pakistan. Lastly, most concepts were developed and tested in a US/Western setting, and more recent scholars and practitioners have repeatedly suggested that organizational theories must be tested across cultures (Tsui, Nifadkar & Ou, 2007). The current study fills these gaps by testing the relationships between gritty leadership, learning agility, and creative performance in a non US/Western context, i.e. Pakistan.

On a final note the study is concerned with these questions and objectives.

Research Question 1: Does gritty leadership positively affect employee creative performance?

Research Question 2: Does learning agility mediates the relationship between gritty leadership and employee creative performance?

Research Objective 1: To examine how gritty leadership effects employee creative performance.

Research Objective 2: To investigate how learning agility mediates the relationship between gritty leadership and employee creative performance.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Gritty Leadership and Employee Creative Performance

It's important to notethat the concept of grit highlights two essential elements i-e; perseverance and passion. According to Perrewe et al. (2014) and Chen et al. (2009), passion is a strong feeling that relates to a personally meaningful value that motivates actions and intents to exhibit that preference or value. Furthermore, Merriman (2017) explains perseverance, as one human quality that indicates the will to finish a task even in the face of difficulty. According to Strayhorn (2014) leaders that possess greater levels of grit are inclined to pursue meaningful work, prioritize their goals, and consistently advance by overcome challenging circumstances. Organizations are continuously looking for ways to encourage and develop innovative and creative work behaviors among their staff members in order to achieve and maintain a competitive edge in today's market. Human resource management, organizational science, psychology, sociology, and other fields have produced a plethora of theoretical and empirical studies on the factors that encourage and impede employee creativity (Shipton et al., 2006).

In particular, organizational leaders are aware that providing support for the development of information is essential to promoting creativity and innovation (Collins & Smith, 2006). Research indicates that the leadership role has a major influence in promoting staff creativity (Mumford & Hunter, 2005). Lee et al. (2020) also gave a clue that leadership positively influences the followers innovative and creative performance. According to this study's assumption, employees' creative performance mostly impacted by gritted leadership, which is

demonstrated by passion, confidence, and perseverance. Thus, on the basis of above literature the following hypothesis is being developed;

HA: Gritty leadership positively influences employee creative performance.

Gritty Leadership and Learning Agility

Learning agility is not merely a theoretical idea. According to Swisher (2013), since it is behavior-based, it can be observed and developed. Many new jobs call for knowledge and abilities that are different from previous ones. It promotes lifelong learning among individuals in order to gain the essential expertise. An expert with field expertise can assess that he's carrying out and finishing his work in the most efficient manner by assessing his performance. In order to obtain high level of performance, those with high learning agility, gain a practical technical skill (Sodikin, Aliyyah, & Idham, 2020). They develop a good understanding of how people behave in various contexts, allowing them to effectively manage conflicts and adapt to changing circumstances. Leaders that possess learning agility are also masters in their industries, able to forge bonds with employees, and capable of solving challenging issues. Their critical thinking and analytical skills enable them to address challenges in a variety of contexts and with flexibility (De Meuse, 2015).

Agile people may effectively solve complicated problems and build linkages between new and old information (Yadav & Dixit, 2017). Conceptually, they approach issues from different angles and come up with the best answer. Accordingly, it is expected that a person with learning agility, possess strong conceptual abilities. Hence, a theoretical explanation provides a broad overview of the connection between leadership and learning agility (Sodikin et al., 2020). A study by Hoff and Smith (2020) found that leadership and learning agility are related with each other. In addition, according to Dai, De Meuse, and Tang (2013), leadership and learning agility are linked to each other. The literature reviewed above provides evidence in favor of the theory linking learning agility with gritty leadership. Thus, it is theorize that;

HB: Gritty leadership positively influences learning agility.

Learning Agility and Employee Creative Performance

It is difficult to predict how the business environment evolves because it is constantly changing (Phong, Hui, & Son, 2018). Skills development affects these uncertain developments, leading to quick corporate adaptation and, ultimately, modifications in business models (Vesna, Sanja, Gheorghe, & Mladen, 2015). For example, it can replace conventional procedures and eliminate the need for customers to visit locations in person. It also provides large data and advanced analytic, which increases competition and calls for creativity (Sbanda et al., 2020). People must be able to keep learning from experience as they grow in any sector, whether they are going to be public servants, business owners, or psychotherapists, as concluded by Charan, Drotter, and Neol (2001). Development in the corporate sector, for instance, may be perceived as requiring people to change, mature, or move on. People evolve or change in the skills and values they use as they take on new, challenging, or varied employment. Developmental actions that are not fully mastered can potentially impede one's progress up the leadership pipeline (Hogan & Ones, 1997).

Numerous studies indicated that strong performers are more likely to be those who are more inclined to learn from experience. Additionally, they might be more employable (Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004; Connolly, 2001). Workers' skill sets must also change to reflect these outside advances. Technological innovation poses a threat to the jobs of manual laborers and people with low skill levels (Dahlin, 2019). Moreover, Subedi's (2023) shown that learning agility has a beneficial impact on performance of employee. There is a significant connection between employee performance and learning agility. Additionally, Kumar, Narayan, Sharma, Kaur, and Sen (2023) gave a clue that employee learning agility can have a significant and favorable effect on the sustainable performance of individuals. Furthermore, Putri and Suharti (2021) revealed that learning agility has positive influence on innovative behavior of employees. On the basis of the above cited literature, the study therefore hypothesizes that;

HC: Learning agility positively influences the employee creative performance.

Mediating Role of Learning Agility

The concept of learning agility is becoming widely recognized in HR management as an important factor of sustainable creative performance (De Meuse et al., 2010). According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), the ability and willingness of an individual to acquire new skills under various circumstances are known as learning agility. Deep learning agility in many situations might lead to new experiences (Yadav, 2017). According to Kaiser and Craig (2011), learning agility is a genuine skill that involves having real-world experience, learning from mistakes, and being willing to use one's higher potential in order to improve performance and increase one's chances of career success. In addition, Seijts and Latham (2012) explained that it not only enhances performance but facilitates organizational change adaptation. Learning agility has the ability to

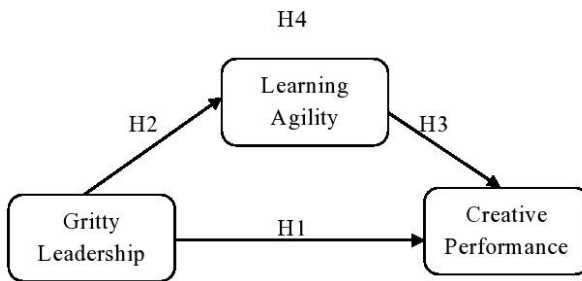
mediate between a range of antecedent and outcome variables related to the workplace (Tripathi et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Tripathi and Dhir (2022) given a clue that the employees' current performance can be the outcomes of learning agility. Additionally, it is linked to worker's adaptability and flexibility (Gravett & Caldwell, 2016). Saputra, Abdinagoro, and Kuncoro (2018) also added that learning agility plays a mediating role. Managers, directors, and executives working for leading companies in the fields of construction, service industry, media, banking, and manufacturing industry follow the same pattern. The extant literature hints that leaders leads to learning agility which consequently leads to creative performance. This clarifies that learning agility mediates the relationship the predictor and outcome variables. Tripathi and Kalia (2022) also given a clue that learning agility contributes in desirable organizational performance. The literature above cited supports the hypothesis that;

HD: Learning agility significantly mediates the relationship between gritty leadership and employee creative performance.

Figure 1.

Research Model



Research Methodology

Sample and Procedure of Data Collection

Employees in Pakistan's hospitality industry provided the study's data. This industry continuously innovates and introduces advancements with remarkable gains, employees in this sector have complex, challenging careers that are change-oriented. Based on data from the Board of tourist & hospitality sector, Pakistan, the hospitality industry makes a significant contribution and brought in \$23 billion in revenue in 2018. As a result, employees in this industry are under much more pressure to offer distinctive and distinctive services in order to meet the needs and demands of clients and guests. The data collection from such busy employees was a challenge. Thus, the study followed a survey based research design to identify employees opinion about their leaders\supervisors, their self learning tendency and performance level. The directors and HR managers of the hotels in Rawalpindi and Islamabad region were contacted. The researcher informed the staff members about the purpose of the data collection, and the managers and directors consented to allow data collection from personnel in their respective departments. In order to encourage respondents to participate, a cover letter on the front page was added in questionnaire, that outlined the goals of the study and guaranteed confidentiality. Employees were contacted three times (time lag1, time lag 2, & time lag 3) in order to obtain pure effect and prevent the issues of common method bias.

Employees were asked about their opinions on their leader's gritty style at Time 1. Employee responses on the mediator (learning agility) were gathered at time 2, with a gap of 15 days. After two weeks, the same employees' responses were gathered for the time lag's 3, on outcome variable (creative performance). A total of 281 usable questionnaires were received from the respondents in time lag 1 after 324 total questionnaires were distributed. 262 valid questionnaires were obtained from the 281 surveys that were distributed to respondents in the time lag 2. Finally, at time lag 3, a total of 262 questionnaires were circulated, and 247 questionnaires from the respondents were received. A final sample size of 247 was obtained. The overall response rate was 76%.

Operationalization of Constructs

In this study, an eight-item scale created by Duckworth and Quinn (2009) was used to quantify gritty leadership. The items were rated on a 5-pointlikert scale ranging from (1) Very much (5) Not at all. Gravett and Caldwell (2016) measure of learning agility was used. This measure consists of twenty five items.The items were rated on a 5-point likert scale ranging from (1) Rarely (5) always. Zhou and George (2001) scale of creative performance was adopted. This measure consists of thirteen items. The items were rated on a 5-pointlikert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Data Analysis and Results

Participants Profile

The study's gender distribution was 61.5% male and 38.5% female. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 60 years & above. 34% of individuals were aged 20 to 29, 27.5% were aged 30 to 39, and 19% were aged 40 to 49. 12.6 % were in the age bracket of 50-59 years. Participants above the age of 60 accounted for only 6.9% of the overall sample.Similarly, 49% of those with a bachelor's degree and 33.2% with a master's degree met the qualification requirements. The proportion of respondents having an MS/M.Phil degree was 15.4%, while 2.4% had a PhD. Furthermore, 13.4% had less than one year of experience, while 18.2% had between 1 to 3 years of experience. Participants with 4-7 years of experience constituted 25.5% of the sample, while those with 7-10 years of experience made up 21.1%.Participants with at least ten years of experience accounted for 21.9% of the overall sample size.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics(Mean (M), Standard Deviation (S.D), Correlations

	Mean (Mean)	S.D	1	2	3
Gritty Leadership	3.29	.956	1		
Learning Agility	3.60	.906	.29**	1	
Creative Performance	3.16	.836	.45**	.36**	1

Note. N:247, **p<0.001, CP= Creative Performance, GL=Gritty Leadership, LA=Learning Agility

Descriptive Statistics

Table I represents the descriptive statistics which consists of mean (m), standard deviation (S.D) and correlations. The study found a substantial correlation between gritty leadership, learning agility (r=.29, p<0.001), and employee creative performance (r=.45, p<0.001).In addition, the learning agility positively correlated with employee creative performance (r=.36,p<0.001).

Test of Measurement Model

Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019b) suggested the composite reliability value of 0.90 and the minimum threshold value of 0.70. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) value indicated convergent validity. As per the study results all constructs had an AVE value greater than>0.5, the required threshold (Hair et al., 2019b).Although a few items had slightly lower outer loadings than 0.7, their values were approaching to 0.7, making it better to keep such items because the AVE was more than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). These items were so taken into account. Table 2 displays the outer loading, alpha, composite reliability (CR), and AVE for all study variables.

Table 2.

Outer loading, Alpha, Composite Reliability & Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Outer Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Gritty Leadership		0.891	0.896	0.567
GL1	0.776			
GL2	0.781			
GL3	0.761			
GL4	0.719			

GL5	0.753			
GL6	0.752			
GL7	0.744			
GL8	0.732			
Learning Agility		0.966	0.967	0.550
LA1	0.719			
LA2	0.685			
LA3	0.720			
LA4	0.740			
LA5	0.752			
LA6	0.771			
LA7	0.746			
LA8	0.748			
LA9	0.733			
LA10	0.775			
LA11	0.751			
LA12	0.724			
LA13	0.731			
LA14	0.731			
LA15	0.706			
LA16	0.722			
LA17	0.739			
LA18	0.747			
LA19	0.750			
LA20	0.771			
LA21	0.763			
LA22	0.760			
LA23	0.760			
LA24	0.743			
LA25	0.742			
Creative Performance		0.919	0.923	0.509
CP1	0.668			
CP2	0.731			
CP3	0.763			
CP4	0.702			
CP5	0.666			
CP6	0.703			
CP7	0.708			
CP8	0.746			

CP9	0.721
CP10	0.705
CP11	0.680
CP12	0.804
CP13	0.731

Note. Alpha, Outerloadings, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted

Table 3.

Discriminant Validity (Hetrotrait-Monotrait Ratio) HTMT (Measurement Model)

Variables	CP	GL	LA
CP	-----	-----	-----
GL	0.496	-----	-----
LA	0.391	0.314	-----

Hypothesis Testing (Structural Model)

The structural model analysis findings are presented in Tables 4. According to Hair et al. (2019), the research structural model was evaluated using R2 (R square-coefficient of determination), t-values, f2 effect sizes. The t-values were estimated using the bootstrapping 5000 approach (Hair et al., 2019). The model's findings supported all of the study's hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 found a substantial direct association between gritty leadership and employee creative performance ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). When a leader's grit increases, it leads to creativity in employee performance. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Hypothesis 2 assumed that gritty leadership is positively and significantly related to learning agility. The results indicated that gritty leadership has positive impact on learning agility ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). When leader's grit increases it further increase the employee learning agility. So, hypothesis 2 is accepted. In addition, in hypothesis 3 it was hypothesized that learning agility is positively related to employee creative performance ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$). The study findings confirmed that learning agility has significant effect on employee creative performance. When learning agility of employees increase it further brings creativity in employee performance. So, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 4.

Results of Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	S.E	t-values	f2	R2	Decision
H1	GL → CP	0.38	0.056	6.85	0.18	0.275	Approved
H2	GL → LA	0.30	0.059	5.20	0.10	0.093	Approved
H3	LA → CP	0.26	0.053	4.90	0.08	-----	Approved

Table 5.

Results of Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	S.E	t-values	2.5% (CI.95)	97.5%	Decision
H4	GL → LA → CP	0.080	0.023	3.48	0.04	0.133	Approved

Finally, the table 5 depicts the mediating effects of learning agility. Hayes (2013) assumptions were followed. The results shows that learning agility mediates the relationship between gritty leadership and creative performance ($\beta = 0.080$, $p < 0.001$), with a confidence interval 95%. The findings indicated that a leader's grit promotes learning agility, which further increases employee creative performance. Thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted. Furthermore, prediction fits were tested using R2 (R-square) and f2, as suggested by Shmueli (2019). The values

for the endogenous constructs confirming and establishing their predictive importance. The data confirm that the study model has good predictive relevance.

Figure 2.

Measurement Model

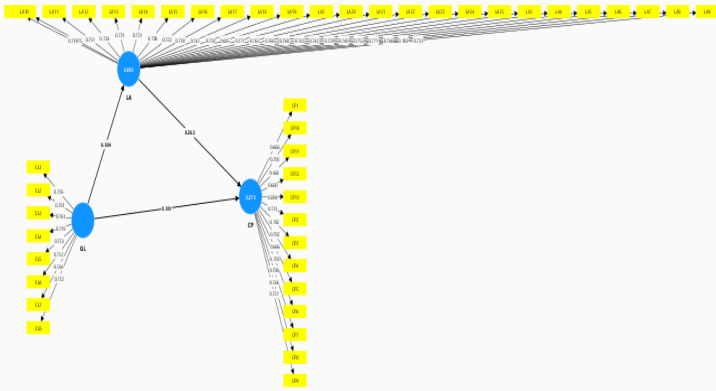
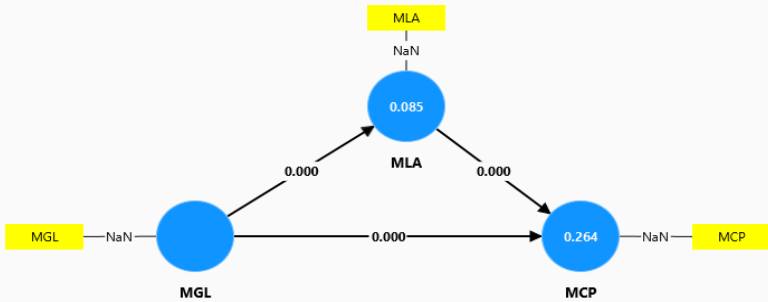


Figure 3.

Tested Model



Discussion and Implications

The present study gives most valuable understanding that how gritty leadership influence the employee creative performance with the mediating effects of learning agility in hospitality industry of Pakistan within the context of social learning theory. The results of the study supported all of the hypotheses, adding to the understanding of the importance of grit in leaders and learning agility and how it influences employees creative performance.

First, the findings revealed that employee creative performance is positively impacted by leaders' grit, supporting hypothesis (H1). Leaders that are effective allow their team members to try their skills and abilities and provide them with constant support. In addition, rather than doing so for their personal gain, leaders promote diversity and learning in order to foster the development and advancement of the workforce they control (Surji & Rrt, 2014). Othman et al. (2014) also emphasized that leaders effect their employee performance both directly and indirectly. The effective leadership support, contribute in employee creativity and innovation (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004). Second, it was assumed that gritty leadership has positive significant impact on employee learning agility. The study findings support the assumption. The findings anticipate that when grit of the leader increases it further increase the learning agility of the employees. In the support of social learning theory, with the passion and perseverance of the leaders it develops the learning capability of the employees to learn from experience and improve their knowledge, expertise and skill with new experiences. Third, the study hypothesized that there

is a positive relationship between learning agility and employee creative performance. The results support the assumptions that as the learning agility increases it further increase the creative performance of employees. As it enables them to meet the challenges with confidence. Karre et al. (2019) also support the notion that learning agility influence individual performance. In addition, Subedi (2023) also explained that learning agility has significant impact on performance of employees. The present study finding is consistent with these two research studies. Finally, the study hypothesized that the relationship between gritty leadership and employee creative performance mediated by learning agility. The findings support the assumption that when leader's grit increases it increases learning agility and learning agility leads to improve employee creative performance. The findings of the study are aligned with the study of Wajhusaputri and Fadalilah (2022), which showed that learning agility improves the employee performance.

This research offers a variety of theoretical and practical ramifications, which significantly advances both academia and the corporate sector. By investigating the impact gritty leadership on creative performance and role of learning agility as mediator, this study significantly adds to the existing body of knowledge. These contributions can be used by the business organizations' management and employees. The practical implications of the study's findings are significant and will help both managers and staff members within the organization. First, in order to motivate employees to take initiative, managers should use gritty leadership style, so that they can create a challenging environment for their employees. Secondly continuous learning and spontaneous response to situations should be encouraged, which consequently appears in form of creativity. Thirdly, managers must keep in mind that without the supervisory support, any policy or practice may be ineffective. The results of the study may also help HRM specialists to develop tailored leadership programs for managers and leading employees to bring significant change. This study suggests that managers should take a gritty leadership stance that may motivate people to participate in activities on a regular basis and with a strong sense of purpose. This will help to increase employee creativity when learning agility is present. Furthermore, management needs to provide its staff with specialized training on how to thrive in the fierce business world.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The gritty leadership and its results were examined in this study along with the mediating role that learning agility plays. The study's empirical findings first demonstrated the beneficial impacts of gritty leadership on employees' creative performance. Furthermore, the study explained the role that learning agility plays as explanatory mechanism. The study's focus was the hospitality sector in Pakistan due to its diversified workforce and dynamic work environment. For both individual and organizational development, the study provided some theoretical and practical implications for hotel management. This study also highlighted how the social learning has a vibrant effect. Researchers and practitioners in the future may benefit from the study's limitations and future directions.

A few limitations were noted in this study, and several avenues for future research were identified. First, the study's data came from the hospitality industry, data from the banking, telecommunications, and education sectors may yield better conclusions, so future studies should focus on this aspect. Secondly, as data were only gathered from Islamabad and Rawalpindi, data from other parts of Pakistan may be gathered in subsequent studies. Thirdly, a single mediator was tested in the model, future studies can be conducted with multiple other mediating variables i.e., thriving, psychological capital. Fourthly, studying the moderating role of organizational complexity might strengthen the worth of study. Future research on these recommendations may contribute to the understanding of leadership dynamics.

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