



Unlocking Gen Z Potential in Creative Industries: The Roles of Agile Leadership, Multifaceted Cooperation, Work Life Integration, and Mental Health

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ABSTRACT: This study introduces a novel integrative model that explains how agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, and mental health support work together to sustain high performance among Generation Z employees in Indonesia's digital creative agencies. As creative industry workplaces confront the challenge of engaging and retaining Gen Z talent, the findings show that flexible leadership and strong team collaboration not only improve performance to build resilient, high-performing teams in an era defined by change and generational transition. but also support the integration of personal and professional life for young workers. Importantly, mental health support amplifies the positive effects of agile leadership, highlighting the value of fostering psychologically supportive and adaptive work environments. By clarifying these relationships, the study offers actionable insights for creative agencies seeking.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Multifaceted Cooperation, Work-Life Integration, Mental Health, Generation Z, Creative Industries.



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INTRODUCTION

The digital creative industry has undergone significant structural shifts in the past decade, driven largely by the growing participation of Generation Z—individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. This cohort brings new attitudes, values, and behaviours into the workplace, including an emphasis on purpose-driven work, psychological well-being, flexible collaboration, and responsiveness to feedback. As the industry becomes more project-based, decentralised, and innovation-intensive, the need to understand what enables or hinders employee performance in such fluid environments becomes critical—not only for productivity but also for long-term organisational sustainability (Porkodi, 2024; Ncube et al., 2024).

The need for this study emerges from both practical concerns and theoretical gaps. From a practical standpoint, digital creative agencies face mounting challenges in adapting to the expectations and work styles of Generation Z, whose approach to collaboration, leadership, and well-being differs significantly from previous generations. Internally, agencies are also undergoing agile transformations to remain competitive, with leaders adopting flatter hierarchies, iterative

workflows, and decentralised decision-making. Yet, there remains a significant mismatch between these evolving leadership structures and the actual psychosocial needs of younger employees. Externally, broader economic uncertainty, hyper-digitalisation, and talent mobility demand more adaptive human resource models, especially for creative industries reliant on cognitive and emotional labour ([Berger, 2023](#); [Bansal, 2024](#)).

Theoretically, while agile leadership has been widely recognised as an effective model for volatile and complex environments ([Porkodi, 2024](#); [Dienagha, 2022](#)), its application in Generation Z-dominated, non-technical creative contexts has received limited scholarly attention. Agile leadership is rooted in Complexity Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory, where responsiveness, empowerment, and individual consideration are central to maintaining team momentum in uncertain conditions ([Renault & Tarakci, 2023](#)). While this model has been studied extensively in software engineering and startup ecosystems, empirical studies in creative sectors remain scarce ([Rahman et al., 2024](#)).

Moreover, multifaceted cooperation—defined as the collaborative integration of diverse roles, skills, and goals—has become central to project execution in creative settings. Drawing from Social Exchange Theory, multifaceted cooperation depends on reciprocal trust, resource sharing, and role clarity ([Zaitsev et al., 2020](#); [Rezaee & Klasson, 2020](#)). However, research suggests that the coordination challenges in highly agile teams, especially those involving Generation Z, are not always resolved simply by agile structures. Instead, successful cooperation hinges on psychological safety, emotional engagement, and shared purpose—factors that need to be actively managed, not assumed ([Gustavsson, 2021](#); [Mészáros & Csiszárík-Kocsir, 2023](#)).

To make matters more complex, the once-dominant model of work-life balance is being replaced with work-life integration, which assumes that personal and professional responsibilities are fluidly interwoven rather than separated ([Kavitha & Suresh, 2021](#)). This is especially true in the digital creative sector, where the blurring of physical, temporal, and emotional boundaries can significantly affect performance, satisfaction, and well-being. However, this integration can also generate stress, conflict, or disengagement if not supported by leadership and team cooperation. These dynamics are further moderated by the state of mental health, which plays a critical role in shaping how employees respond to leadership and collaboration. According to Conservation of Resources Theory, when individuals perceive resource loss (e.g., emotional depletion, time scarcity), their performance and engagement diminish—regardless of external structural support ([Abdullah & Qureshi, 2023](#); [Belling, 2020](#)).

Despite the relevance of these constructs, there is little integrative research linking agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, work-life integration, and mental health into a unified model that explains employee performance—especially in creative industry settings populated by Generation Z. The majority of existing studies have either focused on agile leadership in technical domains ([Berger, 2023](#); [Rahman et al., 2024](#)), or analysed work-life issues in corporate and HR settings without situating them in fast-paced, creative work environments. As a result, important questions remain unanswered: (1) How do agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation jointly shape performance outcomes?; (2) To what extent does work-life integration mediate this relationship?; and (3) how does the mental health of Gen Z employees moderate these mechanisms?.

This study is motivated by the need to answer these questions and fill the gaps in both theory and practice. The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, and employee performance in digital creative agencies, with work-life integration as a mediating variable and mental health as a moderating variable. The study introduces a moderated mediating model to explain how leadership and team dynamics interact with psychological and structural conditions to affect performance. By doing so, it contributes empirically to the literature on organisational behaviour, and theoretically to the intersection of leadership, well-being, and generational studies.

To address these objectives, the study adopts a quantitative research design, using data collected from Generation Z employees working in digital creative agencies. Measurement items for each construct are drawn from validated scales in prior studies. The model will be tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to assess both direct and indirect relationships, and to explore interaction effects involving the moderator. The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it provides empirical evidence on the integrated effect of agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation in a creative, Gen Z workforce context. Second, it advances the understanding of work-life integration as a process, rather than a static condition, that bridges structural and psychological domains of work. Third, it introduces mental health as a conditional factor that shapes how leadership and collaboration translate into performance, offering managerial insights into building resilient and adaptive creative teams.

In summary, this study seeks to fill an important gap in the literature by investigating how agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation interact to shape employee performance among Generation Z workers in digital creative agencies, a context where psychological wellbeing, role fluidity, and team adaptability are increasingly significant. The research is guided by three principal questions. First, in what ways do agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation influence the performance of Generation Z employees in Indonesia's creative industries? Second, how does work life integration act as a mediating mechanism that connects these structural and interpersonal factors to individual outcomes? Third, to what extent does mental health serve as a moderating condition that shapes the effect of leadership and cooperation on employee performance? By developing and empirically testing a moderated mediation model, this study not only responds to urgent managerial challenges in fast moving creative sectors but also advances theoretical understanding of how structural and psychological resources work together to determine sustainable performance in this new generational context.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design, aimed at Generation Z employees working in digital creative agencies in Indonesia. The choice of this approach is based on its suitability for testing complex theoretical models involving multiple latent constructs and interdependent pathways. The research seeks to validate a conceptual framework that includes agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, work-life integration, mental health, and employee performance.

To evaluate the proposed relationships, the study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the primary analytical method. PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for exploratory models and theory-building contexts where data may not meet strict normality assumptions (Putra, 2020). It also enables the simultaneous assessment of both mediated and moderated relationships within a unified framework (Hair et al., 2017). The ability of PLS-SEM to estimate latent variables with small to medium sample sizes and complex interactions adds robustness to this study's analytical rigor (Putra et al., 2024).

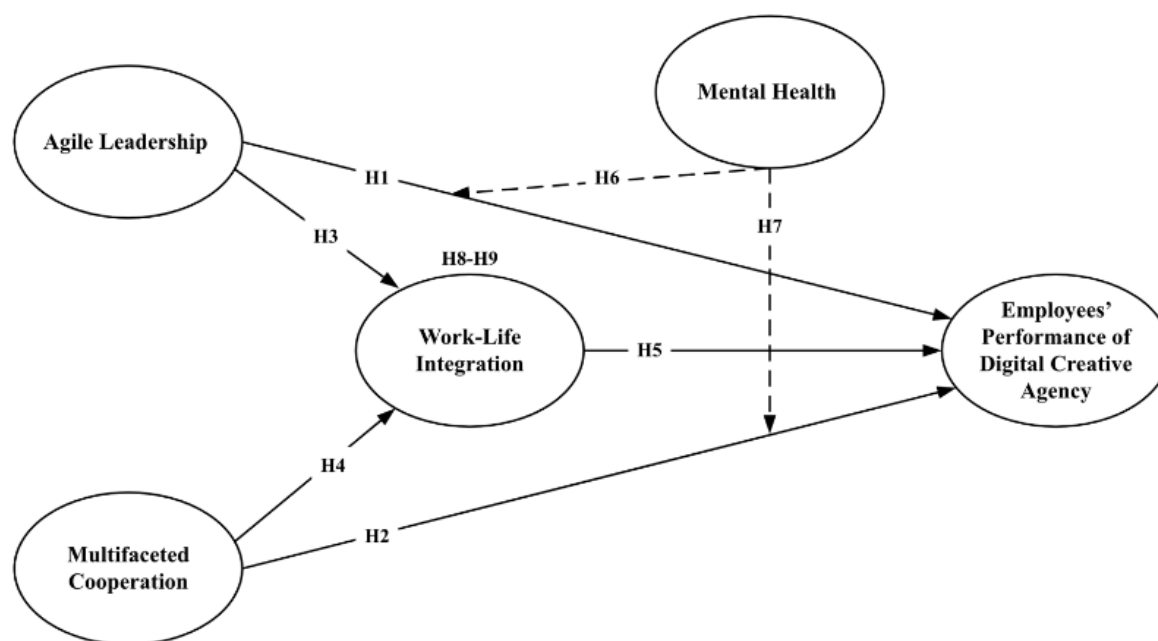


Figure 1. Conceptual Model Framework

The framework will be tested through two model specifications. The first model is a non-interaction model, designed to analyze the direct effects of agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation on employee performance, and the mediating role of work-life integration. The second model introduces interaction effects, examining how mental health functions as a moderator in the relationship between leadership/cooperation and employee performance. This dual-model structure provides a more comprehensive view of how structural, psychological, and behavioral factors converge to influence performance outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 1, the conceptual model includes direct paths (solid arrows), mediating pathways (dashed arrows), and moderating effects (interaction terms). This figure serves as the visual foundation of the analytical strategy and reflects the theoretical logic of the research design.

The emergence of Generation Z in the professional world—defined by a desire for autonomy, mental well-being, and meaning-driven collaboration—has challenged traditional models of workplace leadership and team dynamics. In fast-moving, innovation-driven environments like digital creative agencies, rigid hierarchies and transactional leadership no longer suffice. Instead, agile leadership and collaborative frameworks are needed to meet the psychosocial needs of this generation and ensure sustainable performance.

Agile leadership has consistently been linked to increased organizational effectiveness, innovation, and employee performance. [Porkodi \(2024\)](#) conducted a meta-analysis showing that agile leadership significantly enhances interpersonal trust and individual success, particularly when paired with innovation-oriented work environments. [Udin \(2024\)](#) further observed that agile leadership strengthens interpersonal communication, work satisfaction, and team effectiveness during digital transformation efforts. In contexts facing disruption and technological turbulence, like the era of Industry 4.0, agile leadership also drives institutional productivity ([Akhmad et al., 2024](#)). These outcomes are not purely structural but also cultural. [Mardian \(2024\)](#) emphasized that agile success depends on organizational culture, structural flexibility, and openness to innovation.

In digital creative agencies where team interactions are central to output, agile leadership encourages human-centric leadership skills. [Almeida and Simões \(2021\)](#) found that people management and empathetic communication significantly elevate productivity in agile IT environments. Similarly, [Pratama and Almansur \(2024\)](#) showed that agile leadership enhances employee performance, especially among Gen Z workers, with job satisfaction acting as a key mediating variable. Effective communication also plays a major role in shaping workplace experience. Agile leaders are often the ones facilitating internal communication in digital organizations ([Nikolić et al., 2021](#)), leveraging creativity, fast decision-making, and adaptability to build effective managerial practice ([Kocot et al., 2024](#)). These traits are especially valued by younger employees, who associate agile leadership with empathy, innovation, and balanced risk-taking ([Kucharska et al., 2024](#)). Considering these findings and the documented alignment between agile leadership principles and the expectations of Generation Z workers in digital creative environments, it is reasonable to propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Agile leadership positively influences employees' performance in digital creative agencies.

While leadership provides strategic direction, multifaceted cooperation ensures that day-to-day execution remains cohesive, flexible, and psychologically safe. Collaborative structures that blend diverse skillsets and minimize hierarchical friction are foundational to modern project-based work. Agile environments where teams self-organize are more likely to foster task clarity, motivation, and creativity ([Chavan et al., 2012](#)). [Halushka \(2020\)](#) highlighted that agile management relies on collective decision-making, high team motivation, and shared values—elements directly tied to performance outcomes in creative teams. Given the importance of collaborative dynamics, role clarity, and shared accountability in project-based creative teams, and how these elements resonate with Gen Z's preferred modes of working, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Multifaceted cooperation positively influences employees' performance in digital creative agencies.

The psychological sustainability of Gen Z employees depends heavily on work-life integration, a concept that moves beyond static balance to dynamic interweaving of personal and professional identities. In agile ecosystems, leadership that respects boundaries while enabling flexibility supports this integration. [Nikolić et al. \(2021\)](#) pointed out that agile leaders create structures for open dialogue and mutual trust—two drivers of successful integration. [Barrett et al. \(2021\)](#) also argued that first-time leaders in digital settings must internalize lean and agile principles to adapt to evolving emotional and structural needs. Given the value Gen Z places on well-being, agile

leadership is likely to play a significant role in shaping how employees integrate personal and work roles. In light of the evidence suggesting that agile leadership fosters not only structural responsiveness but also emotional support and individualized flexibility—key ingredients for work-life harmony in Gen Z professionals—the next hypothesis is developed as follows:

H3: Agile leadership positively influences work-life integration.

Team cooperation can also buffer against emotional fragmentation. Supportive collaboration enables shared accountability, equitable load distribution, and social reinforcement. In bureaucratic yet agile-adopting settings like government agencies, cooperative leadership models help reinforce positive work experiences ([Adhikersa et al., 2022](#)). In freelance and hybrid teams, agile models also empower workers to align their work rhythms with personal life demands ([Ghozali et al., 2024](#)). Recognizing that a cooperative work environment can ease interpersonal friction, distribute workload equitably, and enhance social support—especially in emotionally demanding creative roles—the following hypothesis is posited:

H4: Multifaceted cooperation positively influences work-life integration.

When work-life integration is strong, employees report higher motivation, creativity, and task ownership. This is especially true in flexible, high-cognitive-load industries like digital creative work. [Setiawati \(2021\)](#) found that work-life synergy improves Gen Y and Gen Z performance in VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environments. Building on prior research which indicates that strong work-life integration enhances not just satisfaction but also engagement and task ownership—outcomes that are critical in fluid, high-stakes creative settings—it is logical to suggest:

H5: Work-life integration positively influences employees' performance in digital creative agencies.

This study also recognizes the influence of mental health as a moderating factor. Agile leadership, while impactful, may not yield optimal outcomes when employee mental health is compromised. Hooi and Tan (2021) argue that leadership coping dynamics determine whether agile methods facilitate innovative behavior or simply increase pressure. Inconsistencies in leadership impact across performance contexts have also been observed by [Önalán et al. \(2022\)](#), who found that innovation alone may not mediate agile leadership outcomes. The variability may lie in psychological readiness. Given the growing body of literature pointing to the conditional nature of leadership effectiveness under varying psychological states, and considering Gen Z's heightened sensitivity to mental well-being, it is hypothesized that:

H6: Mental health moderates the relationship between agile leadership and employee performance.

The same applies to team-based cooperation. While collaboration can energize and engage, it may also lead to overload or emotional disengagement if psychological support is lacking. Training that incorporates agile values—such as empathy and emotional intelligence—can improve morale and team cohesion ([Pandey & Pandey, 2024](#)). Without such support, even well-intentioned cooperation may backfire under strain. Taking into account the emotional demands of team-based creative work and the potential for stress when cooperation lacks psychological safety, especially among Gen Z workers, the following moderation hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Mental health moderates the relationship between multifaceted cooperation and employee performance.

Moreover, this framework proposes work-life integration as a mediator in the relationship between both leadership and cooperation with performance. [Rialti and Filieri \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that when agile leadership is embedded in employees' lived experience—particularly through participatory decision-making and respect—it boosts morale and engagement. Similarly, NASA-based research by [Silva-Martinez \(2023\)](#) found that agile outcomes are shaped not just by leadership traits, but by how those traits translate into team experience. In other words, integration is the bridge between structure and outcome. Since the pathway from agile leadership to performance is often indirect—mediated by how employees experience flexibility, control, and personal integration—it is plausible to state the following mediating hypothesis:

H8: Work-life integration mediates the relationship between agile leadership and employee performance.

H9: Work-life integration mediates the relationship between multifaceted cooperation and employee performance.

The population of this study consists of Generation Z employees working in digital creative agencies located in Jakarta, Indonesia. Generation Z, defined as individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, represents a cohort that brings distinct values to the workplace, including an emphasis on flexibility, mental well-being, purpose-driven work, and digital collaboration. Their growing presence in creative industries—particularly in roles requiring innovation, adaptability, and teamwork—makes them an essential demographic for examining employee performance within agile organisational settings.

Digital creative agencies were chosen as the context of study due to their fluid structures, project-based operations, and high reliance on interdisciplinary collaboration. These characteristics make them a fitting environment to explore the interplay between agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, work-life integration, and mental health in shaping employee performance.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants met specific inclusion criteria: they had to be (1) members of the Generation Z cohort (aged approximately 20–30 years), (2) full-time employees at a digital creative agency in Jakarta, and (3) actively engaged in team-based or project-oriented work. This criterion ensured that the sample reflected the operational and psychological dynamics relevant to the constructs under investigation.

The selection of Jakarta as the research site reflects its status as the primary hub of Indonesia's digital economy and creative industry, housing a dense concentration of agencies across branding, digital marketing, user experience, animation, and content production sectors. This urban and professional concentration offers a rich setting to explore how younger employees navigate leadership, collaboration, and well-being within complex and fast-paced work environments.

This study employed five latent constructs to empirically test the proposed conceptual model: Agile Leadership, Multifaceted Cooperation, Work-Life Integration, Mental Health, and Employees' Performance. Each construct was measured reflectively using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with items adapted from validated

instruments in prior research. The measurement model was evaluated for reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach.

The construct of Agile Leadership was designed to capture leadership behaviours relevant to highly dynamic, innovation-driven creative environments. Four indicators were adapted from [Akkaya and Üstgörül \(2020\)](#), [Hage et al. \(2021\)](#), and [Parker and Hoesgrove \(2015\)](#), which reflect a leader's adaptability to change, emotional maturity in high-pressure situations, flexibility in adjusting leadership style to different team needs, and speed in acquiring new knowledge and skills. These indicators are grounded in the principles of Complexity Theory and Transformational Leadership, and are particularly relevant for agile transformation in decentralised work settings, such as digital creative agencies.

Multifaceted Cooperation was measured through four dimensions based on the conceptual framework proposed by [Pidoux and Boullier \(2024\)](#), capturing the intensity of engagement among teams, diversity of actors and objectives, the degree of formalisation in collaborative processes, and equality in the distribution of responsibilities and benefits. These indicators reflect the growing emphasis on horizontal collaboration and psychological safety within project-based creative work environments, and align with Social Exchange Theory by highlighting trust, reciprocity, and structural clarity in cooperative efforts.

The construct of Work-Life Integration was conceptualised not as a static balance but as a fluid interplay between personal and professional roles, a model especially relevant in the context of Gen Z employees working in hybrid or creative sectors. Adapted from [Kamalaveni and Srividhya \(2021\)](#), the measurement includes the extent to which work interferes with personal life, the inverse influence of family obligations on work, the perceived strain arising from managing dual roles, and the positive spill-over or enrichment between work and family domains. This integrative approach better captures the reality of blurred boundaries in digital creative work compared to traditional work-life balance models.

Mental Health was treated as a moderating variable, measured using four indicators derived from the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5), as adapted by [Joneghani et al. \(2023\)](#). The indicators assess the respondent's emotional regulation, sense of psychological well-being, presence or absence of work-related anxiety, and general feelings of self-worth and coping ability. These indicators provide insight into the psychological readiness of employees to engage in cooperative work and leadership-driven initiatives, and are theoretically supported by the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that performance is shaped by the availability of emotional and cognitive resources.

Finally, Employees' Performance was measured using four indicators based on Abramis' (1994) Job Performance Questionnaire, also cited in [Joneghani et al. \(2023\)](#). These indicators reflect both technical and interpersonal dimensions of performance, including task completion quality, reliability in fulfilling work responsibilities, conflict management, and consistent delivery under pressure. This multidimensional measurement captures the unique demands of performance in fast-paced, cognitively demanding, and emotionally complex creative environments, aligning with the goals of this study to assess not only outcomes but the conditions that shape them.

To evaluate the robustness of the measurement model, this study examined the reliability and validity of all latent constructs using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. Following established guidelines (Henseler et al., 2014; 2015), the outer model was assessed through internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, ensuring that all reflective constructs met the recommended psychometric thresholds.

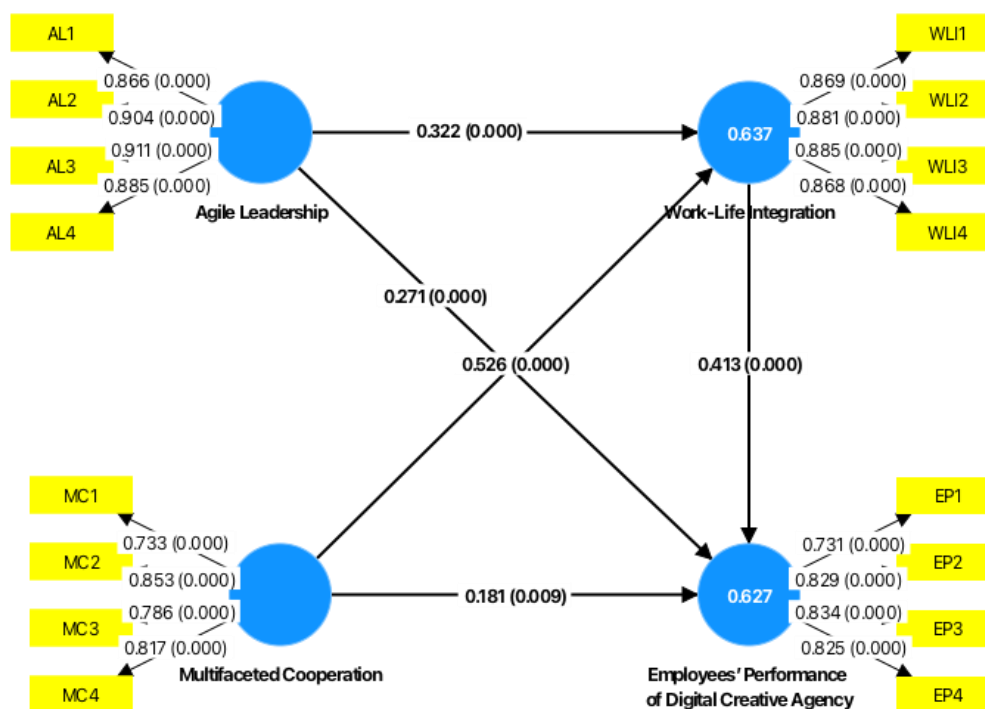


Figure 2. Bootstrapping Results of Non Moderation Model

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Results for the non-moderation model indicated that all constructs exceeded the minimum recommended threshold of 0.70 for both indices, demonstrating strong reliability. Agile Leadership achieved the highest internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.914$; CR = 0.940), followed by Work-Life Integration ($\alpha = 0.899$; CR = 0.930), Employees' Performance ($\alpha = 0.819$; CR = 0.881), and Multifaceted Cooperation ($\alpha = 0.811$; CR = 0.875). In the moderation model, the Mental Health construct also displayed excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.925$; CR = 0.947), confirming that the measurement remained stable across both model structures.

Convergent validity was assessed via the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All constructs met the threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker criterion), indicating that the majority of variance in the items was captured by the latent construct. Agile Leadership reported the highest AVE (0.795), followed by Mental Health (0.817), Work-Life Integration (0.767), Employees' Performance (0.649–0.650), and Multifaceted Cooperation (0.638). These findings confirm that the indicators have satisfactory convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the more robust Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). The square root of each construct's AVE was greater than its correlation with other constructs, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Additionally, all HTMT values were below the

conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming that each construct was empirically distinct. This two-step assessment approach aligns with recent best practices in PLS-SEM to avoid false-positive conclusions about construct distinctiveness.

Overall, the measurement model demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties across both model specifications. The indicators exhibited strong loadings on their respective constructs, and the constructs themselves met established thresholds for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. These results support the robustness of the measurement model for further structural analysis in understanding the performance dynamics of Generation Z employees within digital creative agencies.

To assess the structural relationships between constructs in the proposed conceptual framework, this study conducted an inner model evaluation using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The assessment included an evaluation of model fit indices, explanatory power (R^2), and the significance of path coefficients. The analysis was performed separately for the non-moderation model and the moderation model to test both the direct and interaction effects among the variables. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the bootstrapping results for both models, respectively. Model fit was evaluated using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Normed Fit Index (NFI), as recommended by [Henseler & Sarstedt \(2013\)](#). In the non-moderation model, the SRMR value was 0.074 for both the saturated and estimated models, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. Similarly, the NFI value of 0.820 reflects an acceptable comparative fit. The moderation model yielded slightly better fit statistics, with SRMR values of 0.070 (saturated) and 0.073 (estimated), and an NFI of 0.812 (saturated) and 0.811 (estimated), further confirming the adequacy of the model.

Predictive accuracy was assessed through the coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 values. In the non-moderation model, the R^2 value for Employees' Performance was 0.627, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.622, indicating that Agile Leadership, Multifaceted Cooperation, and Work-Life Integration collectively explain 62.7% of the variance in employee performance outcomes. Meanwhile, the R^2 for Work-Life Integration was 0.637 (adjusted = 0.634), demonstrating that Agile Leadership and Multifaceted Cooperation account for a significant proportion of the variance in employees' ability to integrate their work and personal roles.

In the moderation model, the explanatory power improved slightly. The R^2 value for Employees' Performance increased to 0.644, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.635, showing a positive contribution of the interaction terms involving Mental Health. The R^2 value for Work-Life Integration remained consistent at 0.637 (adjusted = 0.634), reflecting the stability of that pathway across both models. Taken together, the model fit indices and R^2 values suggest that both the baseline and moderated structural models demonstrate strong predictive capability and empirical robustness. The moderation model, while marginally improving overall fit and variance explanation, offers additional insight into the conditional role of mental health in shaping performance outcomes. These results support the theoretical assertion that both structural and psychological mechanisms jointly determine employee performance within the context of Generation Z in digital creative work environments.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the structural model indicate that Agile Leadership has a significant positive effect on Employees' Performance in digital creative agencies ($\beta = 0.271$, $t = 3.557$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This result reinforces the idea that agile leadership behaviours—such as adaptability, emotional maturity, and fast learning—are especially crucial in environments dominated by Generation Z workers. These findings align with previous studies ([e.g., Porkodi, 2024; Renault & Tarakci, 2023](#)) which highlight how agile leadership enables young creative workers to thrive under flexible, fast-paced, and non-hierarchical conditions. Similarly, H2 is also supported, with Multifaceted Cooperation showing a positive yet moderate influence on Employees' Performance ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 2.041$, $p = 0.041$). This confirms that collaborative intensity, role diversity, and equitable structures within teams contribute to performance outcomes. Taken together, these results highlight that while leadership sets strategic direction, cooperation ensures smooth execution—both are critical for success in project-based digital agencies.

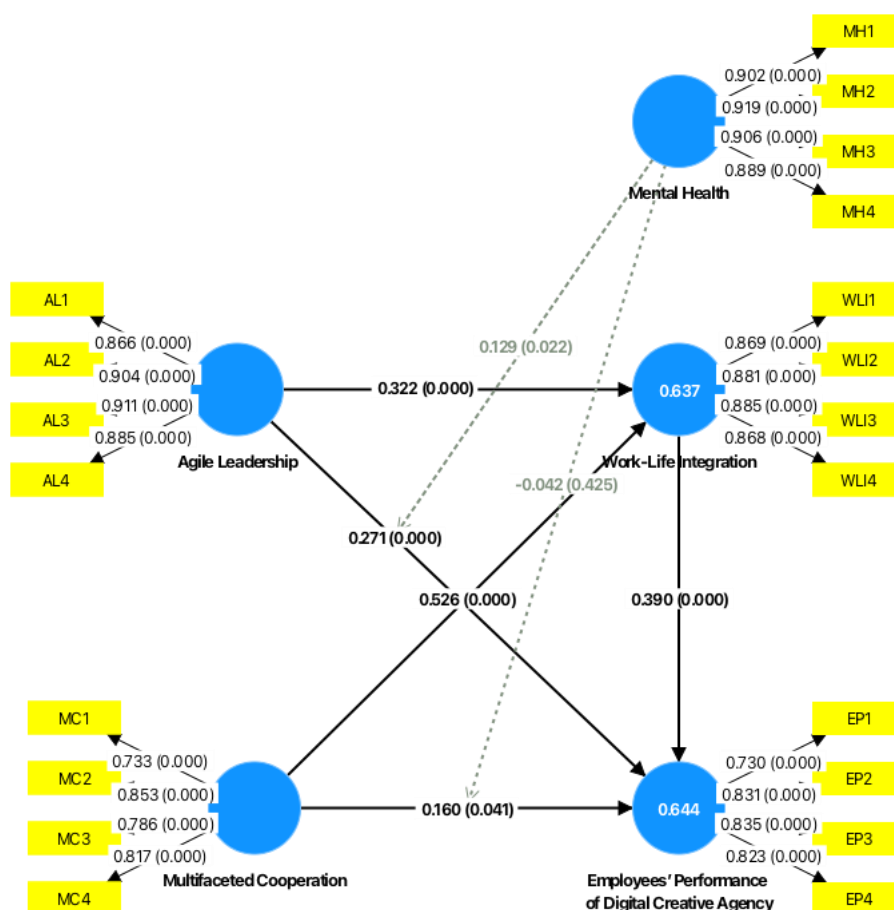


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Results of Moderation Model

Further, the model confirms the strong role of leadership and cooperation in enabling Work-Life Integration, a key mediating construct in the model. H3, which tests the influence of Agile Leadership on Work-Life Integration, is supported with a significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.322$, $t = 5.552$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that agile leaders not only influence task completion but also

shape employees' ability to balance and blend professional and personal responsibilities—likely through empathy, flexibility, and decentralised communication. H4 is also strongly supported ($\beta = 0.526$, $t = 10.119$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that Multifaceted Cooperation has the highest effect on Work-Life Integration among all relationships tested. This finding highlights how shared workload, diverse role alignment, and formal collaboration mechanisms create a psychologically safe environment where employees can manage dual demands effectively. Together, H3 and H4 provide strong empirical support for the assumption that structural conditions significantly shape Gen Z's experience of integration between life and work domains.

The link between Work-Life Integration and Employees' Performance (H5) is also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.390$, $t = 4.581$, $p < 0.001$), reaffirming the importance of psychological and role-based harmony in driving tangible workplace outcomes. This finding suggests that when Gen Z employees perceive strong integration between work and personal life, they are more likely to demonstrate higher engagement, ownership, and effectiveness in their job roles. These results align with [Setiawati \(2021\)](#), who found that work-life synergy boosts motivation and creativity in VUCA environments. It further confirms that in fast-moving, cognitively demanding industries such as digital creative sectors, psychological states directly influence performance, making support for integration not only a matter of well-being, but also one of strategic performance management.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing

No.	Hypothesis	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
H1	Agile Leadership $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance of Digital Creative Agency	0.271	3.557	0.000
H2	Multifaceted Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance of Digital Creative Agency	0.160	2.041	0.041
H3	Agile Leadership $\rightarrow$ Work-Life Integration	0.322	5.552	0.000
H4	Multifaceted Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Work-Life Integration	0.526	10.119	0.000
H5	Work-Life Integration $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance of Digital Creative Agency	0.390	4.581	0.000
H6	Mental Health $\times$ Agile Leadership $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance	0.129	2.283	0.022
H7	Mental Health $\times$ Multifaceted Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance	-0.042	0.798	0.425
H8	Agile Leadership $\rightarrow$ Work-Life Integration $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance	0.126	3.647	0.000
H9	Multifaceted Cooperation $\rightarrow$ Work-Life Integration $\rightarrow$ Employees' Performance	0.205	4.056	0.000

Source: Primary Data

In terms of moderation, the interaction between Mental Health and Agile Leadership on performance (H6) is significant ($\beta = 0.129$, $t = 2.283$, $p = 0.022$), suggesting that the positive effects of agile leadership are more pronounced when employees report better mental health. This finding supports the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that psychological readiness is a prerequisite for the effective utilisation of leadership input. However, H7 is not supported (β

= -0.042, $t = 0.798$, $p = 0.425$), indicating that mental health does not significantly moderate the relationship between Multifaceted Cooperation and performance. This discrepancy may suggest that while leadership benefits from an emotionally resilient workforce, cooperative structures operate more independently of individual psychological states—possibly due to built-in team norms and shared accountability mechanisms.

Finally, both mediating hypotheses are supported. H8 confirms that Work-Life Integration mediates the relationship between Agile Leadership and Employees' Performance ($\beta = 0.126$, $t = 3.647$, $p < 0.001$), while H9 affirms a similar mediating role between Multifaceted Cooperation and Performance ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 4.056$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that leadership and team dynamics shape performance outcomes indirectly through employees' perceived ability to integrate their professional and personal roles. It highlights Work-Life Integration as a central psychological mechanism that translates structural support into behavioural outcomes. This further validates the moderated mediation framework proposed in this study and underlines the importance of designing leadership and collaboration strategies that address not just operational efficiency but also psychological coherence among Generation Z employees in creative work environments.

This discussion interprets the empirical findings of the study in light of existing theoretical frameworks and previous research, outlines practical implications, reflects on methodological limitations, and proposes directions for future inquiry. The results offer valuable insights into how agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation influence the performance of Generation Z employees in digital creative agencies, with work-life integration serving as a key mediating variable and mental health functioning as a conditional moderator.

Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings of this study reveal how the synergy between agile leadership, multifaceted cooperation, and mental health forms the foundation for sustained performance among Generation Z employees in Indonesia's digital creative agencies. By validating the proposed model, this research not only advances theoretical perspectives from Complexity Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory, but also translates these concepts into practical strategies relevant for contemporary creative workplaces.

Agile leadership is shown to be particularly effective in the Indonesian creative sector, where agencies frequently manage simultaneous client projects and navigate shifting digital trends. Leaders who demonstrate adaptability, empathy, and a commitment to continuous learning are better equipped to guide Gen Z teams through periods of uncertainty and innovation. For example, in Jakarta-based branding and animation studios, leaders who foster open dialogue and delegate authority have enabled younger employees to contribute fresh ideas, enhancing both project outcomes and employee engagement. This finding supports previous studies ([Porkodi, 2024](#); [Renault & Tarakci, 2023](#)) and reflects the reality that Gen Z professionals expect meaningful participation, flexibility, and psychological support in their daily work.

Equally important is the role of multifaceted cooperation. In many Indonesian digital agencies, team members often come from diverse creative and technical backgrounds. Successful agencies intentionally nurture environments where cross-disciplinary collaboration, open knowledge sharing, and mutual support are the norm. Such practices are evident in collaborative content creation teams, where graphic designers, copywriters, and digital strategists work together on tight deadlines. These collaborative efforts not only enhance project delivery but also build resilience and psychological safety, enabling teams to adapt to high workload periods and changing client demands. This dynamic is consistent with Social Exchange Theory and is supported by the work of [Rezace et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Gustavsson \(2021\)](#).

A significant contribution of this study is its emphasis on work life integration as a crucial mediator. For Gen Z workers in Indonesia, the boundaries between personal aspirations, social activities, and professional responsibilities are often fluid. Agencies that offer flexible scheduling, remote work options, or creative time-off policies are more likely to see their employees exhibit sustained energy, creativity, and loyalty. These insights are echoed by [Kavitha & Suresh \(2021\)](#) and [Setiawati \(2021\)](#), and have been observed in agencies that maintain a culture of mutual respect and emotional openness, where staff are encouraged to balance client needs with personal wellbeing.

Mental health is also shown to play a decisive role in this ecosystem. The positive effects of agile leadership on performance are especially strong when Gen Z employees report higher levels of emotional wellbeing. For instance, agencies that provide access to counselling, peer support programmes, or wellness workshops report fewer instances of burnout and higher levels of team productivity. This practical outcome aligns with Conservation of Resources Theory ([Belling, 2020](#); [Abdullah & Qureshi, 2023](#)), illustrating that psychological resources are essential for organisational strategies to succeed. Interestingly, while leadership impact depends greatly on employee mental health, the benefits of cooperation remain relatively stable, likely due to shared responsibility and strong team cohesion in Indonesian agency settings.

In sum, the integrated model developed in this study offers a comprehensive lens for understanding and improving Gen Z performance in creative industries. The findings demonstrate that sustainable high performance is not solely the product of management structures, but emerges from the careful alignment of leadership style, team cooperation, work life integration, and support for mental health. For Indonesian creative agencies facing the dual challenges of digital transformation and generational change, investing in these areas will not only improve outcomes but also foster workplaces where young talent can thrive amid ongoing industry pressures.

Comparison with Previous Studies

These results align with prior research on agile leadership in creative and digital contexts. For instance, studies by [Renault and Tarakci \(2023\)](#) and [Porkodi \(2024\)](#) support the idea that adaptive leadership fosters autonomy, psychological engagement, and high task performance. However, this study extends the literature by placing agile leadership within the context of work-life integration, offering a more holistic view of how structural leadership traits translate into lived experiences and measurable outcomes. Similarly, the role of multifaceted cooperation aligns with findings from

[Gustavsson \(2021\)](#) and [Rezaee & Klasson \(2020\)](#), which emphasise the importance of role clarity, mutual trust, and formalised collaboration in agile settings. The unique contribution of this study lies in the incorporation of mental health as a conditional moderator. While previous research has often treated leadership and cooperation as universally beneficial, our results nuance that assumption. Specifically, mental health strengthened the effect of agile leadership on performance ($\beta = 0.129$, $p = 0.022$), but had no significant moderating effect on the cooperation–performance link ($\beta = -0.042$, $p = 0.425$). This suggests that the benefits of leadership are contingent upon psychological readiness, whereas cooperation may operate more independently of individual affective states.

Limitations and Cautions

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, its cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences, limiting the ability to determine the temporal ordering of effects among constructs. Second, the use of self-reported measures introduces potential biases such as social desirability or inflated self-assessment of performance and well-being. Third, the focus on Jakarta-based agencies may limit the generalisability of findings to other regions or countries with different cultural norms, industry maturity, or organisational structures. Additionally, although the sample was purposively drawn from Gen Z employees, further stratification by job roles or tenure might reveal more nuanced insights. These constraints suggest the need for cautious interpretation and highlight the importance of validation through broader and more diverse datasets.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should consider employing longitudinal designs to better capture causal pathways between leadership, integration, and performance over time. Given the moderating role of mental health, researchers may also explore more nuanced psychological variables such as resilience, burnout, or emotional intelligence to understand how internal states mediate structural support. Expanding the scope to include comparative generational cohorts—such as Millennials or Gen Alpha—could reveal age-related distinctions in how agile systems are experienced. Moreover, integrating mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative surveys with in-depth interviews or diary studies, may uncover the lived, subjective experiences of integration and cooperation that structured questionnaires cannot fully capture. Finally, future research should investigate interventions or training programs aimed at enhancing agile leadership and psychological safety, assessing their impact on both individual well-being and team-level outcomes in creative environments.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation on employee performance among Generation Z workers in digital creative agencies in Jakarta. It aimed to develop and validate a moderated mediating model in which work-life integration functions as a

mediator, and mental health acts as a moderator. By incorporating both structural and psychological dimensions, the study sought to understand not only the direct effects of leadership and cooperation on performance, but also the indirect and conditional mechanisms that shape those effects in the context of creative, project-based work environments.

The findings demonstrated that agile leadership and multifaceted cooperation both have positive impacts on employee performance, with work-life integration emerging as a significant mediating variable. Agile leadership enhanced not only task-related outcomes but also facilitated better work-life integration, supporting Gen Z's need for flexibility, empathy, and responsiveness. Multifaceted cooperation also played a dual role—directly contributing to performance and strongly enabling work-life integration—especially through structured collaboration, role diversity, and shared accountability. Notably, mental health was found to moderate the relationship between agile leadership and performance, amplifying its effectiveness when employees were psychologically well. However, no such moderating effect was observed in the cooperation-performance link, suggesting that team-based structures may offer a more stable support system regardless of individual emotional conditions.

These results underscore the importance of integrating psychological well-being and structural support in managing young creative talent, particularly in industries characterised by fluid roles, high cognitive demands, and emotional labour. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by combining constructs from Complexity Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Work-Life Integration Theory, and the Conservation of Resources Theory into a single predictive framework. Practically, it suggests that digital creative agencies should invest in agile leadership development, formalise cooperative work structures, and foster psychological resources like mental health support to sustain high performance among Gen Z employees.

While this study provides valuable insights into the structural and psychological mechanisms affecting employee performance, several limitations should be noted. The cross-sectional nature of the design prevents causal inference, and the use of self-reported data may introduce biases such as social desirability. Additionally, the sample was limited to digital creative agencies in Jakarta, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other regions or industry types. Moreover, other relevant psychological constructs such as burnout, job crafting, or emotional intelligence were not included, which could have added explanatory depth.

Future research should consider longitudinal studies to assess changes over time and establish causality more definitively. Expanding the scope to other generational cohorts or creative sectors outside Jakarta would also enhance the model's generalisability. Researchers are encouraged to explore additional psychological moderators and mediators, such as job satisfaction, autonomy, or psychological safety, to enrich the understanding of how leadership and cooperation affect young workers. Finally, employing mixed-method approaches may offer deeper qualitative insight into how Gen Z employees perceive and experience agile leadership, team collaboration, and integration in everyday practice—insights that are crucial for both academic development and organisational design.

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