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Strategic Drivers of Academic Career Success in Private Higher Education

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Strategic Drivers of Academic Career Success in Private Higher Education

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Abstract. This study explores the strategic drivers of academic career success among lecturers in private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Bali, Indonesia. Drawing upon Human Capital Theory and the Policy Implementation Process Theory, the research examines how academic leadership influences career success both directly and indirectly through two key mediating variables: teamwork quality and learning agility. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 265 lecturers using proportionate stratified random sampling across various private HEIs in Bali. Structural Equation Modelling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. The results reveal that academic leadership has a significant and positive effect on career success. Moreover, teamwork quality and learning agility serve as complementary mediators that strengthen the impact of leadership on lecturer career advancement. The findings underscore the importance of empowering academic leaders at the program level, fostering collaborative team environments, and developing lecturers' learning agility through reflective and adaptive practices. Practically, the model suggests that institutional investment in team-based research environments is as critical as formal leadership development programs in accelerating academic career progression. This study contributes to the literature by integrating two theoretical perspectives into a single structural model and applying it in the under-researched context of private higher education in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach to lecturer career advancement, particularly in addressing challenges specific to private HEIs in developing regions.

Keywords: Academic leadership; career success; learning agility; teamwork quality

Introduction

The career development of university lecturers, particularly those in private HEIs, is a crucial issue in enhancing the quality and sustainability of higher education in Indonesia. Beyond its legal mandate, the *Tri Dharma* of higher education (teaching, research, and community service) places significant administrative and performance pressures on lecturers. Activities such as documenting research outputs, fulfilling credit point requirements, and navigating academic promotion procedures require not only technical competence but also continuous investment in individual capabilities. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, these daily academic responsibilities represent cumulative investments in knowledge, skills, and adaptive capacity that directly shape lecturers' career trajectories (Becker, 1993; De Meuse, 2017).

Formally, lecturers' career advancement in Indonesia is regulated under Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, which defines lecturers as professional educators and scientists responsible for knowledge development and dissemination. Career success is commonly measured through academic qualifications and functional positions, ranging from *Asisten Ahli* to Professor (Kurniawati et al., 2021). However, empirical data from LLDIKTI Region VIII indicate that a substantial proportion of lecturers in private HEIs in Bali remain concentrated at lower academic ranks, such as *Tenaga Pengajar* and *Asisten Ahli*, with only a small percentage progressing to *Lektor Kepala* or Professor (LLDIKTI VIII, 2023). This stagnation reflects persistent structural and organizational challenges within private HEIs.

Previous studies identify several barriers to academic promotion, including limited time, heavy administrative workloads, difficulties in compiling *Tri Dharma* documentation, credit score requirements, and challenges related to academic publication and plagiarism screening (Amirudin & Sutirna, 2018). In addition, inadequate institutional support systems and weak strategic academic leadership further constrain lecturers' career development (Denpasar Institute, 2021). Academic leadership, particularly at the level of department heads and deans, plays a critical role in shaping an environment that supports research productivity, collaboration, and continuous professional learning (Sherif et al., 2020). Nevertheless, empirical findings regarding the effect of academic leadership on career success remain inconclusive. While some studies report a strong positive relationship between leadership and academic achievement (Kurniawati et al., 2021), others suggest that leadership alone is not a consistent predictor of career advancement (Eby et al., 2003).

While external factors such as leadership and institutional policies have been widely examined, the internal behavioral mechanism through which lecturers adapt to policy complexity, namely learning agility is remains underexplored, particularly in the context of private HEIs in Indonesia. Learning agility reflects an individual's ability to learn from experience, adapt to changing demands, and apply new insights to novel situations. In highly regulated and resource-constrained academic environments, such as private higher education institutions, learning agility may function as a critical personal capability that enables lecturers to respond effectively to promotion requirements, performance evaluations, and evolving academic standards. Thus, focusing solely on leadership without considering lecturers' adaptive learning behavior provides an incomplete explanation of academic career success.

This study is grounded in Human Capital Theory and The Policy Implementation Process Theory. Human Capital Theory emphasizes that career success results from continuous investment in individual competencies (Becker, 1993), while Policy Implementation Process Theory conceptualizes academic promotion as an institutional policy that must be effectively interpreted and executed by academic leaders (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Integrating these perspectives allows this study to conceptualize academic career success not merely as an individual outcome but as the result of interaction between leadership-driven policy implementation, collaborative work environments, and lecturers' adaptive learning capabilities.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: How does academic leadership influence lecturers' career success in private HEIs, and what roles do teamwork quality and learning agility play in mediating this relationship? The objective of this research is to empirically test a structural model that incorporates both external factors (academic leadership and teamwork quality) and internal factors (learning agility) as antecedents of academic career success.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative conceptual model that positions teamwork quality and learning agility as complementary mediating mechanisms linking academic leadership to career success. Unlike previous studies that have examined these variables in isolation, this research highlights their interconnected roles in shaping lecturers' career trajectories within private higher education institutions. The findings are expected to provide theoretical enrichment and practical guidance for academic leaders and policymakers in designing more holistic and effective career development strategies for lecturers in private HEIs.

Accordingly, this paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations and develops the research hypotheses. The subsequent section outlines the research methodology and data analysis procedures. The results section presents the empirical findings, followed by a discussion that integrates theoretical and practical implications. The final section concludes the paper by highlighting key contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

Concept and Hypothesis

Academic leadership refers to the ability of academic leaders, such as department heads and deans, to inspire, guide, and influence lecturers in achieving academic excellence and organizational goals. Effective academic leadership involves empowering team members, facilitating collaboration, providing constructive feedback, and aligning individual goals with institutional visions (Sherif et al., 2020). In the context of higher education, academic leadership plays a critical role in creating a supportive environment that encourages scholarly activities, professional growth, and career advancement (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

Teamwork quality refers to the extent to which collaboration among team members is effective, coordinated, and trust-based. It encompasses open communication, fair distribution of tasks, mutual respect, and shared objectives. High-quality teamwork among lecturers facilitates knowledge sharing, collective problem-solving, and increased motivation to fulfill the *Tri Dharma* of higher education (Klaic et al., 2020). Academic leadership is essential in fostering a positive team climate that enhances productivity and commitment.

Learning agility is the individual's ability and willingness to learn from experience and apply that learning in novel situations. It includes dimensions such as self-reflection, experimentation, feedback-seeking, and the capacity to adapt to changes in the academic environment (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000; De Meuse, 2017). For lecturers, learning agility is critical in dealing with the dynamic demands of teaching, research, and community engagement, which ultimately supports their career advancement.

Career success in the academic context is commonly measured through functional academic positions (*Asisten Ahli, Lektor, Lektor Kepala, Guru Besar*), academic qualifications, publication records, and participation in professional development activities (Gläser & Laudel, 2015; Kurniawati et al., 2021). It reflects both extrinsic achievements (e.g., promotions, recognition) and intrinsic satisfaction (e.g., autonomy, academic freedom).

This research is grounded in Human Capital Theory and The Policy Implementation Process Theory, which together provide a comprehensive framework for understanding academic career success. Human Capital Theory emphasizes that lecturers' knowledge, skills, and adaptive capabilities constitute strategic institutional assets that must be continuously developed (Becker, 1993). Meanwhile, Policy Implementation Process Theory conceptualizes academic promotion as a formal policy that requires effective interpretation and execution by academic leaders at the institutional level (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Integrating these two perspectives, this study conceptualizes academic career success not merely as an individual achievement but as an outcome of effective institutional policy execution. When academic leaders fail to translate promotion policies into supportive academic practices, institutional human capital becomes underutilized, thereby limiting lecturers' career progression. In this model, academic leadership functions as the initiating mechanism, while teamwork quality and learning agility operate as key mediating processes linking leadership to career success.

H1: The Effect of Academic Leadership on Career Success

Academic leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting academic excellence and faculty development. According to Kurniawati et al. (2021), strong academic leadership contributes to the creation of a conducive academic environment that supports lecturer performance and motivation. Sherif et al. (2020) further emphasize that inspiring leaders can enhance faculty commitment to fulfilling the *Tri Dharma* of higher education. Based on this rationale, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H2: The Effect of Academic Leadership on Teamwork Quality

Effective leadership also fosters high-quality teamwork by promoting collaboration, trust, and shared responsibility. Klaic et al. (2020) demonstrated that team-centered leadership positively affects team learning and innovation, which are crucial in academic environments. Therefore:

H2: Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the teamwork quality of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H3: The Effect of Teamwork Quality on Career Success

High-quality teamwork contributes to increased productivity, mutual learning, and professional satisfaction all of which support career advancement. Gläser and Laudel (2015) argue that collegial support and collaborative engagement significantly influence academic career outcomes. Accordingly:

H3: Teamwork quality has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H4: The Effect of Academic Leadership on Learning Agility

Supportive academic leadership encourages continuous learning, reflection, and experimentation among lecturers. Learning agility has been identified as a core capability of high-potential professionals (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000), and leaders play a critical role in creating environments that facilitate learning opportunities (De Meuse, 2017). In the Indonesian higher education context, leadership practices that foster psychological safety enable lecturers to experiment with new teaching methods, research collaborations, and publication strategies without fear of failure, thereby enhancing learning agility. Thus:

H4: Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the learning agility of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H5: The Effect of Learning Agility on Career Success

Learning agility enables individuals to adapt to new challenges and continuously improve their professional competence. Beigi et al. (2018) and Miller (2015) found that agile learners are more likely to succeed in dynamic academic environments. Hence:

H5: Learning agility has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H6: The Mediating Role of Teamwork Quality

Academic leadership may not directly lead to career success unless mediated through collaborative team dynamics. Klaic et al. (2020) explained that the relationship between leadership and innovation outcomes is often mediated by the quality of team interactions. Based on this logic:

H6: Teamwork quality mediates the effect of academic leadership on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

H7: The Mediating Role of Learning Agility

Leadership practices that promote reflection, experimentation, and continuous learning may influence career success indirectly through enhanced learning agility. De Meuse (2017) suggests that learning agility acts as a behavioral mechanism through which leadership impacts long-term career development. Thus, the final hypothesis is:

H7: Learning agility mediates the effect of academic leadership on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali.

These hypotheses reflect the integrated perspective that both individual and organizational factors contribute to academic career success. The mediating roles of teamwork quality and learning agility are critical in translating academic leadership into measurable academic outcomes.

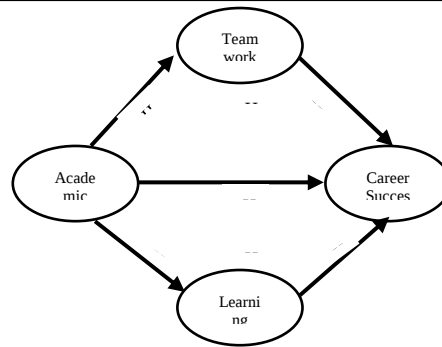


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method to analyze the relationships among academic leadership, teamwork quality, learning agility, and career success. Underpinned by a positivist research paradigm, this study seeks to identify objective causal relationships between leadership, teamwork quality, learning agility, and career success. SEM-PLS was selected for its robustness in handling complex models with multiple mediating variables and its suitability for data that do not strictly meet multivariate normality assumptions (Hair et al., 2022).

The population of this study consisted of lecturers employed at private HEIs in the Province of Bali. According to LLDIKTI Region VIII, the total population of lecturers in private HEIs in Bali was approximately 1,893 at the time of data collection, making this population appropriate for structural modeling analysis. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, a sample of 265 respondents was selected to ensure adequate representation across different institutions and academic functional ranks. With this sample size, the study meets the minimum requirements for SEM-PLS analysis and is considered statistically representative of the target population.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed both offline and online. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement instruments were adapted from established and validated sources. The learning agility scale was adapted from Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), while teamwork quality was measured using indicators developed by Klaic et al. (2020). Academic leadership and career success indicators were derived from prior higher education and career development literature and were contextualized to reflect the Indonesian private higher education setting. Prior to hypothesis testing, all instruments were evaluated for reliability and validity within the research context.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4. The measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) to establish convergent validity, as well as discriminant validity to ensure construct distinctiveness. The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) to assess the explanatory and predictive power of the proposed model. Mediation effects were examined using bootstrapping procedures, following the guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2022).

Result and Discussion

Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses whether an indicator accurately measures a construct, as indicated by its outer loading value. An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading above 0.60 and/or a t-statistic greater than 1.96 (Purwadi et al., 2020).

Table 1. Outer Loading Value after Reconstruction

	Academic Leadership	Teamwork Quality	Learning Agility	Career Success
Deliverer	0.937			
Innovator	0.840			
Integrator	0.868			
Monitor	0.883			
Developer	0.891			
Broker	0.862			
Communication		0.887		
Member of		0.816		
Balance				
Contributions				
Coordination		0.901		
Cohesion		0.903		
Mutual Support		0.857		
Effort		0.848		
Results Agility			0.813	
Mental Agility			0.807	
People Agility			0.799	
Change Agility			0.808	
Career				0.918
Management				
Behaviors				
Environmental				0.840
Career Resources				
Human Capital				0.833
Career Resources				
Motivational				0.902
Career Resources				

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The analysis results show that all indicators of academic leadership, teamwork quality, learning agility, and career success have loading factors above 0.6, indicating that they validly reflect their respective constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is tested using cross loading values and AVE. An indicator is considered valid if its cross loading is higher than that of other variables, and the AVE value is greater than the correlation between variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Zait & Berteau, 2011).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity based on AVE and Correlation

	Learning Agility	Academic Leadership	Career Success	Teamwork Quality
Learning Agility	0.807			
Academic Leadership	0.425	0.881		
Career Success	0.663	0.256	0.874	
Teamwork Quality	0.585	0.652	0.405	0.869

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The analysis shows that all indicators meet the criteria, as their AVE values are greater than the cross-correlations, indicating that the study is supported by adequately valid variables.

Composite Reliability

Composite reliability assesses the consistency of indicators within a variable and is considered good if the value exceeds 0.70 (Hair, Risher, et al., 2019).

Table 3. Results of Construct Validity and Reliability Testing

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Learning Agility	0.821	0.822	0.882	0.651
Academic Leadership	0.942	0.947	0.954	0.776
Career Success	0.896	0.897	0.928	0.764
Teamwork Quality	0.935	0.938	0.949	0.755

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 3 shows that the composite reliability values range from 0.822 to 0.947 and Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.821 to 0.942, both exceeding the 0.70 threshold, indicating that the indicators are reliable. Additionally, the AVE values range from 0.651 to 0.776, above the 0.50 cutoff, confirming that convergent validity is met (MacKenzie et al., 2011).

The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) shows that all indicators meet the criteria for validity and reliability. Convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE indicating that each indicator is valid and reliable. Therefore, further analysis can proceed with the evaluation of the model's goodness of fit (inner model).

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

R-square (R^2)

R-square (R^2) indicates the strength of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables, reflecting the explanatory power of the research model (Hair et al., 2022). According to Chin (1998), an R^2 value of 0.67 is strong, 0.33 is moderate, and 0.19 is weak.

Table 4. R^2 dan R^2 Adjusted

Laten Variable	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Description
Learning Agility	0.345	0.340	Moderate
Career Success	0.442	0.436	Moderate
Teamwork Quality	0.425	0.423	Moderate
Average	0.404	0.400	Moderate

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 4 shows R-square (R^2) values of 0.345 for learning agility, 0.442 for career success, and 0.425 for teamwork quality. According to Chin (1998), these values indicate a moderate model, as they fall within the 0.33–0.66 range.

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

Henseler et al. (2016) highlight the usefulness of the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as a measure of model fit. SRMR represents the difference between observed and predicted correlations, where a value of zero indicates perfect fit (Hair et al., 2022). A value below 0.08 is generally considered acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and this cut-off is deemed suitable for PLS path modeling, especially in studies involving new technology (Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 5. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.077	0.077
d_ULS	1.249	1.249
d_G	0.553	0.553
Chi-square	854.497	854.497
NFI	0.822	0.822

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 5 shows an SRMR value of 0.077, which is below the 0.08 cut-off proposed by Hu & Bentler (1999), indicating an acceptable model fit in the SEM-PLS analysis. This suggests that the empirical data adequately explain the relationships between variables, and the model is suitable for hypothesis testing.

Research Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Direct Effect and Indirect Effect

Effect between Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Description
Academic Leadership -> Career Success	0.574	0.579	0.072	7.939	0.000	Accepted
Teamwork Quality -> Career Success	0.642	0.645	0.039	16.363	0.000	Accepted
Academic Leadership -> Teamwork Quality	0.652	0.653	0.038	16.972	0.000	Accepted
Learning Agility -> Career Success	0.651	0.653	0.053	12.215	0.000	Accepted
Academic Leadership -> Learning Agility	0.214	0.215	0.062	3.421	0.001	Accepted
Academic Leadership -> Teamwork Quality -> Career Success	0.344	0.346	0.046	7.554	0.000	Accepted
Academic Leadership -> Learning Agility -> Career Success	0.198	0.200	0.037	5,340	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali, with a path coefficient of 0.574, t-statistic of 7.939 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. These results support Hypothesis 1, confirming the significant positive influence of academic leadership on career success.

Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the teamwork quality of private HEIs lecturers in Bali, with a path coefficient of 0.652, t-statistic of 16.972 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. These results support Hypothesis 2, confirming the significant positive influence of academic leadership on teamwork quality.

Teamwork quality has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali, with a path coefficient of 0.642, t-statistic of 16.363 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. These findings support Hypothesis 3, confirming the significant positive influence of teamwork quality on career success.

Academic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the learning agility of private HEIs lecturers in Bali, with a path coefficient of 0.214, t-statistic of 3.421 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.001. These results support Hypothesis 4, confirming the significant positive influence of academic leadership on learning agility.

Learning agility has a positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali, with a path coefficient of 0.651, t-statistic of 12.215 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. These results support Hypothesis 5, confirming the significant positive influence of learning agility on career success.

Academic leadership has an indirect positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali through teamwork quality, with a path coefficient of 0.344, t-statistic of 7.554 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. According to Hair et al. (2022), this indicates a complementary mediation effect. These findings support Hypothesis 6, confirming that teamwork quality mediates the effect of academic leadership on career success.

Academic leadership has an indirect positive and significant effect on the career success of private HEIs lecturers in Bali through learning agility, with a path coefficient of 0.198, t-statistic of 5.340 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000. Based on Hair et al. (2022), this indicates a

complementary mediation effect. These results support Hypothesis 7, confirming that learning agility mediates the effect of academic leadership on career success.

Discussion

This study confirms that academic leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the career success of lecturers in private HEIs. Academic leaders who are able to motivate, guide, and empower lecturers contribute not only to direct career advancement but also to indirect improvements through enhanced teamwork quality and learning agility. This finding supports prior research emphasizing the strategic importance of academic leadership in aligning institutional policies with lecturers' professional development and performance expectations (Sherif et al., 2020; Kurniawati et al., 2021). From a policy implementation perspective, effective leadership ensures that formal promotion regulations are translated into supportive academic practices at the program and faculty levels.

The significant effect of teamwork quality on career success is consistent with the argument that collaborative academic environments foster knowledge sharing, mutual learning, and collective problem-solving (Klaic et al., 2020). In the context of private HEIs in Bali, where resource limitations, heavy teaching loads, and administrative pressures are common, high-quality teamwork functions as a critical form of social capital. Collaborative research activities, co-authorship practices, and peer mentoring within academic teams enable lecturers to meet *Tri Dharma* requirements more effectively, thereby enhancing research productivity and facilitating academic career progression.

Learning agility also emerges as a crucial individual capability influencing academic career success. Lecturers with high learning agility demonstrate greater adaptability in responding to evolving academic demands, including changes in promotion policies, accreditation standards, and publication requirements. Change agility, in particular, enables lecturers to proactively adjust research agendas, align publication strategies with accredited and indexed journals, and adopt innovative teaching and community engagement practices in response to curriculum reforms. In the Indonesian academic context, such adaptive behaviors are essential for accelerating progression from *Asisten Ahli* to *Lektor* and *Lektor Kepala*, where research output and relevance constitute key evaluation criteria. This finding reinforces the view of learning agility as a dynamic form of human capital that supports long-term academic career sustainability (De Meuse, 2017; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000).

Importantly, the results demonstrate that teamwork quality and learning agility serve as complementary mediating mechanisms in the relationship between academic leadership and career success. Rather than operating independently, these mediators jointly amplify the effect of leadership on lecturers' career outcomes. Teamwork quality provides a collaborative and supportive environment that facilitates shared learning and collective achievement, while learning agility equips lecturers with the psychological flexibility and resilience needed to capitalize on leadership support and institutional opportunities. This integrative mechanism suggests that academic career success in private HEIs is not solely determined by leadership authority or individual effort, but by the effective interaction between institutional leadership, collaborative work structures, and adaptive individual behavior.

Overall, this study extends Human Capital Theory by demonstrating that lecturers' adaptive learning capabilities function as a critical behavioral mechanism through which leadership and institutional policies influence career outcomes. At the same time, it contributes to Policy Implementation Process Theory by showing that the effectiveness of academic promotion policies depends on leadership practices that foster collaboration and continuous learning at the organizational level. These findings highlight the importance of holistic academic leadership strategies that simultaneously strengthen institutional support systems, teamwork dynamics, and individual learning agility to promote sustainable academic career development.

Limitations

Although the proposed model explains a moderate proportion of variance in lecturers' career success ($R^2 = 0.442$), this study has several limitations. Other institutional factors, such as funding availability, research infrastructure, workload distribution, and policy stability, were not explicitly incorporated into the model and may also influence academic career progression. In addition, the use of cross-sectional data limits the ability to capture dynamic changes in lecturers' career development over time. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs and include additional organizational and policy-related variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of academic career success in private higher education institutions.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that academic leadership significantly influences the career success of lecturers in private HEIs, both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of teamwork quality and learning agility. Academic leadership emerges not only as a structural driver but also as a transformational catalyst that enables lecturers to navigate the increasingly competitive and policy-regulated environment of Indonesian higher education (Sherif et al., 2020; Kurniawati et al., 2021).

Empirically, the proposed model explains a moderate proportion of variance in academic career success, underscoring the importance of adopting a holistic approach that integrates leadership effectiveness, collaborative teamwork, and individual adaptability. The findings demonstrate that teamwork quality and learning agility function as strategic levers in translating leadership practices into tangible career outcomes. While teamwork quality enhances collaborative engagement, shared responsibility, and institutional cohesion (Klaic et al., 2020), learning agility strengthens lecturers' capacity for continuous learning, adaptability, and responsiveness to evolving academic demands (De Meuse, 2017; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). Together, these mechanisms operate synergistically to support sustainable academic career advancement.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that efforts to improve lecturers' career success should extend beyond individual performance evaluation and formal promotion criteria. It is recommended that LLDIKTI Region VIII institutionalize learning agility development programs and team-based research grants as part of formal faculty career acceleration policies. Such initiatives would enable private HEIs to systematically strengthen academic human capital, promote collaborative research cultures, and accelerate lecturers' progression within the national academic ranking system.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that open avenues for future research. Future studies should examine the long-term sustainability of these drivers using longitudinal designs and extend the proposed model to public higher education institutions to enable comparative analysis. Incorporating additional institutional and policy-related variables may also provide deeper insights into the dynamics of academic career success across different higher education contexts.

In conclusion, enhancing academic leadership, fostering high-quality teamwork, and developing learning agility should be viewed not as isolated interventions but as interconnected strategies for strengthening academic human capital. The integrated model developed in this study offers a comprehensive framework for policymakers and institutional leaders seeking to promote sustainable academic career development in private higher education institutions, particularly in underrepresented regions such as Bali.

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