

**VIET NAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HO CHI MINH CITY  
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**



**FOSTERING HIGH PERFORMANCE THROUGH LEADERSHIP  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING:  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TOURISM SECTOR**

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**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Today's global business environment has been characterized as dynamic, competitive, complex, and multifaceted due to speedy changes in social, economic, and technological aspects. These changes have urged many organizations to shift the foundation of strategy and competition from traditional method of relying on physical and financial resources to monitor and maintain daily operations, to modern approach of using intellectual assets to create more values for customers and achieve superior performance (Kamukama et al., 2010). Furthermore, many organizations have been stalled to a near standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the questions of whether they can survive after the demise of the crisis is still unknown (Bartik et al., 2020, Falk et al., 2021). Given the current situation, organizations are increasingly in search for various methods and business strategies to capitalize on their accessible resources and competencies to maintain operational efficiency during the crisis, capture opportunities within the marketplace, achieve superior performance, and remain competitive (Obeidat, 2016).

Earlier scholars stated that a firm's resource-based view emphasizes achieving competitive advantage and superior long-term performance by utilizing the available resources such as knowledge, processes, and other capabilities (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1995). Added to this, Grant (1996) argued that a firm's knowledge-based view highlights the use of the knowledge base of a firm as a strategic resource to augment sustainable performance and gain competitive advantage. In the workplace, organizational learning has been found to affect the success and survival of businesses (Weldy, 2009). As reported in past findings (Narsa, 2019; Oh, 2018; Zhou et al., 2015), organizational learning contributes to several organizational outcomes and thus firms need to promote learning and give it a great priority. Besides, leadership is a critical function of management in all businesses since strong leadership facilitates the alignment of people and resources to accomplish organizational goals and objectives (Northouse, 2018). In this regard, leaders then face many difficulties in dynamically integrating internal resources into superior performance and transforming their firms to adapt with the current complex and unusual situations of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many attempts have been made to answer the question of how leaders lead their organizations toward desirable outcomes during the crisis (Lamprinou et al., 2021; Ngoma et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021).

However, although previous studies have examined the relationship between leadership and organizational outcomes, the findings are still inconsistent and inclusive towards simple methods (questionnaires) and replications of familiar leadership approaches (Yukl, 2013). The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there is no clear answer to the question of which aspects (traits, competencies, or behaviors) of leaders are important to organizational outcomes. In addition, while notable research has investigated the association between leadership and organizational learning on high organizational performance independently, yet previous researchers infrequently integrated them to make a more comprehensive framework. Moreover, these Western-developed phenomena were not tested in the context of Vietnam - a developing country in Asia.

To resolve these puzzles, this study aims to investigate the relationship between different leadership components and high organizational performance, mediated by organizational learning within the context of tourism firms in Vietnam. In this direction, our study fills the identified gaps in the literature and provides several contributions. First, this study extends the theoretical and empirical studies on the influences of leadership on organizational learning and high organizational performance by incorporating multiple leadership theories (trait theory, competence theory, complexity leadership theory) as predictors. Second, complexity leadership concerns a flexible type of leadership style that a leader aims at enabling their firms to thrive in the environment full of uncertainty and adapt to chaotic environments (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2002). It should be especially relevant in the current crisis and turbulent business context due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic but has so far remained an understudied leadership approach (Tourish, 2019). The current research contributes to the leadership literature by examining complexity leadership - an emergent leadership approach and its implication towards organizational learning and

high organizational performance. Third, there is significantly scarce research on how organizational learning affect the achievement of high organizational performance in tourism enterprises. This study would enrich the organizational learning literature and provide further insights to the knowledge-based view by clarifying the role of organizational learning in engendering improved firm performance. Fourth, this study further examines whether organizational learning mediate the relationship between leadership and high organizational performance. This would help in offering further theoretical understanding of the mediating mechanism through which leadership influences organizational learning and ultimately result in superior performance of firms. Last but not least, the findings from this study can also be used to offer powerful and scientifically proven recommendations for leaders and policy makers towards the achievement of high organizational performance of tourism firms and the development of tourism industry in Vietnam.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundation

#### 2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory

According to Wernerfelt (1984), acknowledging the importance of developing resources rather than products, the resource-based view theory of firm contends that “firms possess resources, a subset of which enables them to achieve competitive advantage, and a further subset which leads to superior long-term performance” (p.108). In the extant literature, several studies highlighted how firms with specific assets and capabilities outperform their competitors in the market (Ghemawat, 1986; Grant, 1991; Stalk *et al.*, 1992). In a seminal work “*Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage*” published in Journal of Management, Barney (1991) stated that the resource-based view theory derives from two assumptions of heterogeneity and immobility of resources that foster improved performance and competitive advantage of a firm. The resources can also be defined as capabilities, assets, knowledge, processes, and other capabilities that enable a firm to achieve and sustain its effectiveness, competitiveness and continuing organizational performance (Barney, 1995; Galbreath, 2005). They can be tangible resources (e.g., facilities and equipment) or intangible resources embedded in the organizations such as competence of business owners and leaders (Ulrich, 1998; Saffu *et al.*, 2008). In other words, the resource-based view illustrates how owners and managerial executives generate superior performance and sustained competitive advantage for their organizations from the unique bundle of resources or capabilities that they currently possess such as management skills and knowledge (Conner and Prahalad, 1996; Dollinger, 1999; Castanis and Helft, 1991; Polanyi, 1966).

The resource-based view theory was frequently used to evaluate firm performance (Newbert, 2007) and has gained enormous popularity in tourism research (e.g., Hossain *et al.*, 2022; Haugland *et al.*, 2011; Duarte Alonso, 2017; Espino-Rodríguez and Padrón-Robaina, 2005; Denicolai *et al.*, 2010). For example, several

studies have been done on some costly-to-copy resources that are important for the competitiveness and high organizational performance of tourism firms (Camisón and Forés, 2015; Camisón *et al.*, 2015). According to Kruesi and Bazelmans (2022), the RBV theory has been directly or indirectly invoked as the central theoretical grounding in several T&H studies. Since the resource-based view theory addresses firms' assets and capabilities as underlying determinants of high organizational performance, the researcher deemed it a suitable theory to use in the current study. Drawing on the resource-based view theory, the researcher hypothesized a relationship between the characteristics, competences and styles of leaders in tourism firms and high organizational performance (Wilderom and Van Den Berg, 2000; Chamberlin, 1933; Ulrich, 1998; Saffu *et al.*, 2008; Castanis and Helft, 1991). In other words, this study considers leadership as an internal intangible resource that contributes to the achievement of high organizational performance in tourism firms.

### ***2.1.2 Knowledge-Based View Theory***

Under the knowledge-based view theory perspective, knowledge is perceived to be an asset that resides within the individuals and can be aggregated, transferred and incorporated at the organization level (Denford and Chan, 2011). The primary purpose of organizations is to acquire, transfer, apply, and integrate knowledge necessary for effective adaptation to the ever-changing business environment (Cheng *et al.*, 2014). According to Farzaneh *et al.* (2021), the knowledge-based view theory “is an important approach to organizational learning” and “has inevitably given rise to this general understanding that firms should become learning organizations to maximize their knowledge base” in order to gain sustainable competitive advantages and superior organizational performance (p. 657). Therefore, knowledge capabilities of a firm are found to drive its performance (Darroch, 2005). In other words, high organizational performance of firms is associated with its abilities and capabilities to create, absorb, integrate, apply, manage, and store knowledge (Magno *et al.*, 2017).

Since the extant literature extensively addresses knowledge-based view theory in exploring the impact of knowledge on firms' performance and competitiveness, this

area has received attention in the field of tourism and hospitality firms (Toylan *et al.*, 2020; Utami *et al.*, 2017). Earlier studies pointed out that tourism firms can capitalize on organizational learning and knowledge assets to gain competitive advantage (Cooper, 2015; Zaei and Zaei, 2014). The extant literature also extensively addresses KBV theory in exploring the impact of knowledge on business performance of tourism firms (Toylan *et al.*, 2020; Duarte Alonso *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, the current study adopts the knowledge-based view theory to examine knowledge as a driver of superior performance of tourism firms in the context of an emerging market (Grant, 1996; Farzaneh *et al.*, 2021; Toylan *et al.*, 2020). In other words, this study considers organizational learning as an internal intangible resource that contributes to the achievement of high organizational performance in tourism firms.

### ***2.1.3 Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Theory***

Originated in organizational psychology field, the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory suggests that Ability (skills and knowledge necessary for good performance), Motivation (individual's impetus to perform); and Opportunity (contextual and situational factors that enabled performance) are core antecedents in explaining behaviors and performance (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2000; Bailey *et al.*, 2001). There is limited research on organizational learning using Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory and framework. The study of Argote *et al.* (2003) identified ability, motivation, and opportunity as mechanisms of knowledge management and concluded that these mechanisms have an impact on how knowledge is created, retained, and transferred. Recently, Soomro *et al.* (2021) and Vashdi *et al.* (2019) applied the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity framework to empirically examine the connection between leadership and organizational learning. In these studies, it is argued that each leadership dimension could be classified as the ability, motivation, or opportunity mechanism which are related to organizational learning. This study extends on earlier work (Argote *et al.*, 2003; Vashdi *et al.*, 2019; Soomro *et al.*, 2021) by using Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory to propose a theoretical model linking leadership dimensions to organizational learning.

## 2.2. Leadership

Leadership is defined as an influential process in which leaders empower their followers and facilitates the success of a group or an organization (Yukl, 2013; Northouse, 2018). Over decades, the evolution of this field is marked by the emergence of several leadership theories. Trait theory is the earliest theory on leadership, which assumes that effective leaders acquire specific innate personalities and attributes (Stogdill, 1948). Since studies on trait approach resulted in mixed results and skepticism due to the existence of various traits (Colbert *et al.*, 2012), many attempts have been made to provide a unified personality framework, such as the five-factor model (Northouse, 2018). However, Bono *et al.* (2014) later argued that researchers should turn their attention to more traits that account for characteristics above and beyond the five-factor traits and are more relevant in the future business environment to advance the line of research on trait theory. To that end, Hiller and Beauchesne (2014) identified core self-evaluation, narcissism, need for achievement, and risk propensity as understudied traits that could provide a better conceptual explanation of leadership and how it predicts organizational-level outcomes such as strategy, culture, and performance. Recent literature showed that many researchers have expanded the domain of leaders' personality and employed core self-evaluation and narcissism (Ding and Lin, 2020; Wang and Xu, 2019; Resick *et al.*, 2009), as well as need for achievement and risk propensity (Yu and Chen, 2016; Luo *et al.*, 2016; Marco and John, 2013; Tang and Tang, 2007) in their studies.

Competence theory adopts a leader-centered perspective to leadership and suggests that leaders acquire certain skills and competencies to make them effective (Northouse, 2018). Leadership competencies refer to a group of “essential skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics” (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999, p. 1) that enable leaders to achieve superior performance and gain the results they expected (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). According to Amedu and Dulewicz (2018), three clusters of leadership competencies that contribute greatly to leadership effectiveness



and performance of organizations in a variety of contexts are results orientation, cognitive competence, and interpersonal competence.

Behavioral theory focuses on the behaviors of leaders rather than their inherent personalities (Northouse, 2018). Among several leadership behaviors (e.g., task-oriented, people-oriented, participative, ethical, spiritual, etc.), researchers have increasingly paid attention to study transformational leadership over the past decades (Antonakis and House, 2002; Bhattacharyya, 2018). According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders identify personal values and vision that guide others' actions and initiate changes beneficial for the organizations. However, one limitation of transformational leadership lies in its failure to consider the organizational context and the advent of unpredictable leadership (Lord, 2008). Other scholars also stated that this approach overly relies on the leader-follower stereotype and thus failing to describe organizational learning processes (Yukl, 1999; Gronn, 2002).

Recognizing the limitations of transformational leadership and the abundance of existing empirical studies on the theory, future studies have turned the attention to more emerging conceptions of leadership such as complexity leadership (Yukl, 2013). According to Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017), complexity leadership refers to the structures, activities, and processes that enable organizations to thrive in the environment full of uncertainty. Hazy and Prottas (2018) stated that complexity leadership involves two leadership behaviors. The first dimension is generative leadership, which is how leaders bring new information about conflicting perspectives into the knowledge sharing and encourage involved agents to experiment and learn from these perspectives. The second dimension is administrative leadership, which is how leaders "help to promote clarity of action and accountability and would thus contribute to value potential realized through efficacy" (Hazy and Prottas, 2018, p. 328). Although complexity leadership is said to remediate the limitations of earlier leadership approaches in explaining learning processes (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2002; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2007), research on this leadership approach is limited due to the impact of overly heroic and popular leadership models (Tourish, 2019).

Since leadership research is inconclusive and biased towards simple methods and replications of familiar topics, Yukl (2013) encouraged researchers to use multiple leadership theories and multiple research methods to provide better understand of leadership and its influences. This study acknowledges the importance and relevance of leadership traits (core self-evaluation, narcissism, need for achievement, and risk propensity), leadership competencies (cognitive, interpersonal, and results orientation), and the newly emerged complexity leadership in predicting organizational learning and high organizational performance of firms operating in the current complex and ambiguous environment.

### **2.3. Organizational learning**

Organizational learning is defined as a process of gaining new knowledge that consequently influences individual and organizational outcomes (Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Huber, 1991). March (1991) described organizational learning as the exploitation and exploration of knowledge. Huber (1991) then postulated that organizational learning involves the acquisition, distribution, interpretation, and storage of information from a variety of sources. In the same vein, Pérez López *et al.* (2005) proposed that organizational learning pointed to how knowledge is acquired, distributed, interpreted, and stored within the organizations. Knowledge management is considered to be closely related to organizational learning (Vera and Crossan, 2003). Most definitions of knowledge management include the creation, transference, application, and storage of knowledge (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). According to Pun and Balkissoon (2011), the concepts of organizational learning and knowledge management are integrated. Other studies found that organizational learning is a part of knowledge management (Serenko, 2013; Fteimi and Lehner, 2016), or even being absorbed by knowledge management (Castaneda *et al.*, 2018). In this study, organizational learning is the main focus and is defined as the learning processes that facilitate organizations to achieve their goals (Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Huber, 1991).

## **2.4. High organizational performance**

The performance of an organization is defined as its actual output compared to its desired goals (Kotlar *et al.*, 2018). Peters and Waterman (1982) used a term called high performance to describe organizations that have a strong alignment between structure, leadership, culture, strategy, and employees' capabilities. Following the seminal work of Peters and Waterman (1982), other scholars described high performance of an organization as how it effectively responds to the demand of the marketplace (Owen *et al.*, 2001); or how it achieves better results than competitors over a longer period (de Waal, 2007). The importance of achieving high organizational performance has spurred the development of many approaches to accurately measure it. de Waal (2018a) reviewed existing literature on high organizational performance measures and found that high organizational performance should be subjectively measured based on managerial perspectives, especially when "access to objective performance data is restricted or collection of the information is just not feasible" (p. 3). Based on the foregoing premises, in this study high organizational performance is defined as the achievement of satisfactory financial and non-financial results and is subjectively measured through the perception of leaders.

## **2.5. Hypothesis development**

### ***2.5.1. Leadership and organizational learning***

Leaders play a significant role since they facilitate the collective improvement of organizational learning and decide strategies to respond to market demands. Matošková *et al.*'s (2018) study revealed strong significant positive relationships between leaders' characteristics and knowledge sharing in firms operating in the Czech Republic. Zhang *et al.* (2018) argued that core self-evaluation affects knowledge sharing and creativity at organizations. Besides, extant literature proved that healthy narcissism or grandiose narcissism can improve organizational outcomes (Yoo, 2016; Reina *et al.*, 2014; Kim, 2018; Huang *et al.*, 2019). This appreciation makes it essential to consider the positive influences of leaders' narcissistic personality on organizational learning. Need for achievement has long been found to

positively relate to learning and speed of performance (Lowell, 1952). Risk propensity was found to be embedded in the concept of organizational learning capability with an assumption that organizational learning will be fostered when people take risks and accept mistakes (Onađ *et al.*, 2014; Alegre and Chiva, 2008).

Amy's (2008) study revealed that leaders exhibit a variety of characteristics and competencies, which enable them to become facilitators of organizational learning. Previous studies showed that emotional intelligence contributes to learning at organizations (Bettis-Outland and Guillory, 2018; Ghosh *et al.*, 2012). Jain and Jeppe Jeppesen (2013) found a positive influence of leaders' cognitive competences on the practices of managing knowledge in a thermal power generation firm. In addition, several studies have found that leaders' social or interpersonal intelligence plays a vital role in leadership performance, knowledge acquisition, innovation, and creative performance (Siswanti *et al.*, 2018; Kong, 2015). Kong (2015) stated that social competencies contribute to the analysis, utilization, and deployment of knowledge, which are beneficial for the organizations.

In addition, through generative leadership, leaders encourage others to experiment and learn from varying viewpoint, which consequently generates new knowledge and promotes knowledge sharing within organizations (Arena and Uhl-Bien, 2016; Hazy and Protttas, 2018; Chowdhury, 2005). Džinić (2015) conducted a study in three Croatian city governments and found that administrative leadership has a significant positive relationship with organizational learning. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1.* Leaders' perceptions of their leadership traits, including core self-evaluation (*H1a*), narcissism (*H1b*), need for achievement (*H1c*), and risk propensity (*H1d*) are associated with organizational learning.

*H2.* Leaders' perceptions of their leadership competencies, including results-orientation (*H2a*), cognitive competence (*H2b*), and interpersonal competence (*H2c*) are associated with organizational learning.

*H3.* Leaders' perceptions of their complexity leadership, including generative leadership (*H3a*) and administrative leadership (*H3b*) are associated with organizational learning.

### ***2.5.2. Leadership and high organizational performance***

An empirical study by Peterson *et al.* (2003) concluded that leaders' characteristics ultimately affect firm performance. Using core self-evaluation scale developed by Judge and colleagues (2003), Simsek *et al.* (2010) found that the core self-evaluation of leaders has a connection with entrepreneurial orientation of organizations. Some researchers have pointed out that leaders' grandiose narcissism has a positive impact on firm performance (Huang, 2019; Yoo, 2016; Reina *et al.*, 2014). Kim (2018) conducted a study on 30 public institutions and found that personal characteristics of executives (narcissism) positively affects the performance of these firms. Need for achievement has also been acknowledged as a factor that positively affects organizational performance (Lee and Tsang, 2001). Relating risk propensity and firm performance, many studies suggested that leaders who are willing to take risks produced more desirable performance (Cain and McKeon, 2012; Sidek and Zainol, 2011).

Earlier studies contended that leaders' competencies positively affect the performance and success of organizations (McClelland, 1973; Pickett, 1998). In a study of the Fly Emirates Airline in the UAE, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) found that leaders' competencies play a vital role in the success of the airline firm. Sadler-Smith (2004) conducted research on small and medium-sized firms and noted a positive impact of leaders' intuitive style on both financial and non-financial performance. Cuéllar-Molina *et al.*'s (2019) study contended that emotional intelligence contributes to high organizational performance practices. Almatrooshi *et al.* (2016) conducted a systematical review on determinants of firm performance and suggested that leadership competencies (cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence) have positive effects on both employee and organizational performance. Amedu and Dulewicz (2018) investigated three core clusters of leadership competencies (interpersonal, cognitive, and result orientation) and found that these competencies positively affected firm performance.

Nienaber and Svensson (2013) made a conceptual analysis of complexity science and introduced a framework facilitating an understanding of leadership-performance relationship. Hazy and Uhl-Bien (2015) asserted that generative leadership is positively associated with organizational capabilities and later with firms' performance and adaptability in a changing environment. Administrative leadership was found to help the organization "bring requisite resources, like raw materials, human resources, and financial capital into the organization" (Hazy and Prottas, 2018, p. 328). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

*H4.* Leaders' perceptions of their leadership traits, including core self-evaluation (*H4a*), narcissism (*H4b*), need for achievement (*H4c*), and risk propensity (*H4d*) are associated with high organizational performance.

*H5.* Leaders' perceptions of their leadership competencies, including results-orientation (*H5a*), cognitive competence (*H5b*), and interpersonal competence (*H5c*) are associated with high organizational performance.

*H6.* Leaders' perceptions of their complexity leadership, including generative leadership (*H6a*) and administrative leadership (*H6b*) are associated with high organizational performance.

### ***2.5.3. Organizational learning and high organizational performance***

Organizations should strengthen learning to achieve high organizational performance and supersede their competitors (Garvin, 1993). God *et al.*'s (2012) meta-analysis of 33 empirical studies on organizational learning and firm performance revealed a positive relationship between learning and both financial and non-financial performance of firms. Yuliansyah *et al.* (2021) analyzed 157 survey responses from financial service firms and found that organizational learning has a positive influence on organizational performance. Their research findings are consistent with earlier studies (Waqas *et al.*, 2019; Valdez-Juárez *et al.*, 2019; Ur Rehman *et al.*, 2019; Zhao *et al.*, 2009). Zgrzywa-Ziemak and Walecka-Jankowska (2021) carried out an empirical examination of the relationship between organizational learning and sustainable performance of 694 Polish and Danish companies. The findings from their research have shown a positive, statistically significant relationship between the two phenomena. Another recent cross-sectional study of Soomro *et al.* (2021) also

revealed that organizational learning has a positive and significant impact on organizational performance. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

*H7.* Organizational learning has a relationship with high organizational performance.

#### ***2.5.4. Organizational learning as a mediator***

According to Bryant (2003), leaders create favorable conditions to develop organizational learning, which consequently enhance the performance of organizations. García-Morales *et al.*'s (2008) research in 164 pharmaceutical companies in Europe and America revealed leadership influence firm performance through the mediation of organizational learning. Noruzy *et al.* (2012) also found that leaders foster organizational learning, which in turn strengthen long-term performance of manufacturing firms. In a similar vein, Sayyadi (2019) stated that leaders play a vital role in the creation and management of knowledge within organizations, which are important elements to foster high organizational performance. Other studies also pointed to the notion that organizational learning acts as a mediator in the relationship between leadership and high organizational performance (Para-González *et al.*, 2018; Ur Rehman *et al.*, 2019; Mallén *et al.*, 2015). In the tourism context, studies that examine the relationships between different leadership approaches, organizational learning, and high organizational performance simultaneously have been found lacking. However, the findings discussed previously are important evidence that the impact of leaders on high organizational performance are mediated by organizational learning. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

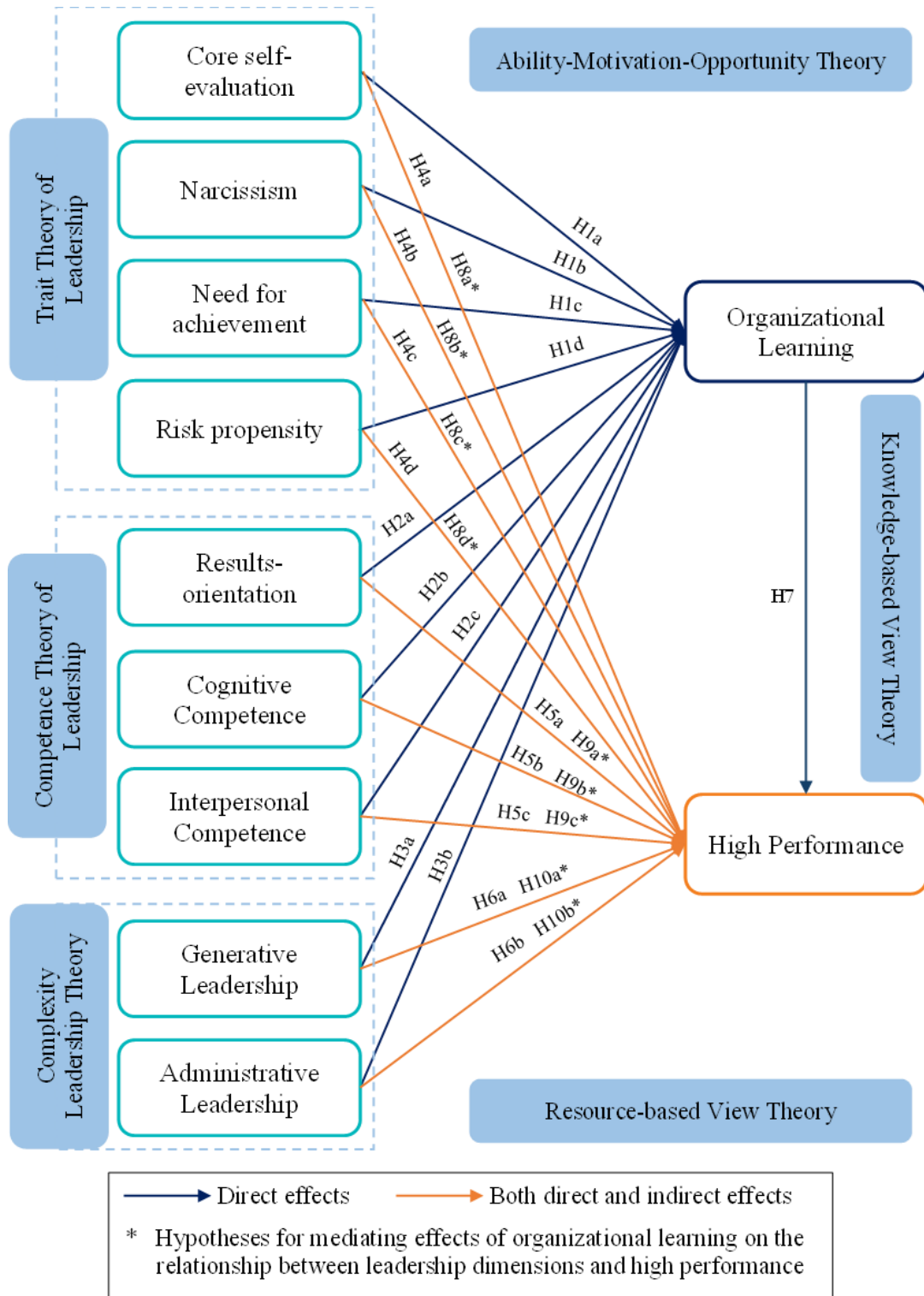
*H8.* Organizational learning mediates the relationship between leadership traits, including core self-evaluation (*H8a*), narcissism (*H8b*), need for achievement (*H8c*), and risk propensity (*H8d*), and high organizational performance.

*H9.* Organizational learning mediates the relationship between leadership competencies, including results-orientation (*H9a*), cognitive competence (*H9b*), and interpersonal competence (*H9c*), and high organizational performance.

*H10.* Organizational learning mediates the relationship between complexity leadership, including generative leadership (*H10a*) and administrative leadership (*H10b*), and high organizational performance.

**Figure 2.1**

*Proposed Research Framework of this Study*





## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### *3.1. Qualitative Method*

The qualitative phase is used to explore whether leadership components we identified in the literature manifest in the context of tourism firms in Vietnam. To achieve this objective, semi-structured interviews are used. We personally contacted prospective participants by telephone and email using personal contacts and references. In this study, eight leaders in tourism firms are invited, who have a least one year of leadership experience in the tourism industry. After eight interviews, seeing that responses in each interview were clearly aligned with the others and there were no new insights emerged, we did not conduct additional interviews.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted and each interview lasted 30-60 minutes. Phone interviews were used for the convenience of some participants. Following the interview protocol, each interview started with the introduction of purpose of the study, collection of consent forms and some background questions. Next, participants were asked to describe their personality and leadership approach and identify drivers of high organizational performance. To ensure that the participants feel comfortable in expressing their perspectives, the language used in interviews is Vietnamese. We used digital devices/smartphones to record the interviews (with permission from participants).

We used thematic analysis method to analyze data in the qualitative study. Data was transcribed and transcripts were sent to participants for their review and confirmation of accuracy. Afterwards, each transcript was coded and analyzed by extracting raw data themes from each interview and identifying quotes relating to the common themes. We also applied researcher triangulation to ensure validity and trustworthiness of the research findings. Each researcher independently analyzed the data. Any disagreement was discussed until consensus met.

### **3.2. Quantitative Method**

We developed a questionnaire using the leadership components identified in the qualitative study and measures from previous studies. As for leadership traits, core self-evaluation was measured based on the Core Self-Evaluation Scale (Judge *et al.*, 2003; Henderson and Gardiner. 2019) and narcissism was measured based on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin and Terry, 1988; Ames *et al.*, 2006). Need for achievement and risk propensity measurement items were adopted from Sidek and Zainol (2011). The measurement scale of leadership competencies, including results-orientation, cognitive and interpersonal competence was primarily adopted from Amedu (2016) and Amedu and Dulewicz (2018). Generative leadership and administrative leadership behaviors in complexity leadership were measured using the 10-item Complexity Leadership Interaction Modes developed by Hazy and Prottas (2018). Organizational learning was measured by 5 items adapted from García-Morales *et al.* (2012) and Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle (2011). The measurement scale of high organizational performance was adopted from Arsezen-Otamis *et al.* (2015). All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree. We also included age, tenure, experience in the industry, education and gender as demographic data of the survey respondents. Before launching the survey, we conducted pre-tests by interviewing managers of tourism firms and academics in the fields. The participants in the pre-tests were asked to help validate the questionnaire and evaluate if the survey questions were clearly understood.

A randomly selected list of 1528 tourism firms in Vietnam, including tourist attractions, restaurants and bars, retailers for tourists, hotels and resorts, tourism event companies, travel agencies, and tourist transportation companies, were contacted via telephone, email, Zalo and Viber app. We delivered the questionnaires via mail and Google Forms to the leaders of these companies since they are reliable key informant and play a vital role in developing company policies, governing operating processes, and allocating resources (Jung *et al.*, 2008). Finally, 638 questionnaires were fully

completed and valid, representing a response rate of 42 percent. According to Hair *et al.* (2012), this sample is a good size for structural equation modeling analysis. Table 1 below illustrates the demographic characteristics of the sample in this study.

**Table 1.**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N= 638)*

	<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	428	67.1
	Female	210	32.9
Age Group	< 31	135	21.2
	31-40	301	47.2
	41-50	153	24.0
	>50	49	7.7
Education level	College	113	17.7
	Bachelor	389	61.0
	Master	134	21.0
	Doctor	2	0.3
Major	Economics	149	23.4
	Humanities	60	9.4
	Tourism	290	45.5
	Management	139	21.8
Company type	Restaurant/bar	138	21.6
	Tourist attraction	62	9.7
	Hotel/Resort	218	34.2
	Retailing system for tourists	54	8.5
	Transportation company	84	13.2
	Travel agency	45	7.1
	Event company	37	5.8

Smart-PLS software version 3.0 was used to process PLS-SEM for 638 cases. The non-parametric bootstrapping was measured with 1000 replications (Hair *et al.*, 2013).

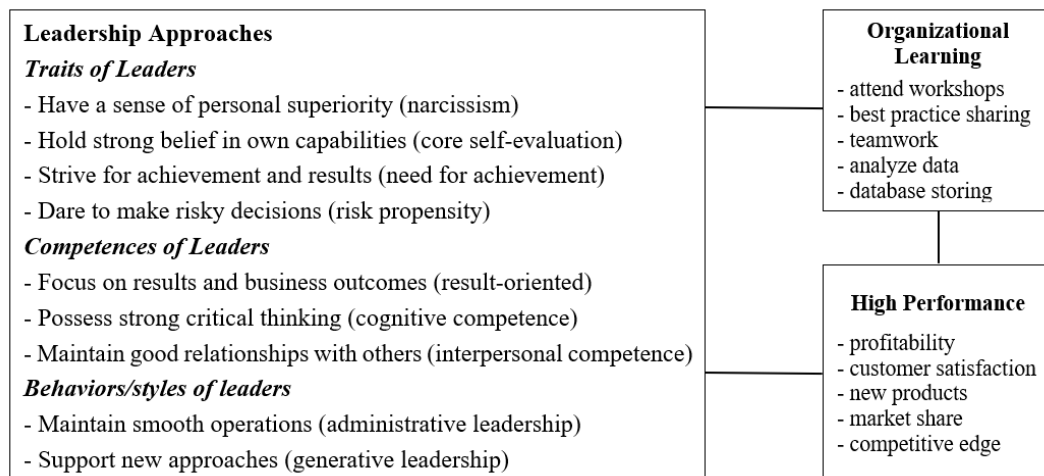
## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 Qualitative Results

The researcher has identified components of leadership that are manifested in the tourism firms based on the results from interviews. They include (1) traits of leaders, including have a sense of personal superiority (narcissism), hold strong belief in myself and my capabilities (core self-evaluation), strive for achievement and results (need for achievement), and dare to make risky decisions (risk propensity); (2) competences of leaders, including focus on results and business outcomes (result-oriented), possess strong critical thinking (cognitive competence), and maintain good relationships with others (interpersonal competence); and (3) behaviors of leaders, including maintain smooth operations (administrative leadership) and support new approaches (generative leadership). These components of leadership are clarified by interviews with tourism leaders and are confirmed for research framework of this study. Besides, leadership approaches of leaders in tourism firms were found to have relationship with organizational outcomes such as organizational learning and high organizational performance. Themes identified from qualitative study and their relationships are depicted in the following figure.

**Figure 4.1.**

*Leadership Approaches and Organizational Outcomes*



## 4.2 Quantitative Results

### 4.2.1. Measurement model assessment

Composite Reliability (CR) is used to measure the internal consistency reliability. According to Hair *et al.* (2012), all the constructs with a minimum loading of 0.6 were accepted. In the current study, the factor loadings range from 0.684 to 0.825 (Table 2) so all scales are above 0.6 and each reliability items are appropriated. Table 2 also shows that the CR values of all the constructs range from 0.843 to 0.922. This is accepted with the rules of thumb for model evaluation by Hair *et al.* (2011) that “the internal consistency reliability as composite reliability should be higher than 0.70 in exploratory research, and 0.60 to 0.70 is considered acceptable”.

We evaluate the validity of items by testing convergent validity through the average variance extracted (AVE) to see if this value is higher than 0.50 or not (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The results of AVE values show in Table 4.2 range from 0.518 to 0.641, which are higher than the indexes suggesting by Hair *et al.* (2011). Therefore, the convergent validity is confirmed.

**Table 4.2.**

#### *Reliability and Validity*

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
High Organizational Performance (OHP)	0.848	0.849	0.884	0.523
Organizational Learning (OL)	0.783	0.784	0.852	0.535
Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)	0.768	0.770	0.843	0.518
Narcissism (NAR)	0.906	0.908	0.922	0.541
Need for achievement (NFA)	0.796	0.797	0.860	0.551
Risk propensity (RPR)	0.857	0.860	0.893	0.582
Results-Oriented Competence (ROR)	0.896	0.898	0.916	0.547
Cognitive Competence (COG)	0.892	0.893	0.912	0.537
Interpersonal Competence (INT)	0.860	0.860	0.899	0.641
Generative Leadership (GLM)	0.780	0.785	0.858	0.603
Administrative Leadership (ALM)	0.757	0.762	0.846	0.579

*Note.* CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

As for discriminant validity, Hair *et al.* (2011) suggested that “an indicator’s loadings should be higher than all of its cross loadings”. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), “the square root of AVE of each latent variable should be greater than the correlations among the latent variables”, and it can be used to establish discriminant validity. For example, the latent variable INT’s AVE is 0.641 so the square root of AVE of INT became 0.801. This value was greater than the correlations among the latent variables in the Column of INT (NAR: 0.532, NFA: 0.571, OHP: 0.565, etc.). Furthermore, the square root of AVE of INT also bigger than the correlation values in the row of INT (GLM: 0.575, CSE: 0.606, COG: 0.735). Other the latent variables were well established the discriminant validity (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3**

*Discriminant validity-Formell and Lacker Criterion*

	OHP	OL	CSE	NAR	NFA	RPR	COG	INT	ROR	ALM	GLM
OHP	<b>0.723</b>										
OL	0.612	<b>0.732</b>									
CSE	0.629	0.573	<b>0.720</b>								
NAR	0.534	0.489	0.679	<b>0.736</b>							
NFA	0.542	0.616	0.672	0.587	<b>0.742</b>						
RPR	0.442	0.462	0.535	0.700	0.585	<b>0.763</b>					
COG	0.601	0.710	0.698	0.534	0.662	0.488	<b>0.733</b>				
INT	0.565	0.617	0.606	0.532	0.571	0.457	0.735	<b>0.801</b>			
ROR	0.639	0.682	0.681	0.519	0.660	0.430	0.832	0.758	<b>0.740</b>		
ALM	0.541	0.620	0.557	0.460	0.556	0.375	0.684	0.625	0.717	<b>0.761</b>	
GLM	0.449	0.625	0.524	0.381	0.530	0.335	0.708	0.575	0.693	0.631	<b>0.776</b>

*Note.* Bold values represent the square root of AVEs

#### **4.2.2. Structural model assessment**

We use variance inflation factor (VIF) to check the existence of multicollinearity. According to Hair *et al.* (2011), the acceptable criterion for each indicator of VIF value should be smaller than 5. The results of the collinearity

statistics in our study show that the VIF values range from 1.390 to 4.633, in which outer VIF values are from 1.390 to 2.505 and inner VIF values are from 2.201 to 4.633. This indicates that multicollinearity is not a problem in our data.

The predictive power of structural model is examined, and the measurement model results are satisfactory. In this study, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is 0.532 for OHP. This indicated that the 9 latent variables (CSE, NAR, NFA, RPR, ROR, COG, INT, GLM, ALM) moderately explain 53.2% of the variance in OHP. Besides, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is 0.589 for OL, which indicates that 9 latent variables (CSE, NAR, NFA, RPR, ROR, COG, INT, GLM, ALM) moderately explain 58.9% of the variance in OL. According to Hair *et al.* (2011), if the Stone-Gesser's values (Q<sup>2</sup>) is bigger than zero, the exogenous constructs are predictive relevance for the endogenous construct. In this study, Q<sup>2</sup> value is 0.269 for the average cross-validated redundancy of OHP, and 0.305 for OL.

In this study, we use bootstrapping procedure with 1000 replications at the 97.5% confidence intervals. The critical t-values for a two-tailed test are larger than 1.96 and this value is acceptable (significance level = 5%,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Gilani *et al.*, 2016; Hair *et al.*, 2011). Table 4.4 depicts the results of structural model.

**Table 4.4**

*Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Path coefficients (<math>\beta</math>)</b>	<b>T-Values</b>	<b>P-Values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>H1a</b>	CSE $\rightarrow$ OL	-0.012	0.222	0.825	Rejected
<b>H1b</b>	NAR $\rightarrow$ OL	0.023	0.588	0.557	Rejected
<b>H1c</b>	NFA $\rightarrow$ OL	0.153	3.248	0.001	Supported
<b>H1d</b>	RPR $\rightarrow$ OL	0.072	1.959	0.050	Supported
<b>H2a</b>	ROR $\rightarrow$ OL	0.080	1.195	0.232	Rejected
<b>H2b</b>	COG $\rightarrow$ OL	0.239	3.891	0.000	Supported
<b>H2c</b>	INT $\rightarrow$ OL	0.082	1.724	0.085	Rejected

<b>H3a</b>	GLM → OL	0.164	2.913	0.004	Supported
<b>H3b</b>	ALM → OL	0.128	2.576	0.010	Supported
<b>H4a</b>	CSE → OHP	0.245	4.751	0.000	Supported
<b>H4b</b>	NAR → OHP	0.100	1.982	0.048	Supported
<b>H4c</b>	NFA → OHP	-0.011	0.178	0.858	Rejected
<b>H4d</b>	RPR → OHP	0.019	0.392	0.695	Rejected
<b>H5a</b>	ROR → OHP	0.252	3.439	0.001	Supported
<b>H5b</b>	COG → OHP	-0.027	0.398	0.691	Rejected
<b>H5c</b>	INT → OHP	0.043	0.844	0.399	Rejected
<b>H6a</b>	GLM → OHP	-0.112	2.250	0.025	Supported
<b>H6b</b>	ALM → OHP	0.075	1.461	0.144	Rejected
<b>H7</b>	OL → OHP	0.267	3.164	0.002	Supported

Hypothesis 1 is tested and the results show that two factors NFA ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $T = 3.248$ ,  $P = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) and RPR ( $\beta = 0.072$ ,  $T = 1.959$ ,  $P = 0.050 < 0.05$ ) are positively associated with OL at 99% and 95% confidence level. Therefore, hypotheses H1c and H1d are supported. Two factors CSE and NAR are not positively associated with OL and have no significant differences; therefore, hypothesis H1a and H1b are rejected. Hypothesis 2 is tested and the results show that only COG ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $T = 3.891$ ,  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) is positively associated with OL at 99% and confidence level. Therefore, hypothesis H2b is supported. Two factors ROR and INT are not positively associated with OL and have no significant statistics; therefore, hypotheses H2a and H2c are rejected. Hypothesis 3 is tested and the results show that all the path coefficients are statistically significant. GLM ( $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $T = 2.913$ ,  $P = 0.004 < 0.05$ ) and ALM ( $\beta = 0.128$ ,  $T = 2.576$ ,  $P = 0.010 < 0.05$ ) are positively associated with OL at 99% confidence level. Hypotheses H3a and H3b are fully supported.

Hypothesis 4 is tested and the results show that only CSE ( $\beta = 0.245$ ,  $T = 4.751$ ,  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and NAR ( $\beta = 0.100$ ,  $T = 1.982$ ,  $P = 0.048 < 0.05$ ) are positively associated with OHP at 95% and 99% confidence level. Therefore,



hypotheses H4a and H4b are supported. Two factors NFA and RPR are not positively associated with OHP and have no significant statistics; therefore, hypotheses H4c and H4d are rejected. Hypothesis 5 is tested and the results show that only ROR ( $\beta = 0.252$ ,  $T = 3.439$ ,  $P = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) is positively associated with OHP at 99% confidence level. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is supported. Two factors COG and INT are not positively associated with OHP and have no significant statistics; therefore, hypotheses H5b and H5c are rejected. Hypothesis 6 is tested and the results show that only GLM ( $\beta = -0.112$ ,  $T = 2.250$ ,  $P = 0.025 < 0.05$ ) is negatively associated with OHP at 97.5% confidence level. Therefore, hypothesis H6a is supported. The factor ALM is not significantly associated with OHP; therefore, hypothesis H6b is rejected.

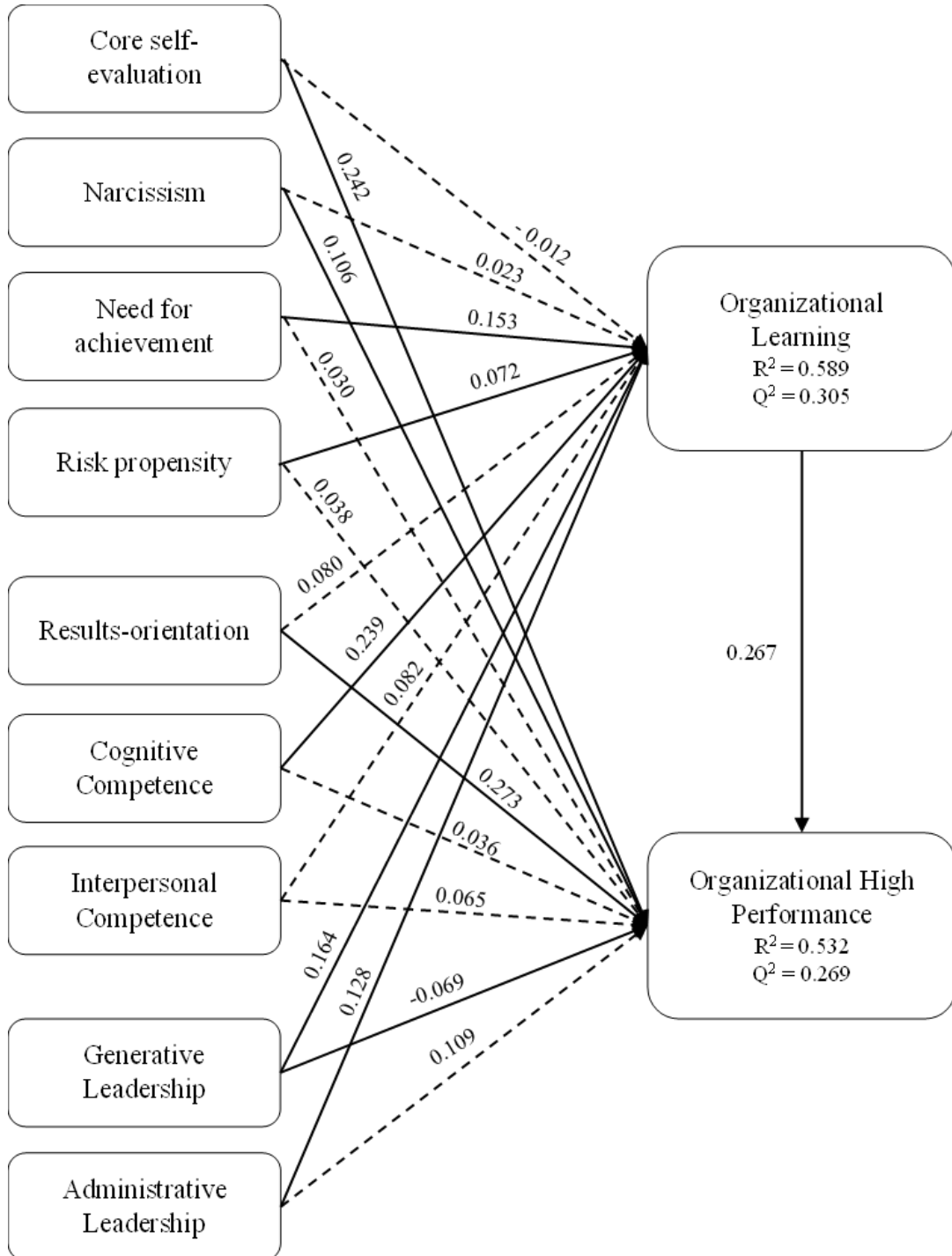
Hypothesis 7 is tested and the results show that the path coefficient is statistically significant. OL ( $\beta = 0.267$ ,  $T = 3.164$ ,  $P = 0.002 < 0.05$ ) is positively associated with OHP at 99% confidence level. Therefore, hypothesis H7 is fully supported.

Hypothesis 8 is tested and the results show that OL mediates the relationship between NFA and OHP ( $\beta = 0.041$ ,  $T = 2.234$ ,  $P = 0.026 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis H8c is supported. There is no statistically significant indirect relationship between CSE, NAR, RPR and OHP through the mediation of OL. Therefore, hypotheses H8a, H8b, and H8c are rejected. Hypothesis 9 is tested and the results show that OL mediates the relationship between COG and OHP ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $T = 2.327$ ,  $P = 0.020 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis H9b is supported. There is no statistically significant indirect relationship between ROR, INT and OHP through the mediation of OL. Therefore, hypotheses H9a and H9c are rejected. Hypothesis 10 is tested and the results show that OL mediates the relationship between GLM and OHP ( $\beta = 0.044$ ,  $T = 2.409$ ,  $P = 0.016 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis H10a is supported. There is no statistically significant indirect relationship between ALM and OHP through the mediation of OL. Therefore, hypothesis H10b is rejected.

The results for the direct effects of the structural model are shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1**

*Path Coefficients of The Structural Equation*



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

The examination of the ten hypotheses has brought forward several key issues. First, the results partially confirm the significant effects of different leadership traits, competencies, and behaviors on organizational learning. Out of the four leadership traits and four competencies, only need for achievement (*H1c*), risk propensity (*H1d*), and cognitive competence (*H2b*) exert significant positive effects on organizational learning; therefore, offering further evidence for previous studies (Lowell, 1952; Onađ *et al.*, 2014; Jain and Jeppe Jeppesen, 2013). On the contrary, core self-evaluation (*H1a*), narcissism (*H1b*), results orientation (*H2a*), and interpersonal competence (*H2c*) do not have significant direct effects on organizational learning. These results contrasting the conclusions drawn by earlier research which supported the presumed relationships (Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Siswanti *et al.*, 2018; Bettis-Outland and Guillory, 2018). One plausible reason could be that leaders who score high in these domains tend to be overconfident in every dimension of their work and just focus on building relationships, which, in turn, leads them to satisfy with the status quo and underestimate learning initiatives. Besides, although earlier studies have tangentially implied that generative and administrative leadership relates to knowledge acquisition (Hazy and Prottas, 2018; Džinić, 2015), our study is an early attempt to understand how these leadership behaviors help organizations achieve better organizational learning using the lens of the complexity leadership theory (*H3a*, *H3b*). The explanation for this finding can be due to strong Confucianism culture in Vietnam, which encourages learning and sees it as a tool to help people explore their instinctive potentials and achieve higher performance (Viengkham *et al.*, 2018).

Second, the results offer insightful discussion on how the leaders' traits, competencies, and behaviors affect high organizational performance. The results of this study support our contention that leaders' core self-evaluation (*H4a*), narcissism (*H4b*), and results-orientation (*H5a*) are important antecedents to firms' superior performance. This finding is consistent with earlier literature in the fields (Simsek *et al.*, 2010; Kim, 2018; Dulewicz, 2018). Some hypotheses (*H4c*, *H4d*, *H5b* and *H5c*)

are not supported by the data although earlier works have helped in proposing these associations (Lee and Tsang, 2001; Cain and McKeon, 2012; Almatrooshi *et al.*, 2016). It appears that within the context of this research leaders who have high levels of need for achievement, risk propensity, cognitive competence, and interpersonal skills do not contribute to the performance of their organizations. This, in turn, provides new insights toward the extension of existing theoretical relationships and adds to the current debates from similarly published studies. Furthermore, previous studies have identified generative and administrative leadership as the behaviors related to firm performance (Nienaber and Svensson, 2013; Hazy and Uhl-Bien, 2015; Hazy and Prottas, 2018). In our study, the results are opposite to what earlier studies have discussed since generative leadership (*H6a*) was found to negatively relate to organizational performance and administrative leadership (*H6b*) was found to have no connection with high organizational performance. It seems that leaders within the context of this research rely on much on their personalities and competencies rather than their behaviors to lead their firms towards superior performance. Besides, tourism leaders perceived that the application of new ideas and forgiveness of mistakes could create problems in the performance of their organizations. This finding therefore reflects the contemporary nature of tourism sector, which requires accuracy and consistency in daily operation and delivery of services (Solakis *et al.*, 2022). These findings open doors for future researchers to investigate how such leadership behaviors could be applied to foster high organizational performance and calls for using complexity leadership theory to better explain for leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes.

Third, although the leadership-related findings of this research are consistent with earlier studies, our work extends previous literature by investigating the role of organizational learning. The findings show a significant relationship between the organizational learning and the high organizational performance, which is consistent with previous studies (Yuliansyah *et al.*, 2021; Soomro *et al.*, 2021; God *et al.*, 2012). As evidenced by the results, organizational learning acts as a prerequisite for high organizational performance of tourism firms in Vietnam, which contributes to tourism

literature and supports the contention that these Western-developed phenomena can be applied in the context of developing economies in Asia.

Finally, results for mediating role of organizational learning represent that this factor is believed to mediate the impact need for achievement (*H8c*), cognitive competence (*H9b*), and generative leadership (*H10a*) have on high organizational performance. The findings confirm that the resource-based view theory and knowledge-based view concept can be used to examine and validate the relationship between these domains in the tourism industry. More precisely, this study concurs with earlier works proposing that organizational learning is a crucial mediator in firm's superior performance (Sayyadi, 2019; García-Morales *et al.*, 2008). The results also extend the previous findings by reporting how organizational learning mediates the relationship between leaders' traits, competencies, behaviors, and firm performance, in the context of tourism firms in Vietnam - a developing country in Asia. Furthermore, this study provides one of the first mediation investigations of the theory that organizational learning is important in high organizational performance to derive the best results from leaders with need for achievement, cognitive competence, and generative leadership behaviors.

## **5.2. Research Implications**

### ***5.2.1 Implications for theory***

This study has several theoretical contributions. First, existing studies on leadership and organizational outcomes seem to fit the metaphor of “the blind men and the elephant” with each research merely touching on a single leadership theory. Our study extends leadership literature by combining traits, competencies, and complexity leadership theories and demonstrating that leaders' characteristics and behaviors not only influence organizational learning, but also high organizational performance. Besides, despite decades of research and thousands of publications on leadership, the field has not yet arrived at a definitive knowledge about a comprehensive leadership profile of leaders in organizations. We hope that the findings in this study contribute

another small piece to this large puzzle and provide a glimpse into the “black box” of leadership effectiveness.

Second, by integrating the concepts of leadership, organizational learning, and high organizational performance, this study develops an overarching and unique conceptual indicating the mediating role of organizational learning. In this regard, previous studies were looking at the relationship between leadership and organizational learning, organizational learning and high organizational performance, leadership and high organizational performance. Contrariwise, this study presents a combined and more comprehensive theoretical framework which examines how each variable affects one another.

Third, the current study contributes to the existent knowledge through its highlights on the role of organizational learning in stimulating high organizational performance and in positively mediating the relationship between leadership and high organizational performance. Furthermore, the present study presents an analysis of these domains in the context of tourism firms in Vietnam. Previous literature on the same concepts has focused on Western countries and well-developed knowledge economies (Amedu and Dulewicz, 2018; Zgrzywa-Ziemak and Walecka-Jankowska, 2021; Soomro *et al.*, 2021; Sayyadi, 2019; Matošková *et al.*, 2018), and thus, neglected developing countries and transitioning economies such as Vietnam. The findings into how tourism firms in Vietnam foster high organizational performance through leadership and organizational learning represent a first step to establishing comparisons between regions and industries, which are potential research areas in the future.

### ***5.2.2 Implications for practice***

The current study makes several practical contributions. First, the results from this study can be used by practitioners, business owners, and human resources managers engaged in the field of recruitment and leadership development. In particular, the findings revealed two potential clusters of personality traits and competencies including: (1) need for achievement, risk propensity, and cognitive competence that

are significantly related to organizational learning, and (2) core self-evaluation, narcissism, and result-orientation that are significantly related to high organizational performance. These are personalities and competencies that leaders bring with them to work so that they can foster organizational learning and superior firm performance. Human resources managers can use these clusters of personality traits and competencies as a reference in selecting and training senior executives or potential leaders. The description of these traits can also be used in a survey as a pre-hiring or preliminary assessment to identify the presence of effective leadership personalities among potential applicants. Furthermore, human resource department in tourism firms should develop comprehensive training programs for their leaders to acquire and develop a skillset including cognitive and results orientation competences.

Second, the results suggest that both generative and administrative leadership behaviors are important for leaders to foster organizational learning. Ideally, leaders in tourism firms should be able to demonstrate both leadership behaviors since such behavioral flexibility is essential for leadership effectiveness. In tourism firms, if a leader is inclined toward only generative leadership behavior, another leader should focus on administrative leadership behavior to ensure effective implementation of organizational learning. In this regard, business owners and human resource department should nurture a working environment that values and rewards such behaviors. Added to this, tourism firms can train their leaders and managerial employees and encouraging them to exhibit complexity leadership behaviors through development programs combined with mentoring practices and a culture that reinforces such behaviors. For example, administrative leaders are trained to set specific goals, evaluation criteria, and expected deliverables at work. They also need to learn some influencing tactics that can be used in empowering employees to invest more time and energy to work. On the other hand, generative leaders will support and provide necessary resources for field trips and experiential learning programs, as well as the implementation of innovative ideas at work. Moreover, further training programs could be provided to help leaders be aware of the external environment and flexibly adjust their leadership behaviors (generative, administrative, or the

combination of the two behaviors) to better fit changing contingencies and the prevailing environment faced by their organizations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third, organizations cannot solely rely on leaders to foster high organizational performance; therefore, other factors such as organizational learning must be in place. Business owners can work with human resource department to develop an organizational learning department within their firms. This department is responsible for collecting, assembling, and distributing employees' suggestions and new approaches on work performance so that these ideas are heard and considered for implementation continuously. Tourism firms can also assign this department to identify and implement necessary techniques and facilities to acquire and transfer knowledge (e.g., field trips, workshops, conferences, best practices sharing sessions, etc.) among different fields of activities. Moreover, the organizational learning department needs to strengthen communication and collaboration between departments in the organization and between the organization and its external partners so that they are integrated towards learning. The outcomes of organizational learning, for example, internal knowledge resources and databases, should be stored and kept up to date for future use. Added to this, in the current turbulent and uncertain environment during COVID-19 pandemic, business owners and managerial executives must also identify optimal strategies to successfully cultivate a favorable learning environment and foster a shared culture between organizational members. For example, leaders in tourism firms should focus efforts on initiatives that can result in the creation new knowledge (e.g., research and development activities, creative solutions competition, annual innovative ideas rewards) and in activities dedicated to disseminating and utilizing knowledge (e.g., application of new technologies in learning, group projects, meetings, etc.). Contents and criteria related to knowledge creation, sharing, application and storage should be included in the annual review and annual performance appraisal as act as a requirement for recognitions, rewards, and promotions.



### **5.3. Conclusion, limitations, and areas for future research**

This study aims to examine how leadership, organizational learning, and high organizational performance affect one another. The research findings offer evidence that traits, competencies, and complexity leadership behaviors of leaders could influence organizational learning and high organizational performance. Besides, the mediating role of organizational learning enriches the content of resource-based view and knowledge-based view theories by revealing one of the mechanisms through which leadership affects high organizational performance. Finally, this study provides some culture-specific insights about leadership in a developing country and recommends some avenues for further investigation of the relationship between leadership and organizational outcomes.

This study has several limitations. The first limitation is the use of a subjective measure for high organizational performance. Though this approach is not ideal, this is one of the most pragmatic constraints in doing research in Vietnam now due to the lack of valid and reliable sources of performance data for the variety of firms in our sample. Added to this, the leaders participating in this study might exhibit a self-serving bias and thus reducing the variance in performance across the tourism organizations. Future studies are encouraged to include other performance indicators to evaluate the leadership approaches and influences of leaders, for example, assessments from employees, customers, and the community. Last but not least, our research was conducted in a context where leaders seem to have great latitude for discretion due to cultural aspects. Future studies could explore the moderating or mediating effects of culture on the relationship between leadership and organizational outcomes.

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