Received: 15 January 2026 | *Revised: 07 April 2026* | *Accepted: 19 April 2026*
https://doi.org/10.32038/JBSO.2026.15.01

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BEHAVIOR STUDIES IN ORGANIZATIONS

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Charismatic Leadership and Perceived Team Innovative Behavior in SMEs: The Mediating Role of Employees' Self-Concept

Petra Cajnko[1,2]*, Iztok Podbregar[1]

[1]Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor, Slovenia
[2]Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Maribor, Slovenia

***Correspondence:** petra.cajnko@um.si*

ABSTRACT

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), innovation plays an important role in remaining competitive as business conditions change. While previous research has linked leadership to innovative behavior, less is known about the psychological processes underlying this relationship. This study investigates how charismatic leadership relates to perceived team innovative behavior in Turkish SMEs, with particular attention to the possible mediating role of employees' self-concept. We used a quantitative, cross-sectional design and administered an online questionnaire to employees of SMEs in Mersin, Turkey. After data screening, 250 valid responses were used to evaluate the measurement and structural models using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS.Charismatic leadership was positively associated with perceived team innovative behavior and employees' self-concept. Employees' self-concept was also positively associated with perceived team innovative behavior. The estimated indirect effect of charismatic leadership on perceived team innovative behavior through employees' self-concept was positive but small. The percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval did not support statistical significance. The findings indicate positive associations among charismatic leadership, employees' self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior in Turkish SMEs. These findings suggest that leadership and employees' perceptions of themselves are relevant to innovation-related behavior, although further research using longitudinal data and improved measurement models is needed.

Keywords:
Charismatic Leadership, Perceived Team Innovative Behavior, SMEs; Self-Concept, PLS-SEM; Turkey

M12, M54, O31

How to cite this article:
Cajnko, P., & Podbregar, I. (2026). Charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior in SMEs: The mediating role of employees' self-concept. *International Journal of Behavior Studies in Organizations, 15,* 1-21. https://doi.org/10.32038/jbso.2026.15.01

This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.
Copyright: © 2026 The Author(s). International Journal of Behavior Studies in Organizations published by EUROKD

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in global economic growth through distinct advantages such as market insight, adaptability, and flexibility (Varga, 2021). These advantages also enable them to perceive market dynamics and environmental changes more quickly, which is important for SMEs' resilience and competitiveness (Gunasekaran et al., 2011; Popadić et el., 2022). SME owners typically have considerable autonomy because of their simple organizational structure. These enterprises functionally operate as a single team whose success depends on overall team performance. Within such teams, owner's leadership style plays a vital role in promote innovation and change, improving a firm's ability to sustain growth (Dong, 2024). They affect how the team perceives environmental shifts, adapts to them, and how the leader guides the team through these transitions. This process helps members perceive and interpret their task environment with greater awareness and reduces interpersonal differences in expectations and perceptions about environmental change (Thommes et al., 2024). However, the core advantage of these small organizations depends heavily on their capacity for innovation and understanding of environmental changes, and their relative flexibility compared to large enterprises facilitates their growth and survival (Dong, 2024; Sen et al., 2023). Yet, despite recognizing this advantage, many SMEs leaders struggle to efficiently sustain their team innovative performance, and face numerous challenges regarding their survival.

The failure of SMEs to achieve sustained innovative performance can be attributed to numerous factors. From an intra-organizational perspective, the performance of these team-based units stems from the team leader and the team members, who are directly responsible for executing innovative performance. The leader's behavior and leadership style help individuals translate perceived environmental changes into successful innovative outcomes. Some leaders direct managerial attention and capital toward manufacturing and market exploitation (Levitt & March, 1988), where the firm refines obsolete capabilities and fails to invest in exploration (He & Wong, 2004), whereas in SMEs, outputs rely on employees' contextual ambidexterity. Leadership provides vision, ideas, and motivation to achieve success by shaping and managing norms and supporting creativity and innovation toward innovative performance. Guided by the leader's behavior, team members develop trust, engage in creative initiatives without fear of the consequences of risk-taking, and openly share both positive and critical feedback within the team (Dong, 2024; Thommes et al., 2024). Nevertheless, despite this recognized impact, differences among teams' innovation behaviors persist. Not all teams reach an acceptable level of innovative behavior at the same rate or scale (Srholec & Verspagen, 2012). Within organizational context, leadership, and support conditions, these variations result from individual team member characteristics and performance (Aslam, 2025; Li & Griffin, 2023; Shaik et al., 2023). These individual traits serve as inputs brought into the organization, directly influencing the organizational policies transition to the ultimate performance. Existing literature has predominantly focused on input traits such as personality, self-efficacy, and similar constructs. However, in team-based activities, individual traits that facilitate communication, self-awareness, and the accurate perception of others become paramount (Ficapal-Cusi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023). These psychological characteristics indicate the extent to which an individual can function as an effective, innovative member to enhance team performance. Therefore, members must communicate effectively with peers and maintain a sound self-understanding within the team setting (Jin & Peng, 2024).

Unlike many studies that analyze team innovation at the organizational level, direct interaction between leaders and subordinates in SMEs underscores the importance of the individual level of analysis for accurately understanding the innovation process within teams (Knezović & Drkić, 2021). Consequently, members' psychological characteristics and their perceptions of self and others can significantly account for performance differentials across these units. An individual's self-concept, comprising individual, relational, and collective self-aspects, can provide a more comprehensive explanation of the individual's role in team innovative performance (Hoang et al., 2021; Knezović & Drkić, 2021; Li, 2018). A thorough understanding of self-concept within the context of team performance can help reduce challenges related to how members perceive team dynamics, strengthen effective communication, and enhance alignment with the team's overarching goals (Dierdorff et al., 2019; Ren & Shen, 2024).

Despite extensive research on leadership and innovation, the psychological mechanisms linking charismatic leadership to innovative behavior—as well as the role of individual psychological characteristics, such as self-concept—remain insufficiently explored, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Most existing studies have examined either direct relationships between leadership and innovation or individual psychological constructs, such as "creative self-efficacy." In contrast, less attention has been paid to the individual's self-concept—viewed as a potential mediating construct and a psychological asset that an individual brings to an organization or work team—within the context of the relationship between charismatic leadership and innovation. Investigating this relationship may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how employees' psychological self-definition is associated with their responses to leadership and their perceptions of team innovation, regardless of whether the hypothesized indirect effect receives empirical support.

This study makes three main contributions. First, it extends the literature on charismatic leadership and innovation by empirically evaluating employees' self-concept as a potential psychological pathway underlying the relationship between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior, without presupposing support for the proposed mediation. Second, it integrates the individual, relational, and collective dimensions of self-concept within a single explanatory framework, thereby examining the relevance of multidimensional self-definition for innovation-related perceptions. Third, by examining employees of SMEs in Mersin, Turkey, the study provides empirical evidence from a specific national and organizational context and contributes to a broader understanding of the associations between leadership-related characteristics, employees' self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior in SMEs in the Turkish SME context, which can therefore contribute context-specific evidence to the broader literature on leadership and innovation.

Review of Literature

Charismatic Leadership and Team Innovative Behavior

Team innovative behavior refers to the collective generation, promotion, and implementation of new and useful ideas within a work team (Widmann & Mulder, 2018). However, unlike individual creative behavior, team innovation encompasses collaborative processes through which ideas are proposed, evaluated, developed, and implemented (Anderson et al., 2014). Team innovative behavior can be examined through employees' individual perceptions of

innovation-related activities within their teams. Accordingly, the term "*perceived team innovative behavior*" is used to distinguish these individual-level assessments from innovation outcomes measured at the team level (the macro level). This distinction is particularly significant in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where resource constraints may lead to a greater reliance on knowledge sharing, collaboration, and collective problem-solving among employees (De Massis et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2025).

The organizational characteristics of SMEs may create both opportunities and challenges for innovation. Because of their relatively small scale, these firms must focus on the advantages of flexibility and distinctive forms of innovation. They use flexible structures, shorter communication channels, and less formalized decision-making processes to facilitate knowledge exchange and implement new ideas (Agruña Barrón et al., 2025). At the same time, restricted access to finance, technology, and qualified personnel can make innovation difficult to maintain over time (De Massis et al., 2018). Leadership is relevant in this setting because managers help establish priorities, interpret business challenges, and coordinate employees' efforts (Musaigwa, 2023). The way leaders communicate expectations, involve employees in decisions, and respond to suggestions may be associated with the extent to which employees perceive their teams as engaging in innovative activities (Jun & Lee, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

Among leadership styles, charismatic leadership provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding and supporting innovation processes. According to the behavioral model proposed by Conger and Kanungo, charismatic leadership entails having a strategic vision and the ability to articulate it, accepting personal risk, demonstrating sensitivity to the environment, attending to followers' needs, and engaging in unconventional behaviors (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998, 2016). These characteristics can help charismatic leaders communicate organizational goals meaningfully, share emerging opportunities they identify, and encourage staff to explore alternative approaches to established practices. In small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—where organizational adaptability and effective use of limited resources are vital for survival—such leadership behaviors may increase team-based employee involvement in innovative activities (De Massis et al., 2018).

A key aspect of charismatic leadership is how leaders communicate organizational direction. When employees understand why change is necessary and how their work contributes to future objectives, they may find it easier to recognize the value of proposing and developing new ideas. A clear shared vision can help team members understand the relevance of generating, developing, and implementing new ideas in relation to broader organizational objectives. This may be particularly useful in smaller enterprises, where shorter decision-making processes and relatively direct communication can support coordination between managers and employees (Magistretti et al., 2020). From this perspective, charismatic leaders may be associated with innovation not only because they identify opportunities, but also because employees are willing to engage in collective efforts toward organizational change (Paulsen et al., 2009).

The relationship between charismatic leadership and innovation can also be understood through interpersonal and psychological processes. Innovative activities often entail uncertainty, experimentation, and the possibility of failure. Consequently, employees may hesitate to propose unconventional ideas for fear of criticism, rejection, or negative repercussions in their jobs. Therefore, leaders who are sensitive to their employees' needs, trust

in their capabilities, and embrace calculated risks foster an organizational environment characterized by trust and perceived support (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Le Blanc et al., 2021). Such conditions may be associated with employees' greater willingness to express new ideas, discuss alternative solutions, and participate in innovation-related activities. Therefore, employees become more involved in the innovation process.

These interpersonal processes are particularly important in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where frequent interactions between leaders and employees make leadership behaviors more visible, and close working relationships can foster mutual trust and enhance communication (Psychogios & Garev, 2012). Furthermore, a leader's supportive behaviors build an environment that encourages experimentation, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas (Hirst et al., 2009; Imran et al., 2025; Jin & Peng, 2024). However, these relationships should not be taken as evidence that charismatic leadership necessarily leads to the development of trust or innovative behaviors. Rather, existing theoretical and empirical research suggests that such leadership characteristics may be positively associated with employees' perceptions of a team environment that supports innovation.

Another characteristic associated with charismatic leadership is the tendency to challenge established routines and exhibit unconventional behaviors. Charismatic leaders question traditional approaches and advocate for alternative solutions. This approach may convey the message that experimentation and constructive deviation from established organizational procedures are acceptable. Such behavior may be linked to employees' willingness to re-examine existing work processes, exchange diverse perspectives, and collaborate beyond the scope of their strictly defined duties (Cruz-Páez, 2025). These processes are particularly relevant for SMEs, where knowledge sharing and collaborative problem-solving may help organizations address resource limitations and respond to emerging business opportunities (McAdam et al., 2014).

In general, theoretical arguments suggest that charismatic leadership may have a positive relationship with perceived innovative behavior within a team through several complementary processes; including presenting a compelling vision, identifying environmental opportunities, providing interpersonal support, encouraging calculated risk-taking, and remaining open to unconventional approaches. These leadership characteristics may be particularly significant in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where effective collaboration and the utilization of employee knowledge play a key role in innovation (Le Blanc et al., 2021; Paulsen et al., 2009). Accordingly, one of the objectives of the present study is to examine whether employees who perceive higher levels of charismatic leadership; within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); report higher levels of innovative behavior within their teams.

Therefore, the first hypothesis can be stated as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Charismatic leadership is positively associated with employees' perceptions of team innovative behavior in SMEs.

Charismatic Leadership, Self-Concept, and Team Innovative Behavior

Although examining the impact of leadership style on innovative behavior provides a structural understanding of how charismatic leadership fosters innovation, the psychological mechanisms underlying this effect warrant deeper investigation Conger and Kanungo's (1987, 1998)

behavioral framework explains charismatic leadership through leaders' vision, sensitivity to environmental conditions and followers' needs, personal risk-taking, and unconventional behavior. A self-concept-based perspective complements this framework by explaining how leadership may be associated with employees' self-definition, motivation, and responses to organizational objectives (Paul et al., 2001; Shamir, 1991). From this perspective, charismatic leadership may be related to innovative behavior not only through perceived leadership behaviors but also through employees' perceptions of themselves, their interpersonal relationships, and their identity and belonging in the broader team or organization.

In this context team members' self-concept of team members can serve as a vital mediating factor between a leader's charismatic behaviors and the team's innovative outcomes. Innovation entails uncertainty, trial and error, and the risk of failure. Employees who propose new ideas or challenge established routines may expose themselves to criticism, rejection, or professional risks (Globocnik, 2019). Consequently, an individual's willingness to engage in innovation-related activities may be linked to how they perceive their own capabilities, their relationships with colleagues, and their responsibilities toward the team. By influencing interpersonal interactions, organizational norms, and employees' understanding of shared goals, leadership can shape the organizational conditions within which such perceptions and interpretations emerge (Gerlach et al., 2020; Rosing et al., 2011). As a result, factors related to confidence, security, and identity are recognized as critical facilitators of innovation, and those with high self-esteem feel less threatened by the prospect of having their ideas rejected (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Similarly, a cohesive and elevated collective identity provides the psychological safety and shared purpose that enables the collaborative development of ideas (Hirst et al., 2009).

Charismatic leadership may relate to these dimensions of the self-concept through several complementary processes. First, the presentation of a strategic, opportunity-oriented vision by a leader exerts a profound impact on the identity of followers. By framing the goals of a small or medium-sized enterprise; not merely as an endeavor for financial survival, but as a meaningful pursuit of innovative solutions; a charismatic leader aligns the intrinsic values of followers with the organization's mission (Hansen et al., 2020; Howell & Shamir, 2018). Such a leader inspires individuals to see themselves not merely as subordinates, but as partners in the company's destiny; consequently, they feel responsible for achieving these goals and actively participate in their realization. This alignment increases the intrinsic value of the effort; followers no longer see themselves merely as task executors, but as indispensable contributors to an important, overarching purpose. According to Shamir et al. (1993), charismatic leadership affects employee motivation more through employees' self-concept than through rational calculation, and it increases the dominance of collective identity within that self-concept. This shift from a utility-maximizing identity to a purpose-driven identity is the first step in self-concept elevation (Paul et al., 2001; Shamir et al., 1993).

Second, the leader's sensitivity to members' needs plays a direct role in strengthening creative self-efficacy, that is, the individual's belief in their own ability to achieve creative outcomes (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). Charismatic leaders, through individualized support, active listening, and developmental coaching, engage in what Bandura (1977) termed "verbal persuasion." By expressing confidence in followers' creative capacity and providing a safe environment, leaders give employees the sense that they can speak freely without fear of

punishment, thereby enhancing individuals' sense of worth and their confidence in their innovative abilities. Numerous studies on team creative behavior and team innovation show that team identity helps individuals develop a strong sense of belonging to the team and, to some extent, display more innovation-related behaviors (Litchfield et al., 2018).

Third, charismatic leadership may be associated with collective self-concept through the emphasis placed on shared objectives, collective capabilities, and organizational identity. Leaders who communicate a common vision, demonstrate commitment to organizational goals, and support unconventional approaches may encourage employees to perceive innovation as part of their team's collective purpose (Hansen et al., 2020; Howell & Shamir, 2018). Employees who identify strongly with their team may place greater importance on shared achievements and become more willing to exchange knowledge, coordinate activities, and contribute to developing new solutions (Choi, 2006; Globocnik, 2019). Collective self-concept may therefore represent a relevant potential psychological associate leadership with employees' perceptions of team innovative behavior.

The relationship between self-concept and perceived team innovative behavior can be understood through the complementary relevance of these three levels of self-definition. Individual self-concept may be associated with employees' willingness to contribute knowledge, demonstrate initiative, and participate in problem-solving activities. Relational self-concept may be associated with the importance employees attach to cooperation, interpersonal support, and constructive communication. Collective self-concept may be associated with commitment to shared objectives and participation in activities that benefit the team as a whole. Together, these dimensions provide a conceptual basis for understanding why employees' self-concept may be positively associated with their perceptions of innovation-related activities within their teams (Zeng & Zu, 2020). These psychological processes may be particularly relevant in SMEs, where relatively direct communication and frequent interactions between leaders and employees can increase the visibility of leadership practices. Such organizational conditions may provide opportunities for leaders' vision, interpersonal sensitivity, and behavioral example to become associated with employees' perceptions of their roles and relationships (Paul et al., 2001; Ren & Shen, 2024). Moreover, resource constraints may increase the importance of psychological and relational resources, including employee identification, commitment, and cooperation, for supporting innovation-related activities (Selivanovskikh, 2023; Takeed et al., 2025).

Previous research has examined associations between leadership and innovation-related outcomes (Hirst et al., 2009) and has provided theoretical and empirical support for the relevance of followers' self-related perceptions in charismatic leadership processes (Paul et al., 2001; Shamir, 1991). Nevertheless, the integrated relationship among charismatic leadership, multidimensional self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior remains comparatively underexplored in SMEs. Examining self-concept as a potential mediator may therefore provide additional insight into whether a statistical indirect association is consistent with the proposed theoretical explanation linking charismatic leadership and employees' perceptions of innovation within their teams.

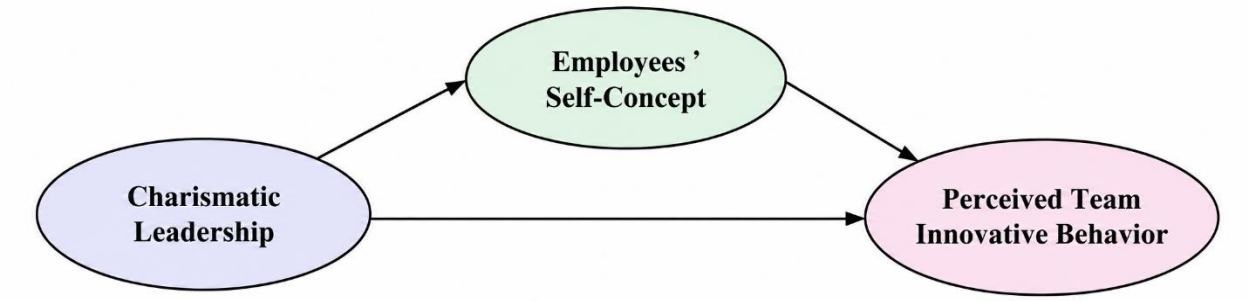
Based on these theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Employees' self-concept statistically mediates the positive association between charismatic leadership and employees' perceptions of team innovative behavior in SMEs.

The hypothesized relationships among the study constructs are presented in Figure 1. The conceptual model includes a direct association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior (H1), together with a proposed indirect association through employees' self-concept (H2).

Figure 1

Conceptual model of the hypothesized relationships among charismatic leadership, employees' self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior



Note. The model illustrates the hypothesized direct association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior (H1) and the proposed indirect association through employees' self-concept (H2). The arrows represent theoretical hypotheses and should not be interpreted as evidence of causal effects.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The research was conducted using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey of employees working in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Mersin, Turkey, between July and December 2024 within a research project carried out in Turkey. To control for the effects of business context and the necessity for innovation, a diverse range of companies across various sectors was approached to mitigate potential supply chain pressures within any single industry, particularly during the study period. Because the original scales were in English, a rigorous forward-backward translation procedure was employed to translate the instrument into Turkish, ensuring semantic equivalence and cultural appropriateness. All items were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

A total of 613 employees from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Mersin were randomly selected from a business directory and contacted to participate in the study. Of these, 512 individuals responded to the questions; however, 342 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete information. Ultimately, 250 questionnaires were used in the final analysis.

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire administered in English. The questionnaire was designed to assess employees' perceptions of charismatic leadership, their individual, relational, and collective self-concept, and innovation-related activities within their work teams.

The final sample consisted of 173 male respondents (69.2%) and 77 female respondents (30.8%). Most respondents were married (80.4%), and the largest age group was between 45

and 55 years. Regarding educational attainment, 56% held a bachelor's degree, 23% held a master's degree, 15% held a doctoral degree, and 6% had completed secondary education or a lower level of formal education.

Measures

The questionnaire included established measurement instruments for charismatic leadership, employees' self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior. All constructs were assessed using multi-item scales, with higher scores representing higher levels of the respective measured characteristics. The evaluation considered indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, subject to the availability of the corresponding statistical outputs.

Charismatic Leadership. Charismatic leadership was assessed using the 20-item Conger–Kanungo Scale of Charismatic Leadership developed by Conger and Kanungo (1998). The instrument encompasses five dimensions: Strategic Vision and Articulation (SVA), Personal Risk (PR), Sensitivity to the Environment (SE), Sensitivity to Member Needs (SMN), and Unconventional Behavior (UB). Representative items include “Provides inspiring strategic and organizational goals,” “Takes high personal risks for the sake of the organization,” and “Readily recognizes new environmental opportunities.”

Self-Concept. Self-concept was measured with the Levels of Self-Concept Scale (LSCS) a 15-item scale adapted from Johnson and Chang (2006). The LSCS contains multiple subscales to assess each of the three levels of self-concept. Individual self-concept concerns self-definition through personal distinctiveness, individual abilities, and achievements. The representative items for individual, relational and collective self-concept are “I feel best about myself when I perform better than others”; “My relationships with my coworkers are a major part of who I am”; and “When I become involved in a group project, I do my best to ensure its success” respectively.

Perceived Team Innovative Behavior. Perceived team innovative behavior was measured using a three-item scale adapted from González-Romá et al. (2009). The instrument assesses employees’ perceptions of their team’s collective tendency to generate, introduce, and apply new ideas, processes, or products. A sample item is “In my team, we often try out new ideas and methods.” Because responses were collected and analyzed at the individual level, the construct was operationalized as perceived team innovative behavior rather than as an aggregated team-level measure. This distinction ensures consistency between the measurement approach, the statistical analysis, and the interpretation of the findings.

Results

Measurement Model

To evaluate the measurement model; comprising three constructs: charismatic leadership, employee self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior; the 250 final questionnaires were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach in SmartPLS 3.2 software. By using PLS-SEM, the results are not affected by a small sample size (Hair et al., 2017). The bootstrapping procedure (n = 5000 resamples) has been used to estimate the model. Fornell and Larcker and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio methods were used to assess the discriminant validity. The evaluation of this model included an assessment of factor loadings (indicators), internal consistency reliability, convergent validity,

and discriminant validity. Items with factor loadings below 0.3 were excluded from the analysis. Consequently, three items from the charismatic leadership scale were removed from the estimated measurement model. Fifteen indicators for employees' self-concept and three indicators for perceived innovative behavior at the team level (all with factor loadings exceeding 0.3) were included in the model. Thus, the charismatic leadership model comprises fewer indicators than the original 20-item instrument described in the methodology section; specifically, items CHL10, CHL18, and CHL19 were excluded from the final measurement model.

The standardized outer loadings ranged from .447 to .757 for charismatic leadership, from .344 to .721 for employees' self-concept, and from .756 to .864 for perceived team innovative behavior. Several indicators of charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept fell below the commonly recommended loading threshold of .708, suggesting that some indicators explained relatively limited variance in their respective constructs. Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α), rho_A, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Measurement Model

Construct	Indicators	α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Charismatic Leadership	17	.90	.91	.92	.40
Employees' Self-Concept	15	.84	.86	.87	.32
Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	3	.72	.73	.84	.64

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .72 to .90, while composite reliability values ranged from .84 to .92, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability across all three constructs. However, convergent validity was not fully established. The AVE values for charismatic leadership (.40) and employees' self-concept (.32) were below the recommended threshold of .50, whereas perceived team innovative behavior demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity (AVE = .64).

Inspection of the outer loadings revealed several comparatively weak indicators within charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept. Nevertheless, the final measurement specification was retained without further post hoc indicator deletion in order to preserve the theoretical content represented by the included indicators. Accordingly, the structural model results are interpreted with caution, particularly regarding the convergent validity limitations of these two constructs.

Discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the available cross-loading results. Table 2 presents the square roots of AVE on the diagonal and the correlations among the latent constructs below the diagonal.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	1	2	3
1. Charismatic Leadership	**.63**		
2. Employees' Self-Concept	.18	**.57**	
3. Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	.38	.22	**.80**

Note. Diagonal values in bold represent the square roots of AVE. Off-diagonal values represent correlations between the latent constructs.

For each construct, the square root of AVE exceeded its correlations with the other constructs, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Discriminant validity was additionally evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of .85, providing further support for discriminant validity based on the reported point estimates. The HTMT results are presented in Table 3. Although these findings support the empirical distinctiveness of the constructs, they do not eliminate the convergent validity limitations identified for charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept.

Table 3
Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	1	2	3
1. Charismatic Leadership	—		
2. Employees' Self-Concept	.22	—	
3. Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	.46	.26	—

Note. HTMT = heterotrait–monotrait ratio. All reported values were below the conservative threshold of .85.

Taken together, the measurement model results indicate satisfactory internal consistency reliability and support for discriminant validity based on the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT point estimates. However, convergent validity remained insufficient for charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept. The retained measurement specification was used consistently throughout the structural model analysis. Consequently, the structural relationships should be interpreted in light of these measurement limitations, and the findings should be considered provisional pending further validation of the constructs.

Common method bias was also considered because all constructs were assessed through self-reported questionnaire responses. The earlier analysis reported three factors in Harman's single-factor test, with the first factor explaining 24.39% of the total variance. Although this result did not indicate that a single factor accounted for most of the variance, Harman's test cannot establish the absence of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics were calculated from the responses of the 250 participants using the mean scores of the available indicators for each construct. Pearson correlations were calculated between these observed composite scores. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Constructs

Construct	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Charismatic Leadership	3.46	.63	—		
2. Employees' Self-Concept	4.08	.45	.17	—	
3. Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	3.87	.69	.37	.19	—

The descriptive results indicate that respondents reported relatively high average levels of employees' self-concept (M = 4.08, SD = .45) and perceived team innovative behavior (M = 3.87, SD = .6), while the mean score for charismatic leadership was 3.46 (SD = .63).

All three observed composite-score correlations were positive. Charismatic leadership was positively correlated with employees' self-concept (r = .17) and perceived team innovative behavior (r = .37). Employees' self-concept was also positively correlated with perceived team innovative behavior (r = .19).

The correlations among the latent constructs were .18 for charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept, .38 for charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior, and .22 for employees' self-concept and perceived team innovative behavior, as reported in Table 2. Differences between the two sets of correlations reflect the distinction between observed composite scores and estimated latent construct scores.

These results indicate positive associations among the study variables. However, given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the observed relationships should not be interpreted as evidence of causal effects.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated by examining standardized path coefficients, explained variance (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and bootstrap-based inferential statistics. The hypothesized model included direct paths from charismatic leadership to employees' self-concept and perceived team innovative behavior, together with a direct path from employees' self-concept to perceived team innovative behavior.

The model explained 3.6% of the variance in employees' self-concept (R^2 = .03; adjusted R^2 = .03) and 17.2% of the variance in perceived team innovative behavior (R^2 = .17; adjusted R^2 = .16). The relatively low R^2 for employees' self-concept suggests that most of its variance remained unexplained by charismatic leadership. The explained variance in perceived team innovative behavior was greater, although a substantial proportion of its variance also remained unexplained.

The effect size (f^2) for the relationship between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior was .14. The corresponding effect sizes for charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept (f^2 = .03) and for employees' self-concept and perceived team innovative behavior (f^2 = .02) were smaller.

Statistical inference was conducted using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and two-tailed tests at the .05 significance level. As presented in Table 5 and Figure 2, charismatic leadership demonstrated a positive association with perceived team innovative behavior (β = .35, t = 7.05, p < .001). This relationship was the strongest direct association in the structural model and was statistically significant according to the reported p-value and both types of bootstrap confidence intervals. The findings therefore provide support for Hypothesis 1 (H1).

Charismatic leadership was also positively associated with employees' self-concept (β = .18, t = 2.79, p = .005), while employees' self-concept was positively associated with perceived team innovative behavior (β = .15, t = 2.03, p = .042).

Table 5

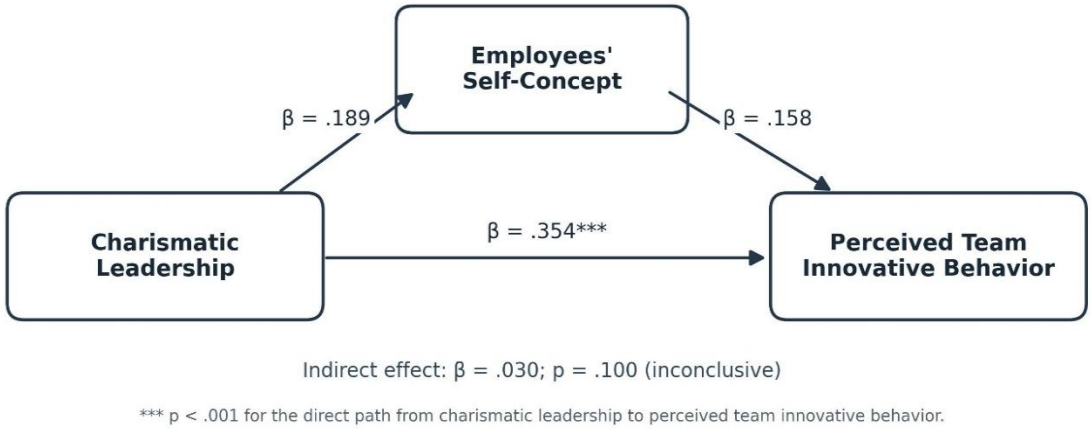
Structural Path Coefficients and Bootstrap Results

Structural relationship	β	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Charismatic Leadership → Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	.35	.05	7.05	< .001
Charismatic Leadership → Employees' Self-Concept	.18	.06	2.79	.005
Employees' Self-Concept → Perceived Team Innovative Behavior	.15	.07	2.03	.042

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; SE = bootstrap standard error; t = bootstrap t statistic. Results are based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Figure 2

Standardized Structural Model With Path Coefficients



Note. The structural model includes three direct paths: charismatic leadership to perceived team innovative behavior (β = .35), charismatic leadership to employees' self-concept (β = .18), and employees' self-concept to perceived team innovative behavior (β = .15). The indirect effect is examined separately in the mediation analysis.

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of employees' self-concept was examined using 5,000 bootstrap resamples. The estimated specific indirect effect of charismatic leadership on perceived team innovative behavior through employees' self-concept was positive and relatively small (β = .03). The percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval [.002, .076] excluded zero, indicating a statistically significant indirect association under the percentile confidence interval criterion.

Accordingly, the findings provide method-dependent evidence of a small positive indirect association rather than robust confirmation of the proposed mediating effect (b=.030, SE=.018, 95% bias-corrected CI [−.22,.058]). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 (H2) was not statistically supported at the .05 significance level. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Although the direct association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior remained positive and statistically significant (β = .35, p < .001) the absence of a robust indirect effect precludes a conclusion of mediation.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Mersin, Turkey, with particular attention to the potential mediating role of employees' self-concept. The findings revealed a positive association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior, providing support for the study's first hypothesis. The study also found positive associations between charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept, and between employees' self-concept and perceived team innovative behavior. However, the mediation analysis yielded inconclusive evidence regarding the proposed indirect relationship. These findings contribute to the understanding of leadership and innovation-related perceptions in SMEs while highlighting the need for caution when interpreting the psychological pathways linking charismatic leadership, employees' self-concept, and perceived team innovative behavior.

Consistent with the findings of Le Blanc et al. (2021), Paulsen et al. (2009), and Cruz-Páez (2025), the results of testing H1 in this study found that leadership style, particularly charismatic leadership; can enhance team innovation within small industrial units. The potential to examine various mechanisms of team innovation in relation to leadership has been illustrated in studies by Le Blanc et al. (2021) and Ren and Shen (2024). However, it is important to note that in small firms, charismatic leaders are typically the owners and entrepreneurs themselves. In these companies, the leader and team members engage in direct, daily interaction throughout work processes; consequently, the impact of this direct relationship- when coupled with an owner’s charismatic leadership- can be significantly more profound. This is particularly true when compared to large organizations, where direct, continuous communication between leaders and members is often less frequent or consistent. Close relationships with leaders support knowledge transfer and clear communication between them, and ultimately lead to trust and risk-taking actions under the leader's vision. Therefore, innovation behaviors may be seen among team members in the same way, with minimum deviation and ambiguity.

Regarding H2, the results show that the influence of the charismatic leadership style on the psychological attributes of individuals in small units likely holds significantly greater importance. Charismatic leadership can influence team innovation by strengthening various dimensions of an individual’s self-concept. Employees perceive leadership behaviors and, through self-redefinition and enhanced motivation, respond to the organization (Paul et al., 2001; Shamir, 1991). Charismatic leaders help employees view themselves positively by building trust, clarifying goals, and providing inspiration. In turn, these motivated and positive employees respond to team needs with innovative behaviors. Essentially, by demonstrating a willingness to embrace risk and creativity, charismatic leaders in small units foster a sense of security among team members. Trusting that their leaders are tolerant of errors and calculated risks, members are better equipped to align their collective and relational self-concepts with team objectives, ultimately leading to improved outcomes (Litchfield et al., 2018; Paulsen et al., 2009). Through the sustained reinforcement of such leader behaviors, this process can become embedded within the group, allowing the self-concepts of all members to adapt dynamically to the specific requirements of the industrial unit. Such behaviors may be associated with organizational environments where employees feel more encouraged to

contribute ideas, explore alternative approaches, and participate in innovation-related activities. In SMEs, where organizational performance may depend heavily on employees' initiative and collaboration, employee perceive the goal through leadership eyes and are motivated by feeling personal significance, interpersonal connection, and collective belonging.

The multidimensional conceptualization of self-concept also offers a useful theoretical perspective. Individual, relational, and collective self-concept represent complementary aspects of how employees understand themselves in organizational settings. These aspects may be relevant to personal initiative, interpersonal cooperation, and commitment to shared organizational objectives.

Theoretical Implications

The present study offers several theoretical implications for research on charismatic leadership, employees' self-concept, and innovation-related behavior in SMEs. First, it contributes to the leadership–innovation literature by examining the direct association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior alongside the potential psychological relevance of employees' self-concept. The positive relationship between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior provides empirical support for the relevance of charismatic leadership within the examined organizational context. However, the evidence for the proposed indirect relationship through employees' self-concept was sensitive to the bootstrap inference method. The study therefore contributes by evaluating a theoretically relevant psychological pathway rather than by confirming a mediating mechanism. Second, the study extends the application of self-concept-based perspectives on leadership by considering individual, relational, and collective aspects of employees' self-definition within an integrated conceptual framework. These dimensions provide complementary perspectives on how employees understand their personal capabilities, interpersonal relationships, and membership in organizational groups. Such considerations are theoretically relevant because innovation-related activities involve individual initiative, cooperation, knowledge exchange, and commitment to shared objectives. Nevertheless, the empirical analysis examined self-concept as an overall construct rather than estimating separate effects for its individual dimensions. Accordingly, the theoretical relevance of these dimensions should be distinguished from their untested individual empirical contributions. Third, the findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between direct leadership–innovation associations and proposed psychological mechanisms. Although charismatic leadership demonstrated a positive association with employees' self-concept, and self-concept was positively associated with perceived team innovative behavior, the estimated indirect effect was small, and its statistical significance was not consistently supported across the reported bootstrap results. This suggests that the psychological processes underlying the leadership–innovation relationship may be more complex than those represented by a single mediating construct. Future theoretical models could therefore consider additional psychological and organizational factors, including psychological safety, creative self-efficacy, interpersonal trust, organizational identification, and team climate. Fourth, the study contributes to the SME literature by examining these relationships in a specific organizational and geographical context. SMEs may provide conditions in which leadership behaviors are particularly visible because of relatively direct communication and frequent interpersonal interactions. At the same time, limited organizational resources may increase the importance of employee initiative, collaboration, and

knowledge sharing. However, these contextual characteristics were not directly measured in the present study. Consequently, their relevance should be understood as a theoretically informed explanation rather than an empirically demonstrated feature of the sampled organizations.

Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of measurement quality when developing and testing psychological explanations of leadership-related outcomes. Although the study identified positive structural associations, the measurement model revealed limitations in convergent validity for charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept. These findings indicate that future theoretical development should be accompanied by more rigorous measurement validation, particularly when multidimensional psychological constructs are represented as overall latent variables. Taken together, the study provides evidence supporting the direct association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior while identifying employees' self-concept as a theoretically relevant, but not conclusively established, explanatory pathway.

Managerial Implications

The findings also offer several practical considerations for managers and owners of SMEs. First, the positive association between charismatic leadership and perceived team innovative behavior suggests that leadership practices deserve attention within organizational efforts to support innovation. Managers may benefit from articulating a clear, meaningful organizational vision; communicating the importance of innovation; demonstrating openness to new approaches; and encouraging employees to contribute ideas and participate in organizational improvement.

These recommendations should not be interpreted as evidence that charismatic leadership practices necessarily cause improvements in innovative behavior. Rather, they represent theoretically informed managerial approaches consistent with the positive association observed in the study.

Second, managers should consider how employees understand their roles, capabilities, and contributions within the organization. Although the mediating role of self-concept was not conclusively supported, the observed positive associations suggest that employees' self-perceptions may be relevant to their organizational experiences. Providing meaningful responsibilities, recognizing employee contributions, communicating confidence in employees' capabilities, and involving them in appropriate decision-making processes may help create conditions in which employees feel valued and connected to organizational objectives.

Third, the multidimensional perspective on self-concept highlights the potential importance of interpersonal relationships and collective identification. Managers may support collaborative working environments through regular communication, constructive feedback, mutual respect, and opportunities for team-based problem-solving. Such practices may encourage knowledge exchange, cooperation, and the consideration of alternative approaches. However, the present study did not separately test the individual, relational, and collective dimensions of self-concept, and therefore cannot establish which dimension is most relevant to perceived team innovative behavior.

Fourth, managers of SMEs should recognize that innovation-related activities may benefit from organizational practices that mobilize existing employee knowledge and capabilities. Although financial resources, technological infrastructure, and formal research and

development activities remain important, organizations may also consider leadership development, employee participation, collaborative learning, and internal knowledge sharing as complementary approaches to supporting innovation.

Finally, the findings suggest that leadership development should not focus exclusively on charismatic communication or the articulation of an inspiring vision. Managers should also encourage constructive disagreement, independent thinking, and the open discussion of alternative ideas. This is particularly important because strong identification with a charismatic leader does not necessarily guarantee innovation and may, under some circumstances, discourage employees from questioning established assumptions.

Overall, the practical implications emphasize the potential value of combining clear leadership direction with employee participation, supportive interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for independent contribution. These recommendations are consistent with the study's findings but require further evaluation through longitudinal, experimental, or organizational intervention research before causal effectiveness can be established.

Limitations and future research avenues

This study offers some limitations that the researchers could consider in the future. First of all, this study collected cross-sectional data from SMEs employees working in Mersin, Turkey. Future studies can conduct a longitudinal study to explore the potential divergent effect of charismatic leadership in predicting team innovative behavior among SMEs and larg companies in other regions. Second, perceived team innovative behavior was measured through individual employees' assessments of innovation-related activities within their teams. Because respondents were not systematically identified and grouped by team membership, the study could not assess within-team agreement, aggregate responses to the team level, or account for potential clustering within organizations. The findings therefore concern individual perceptions rather than objectively established team-level innovative behavior. Future research should collect responses from identifiable work teams and employ multilevel analytical approaches to distinguish individual perceptions from shared team characteristics and organizational outcomes. Third, the study examined employees' self-concept as an overall construct comprising individual, relational, and collective dimensions. Although charismatic leadership explained only 3.6% of the variance in employees' self-concept, future studies should examine the underlying mechanisms and dynamic processes connecting different aspects of self-concept. Fourth, the study focused on charismatic leadership and employees' self-concept without directly examining other potentially relevant leadership approaches, psychological mechanisms, or contextual conditions. Innovation-related behavior may also be associated with transformational, entrepreneurial, servant, or ambidextrous leadership, as well as psychological safety, creative self-efficacy, knowledge sharing, organizational climate, and environmental dynamism. Future research could incorporate these variables to assess the explanatory contribution of employees' self-concept within more comprehensive theoretical models. Finally, charismatic leadership should not be assumed to have uniformly positive implications. Strong identification with a charismatic leader may, under certain conditions, be associated with excessive leader dependence, conformity, or reduced willingness to challenge established visions. Such possibilities may be particularly relevant in organizational settings characterized by close interpersonal relationships and concentrated managerial influence. Future research should therefore investigate potential boundary conditions and unintended consequences of

charismatic leadership, including the circumstances under which strong leader identification supports or constrains employees' independent thinking and innovation-related contributions.

Petra Cajnko: Methodological Review, Interpretation of Results, Writing – Review & Editing, and Manuscript Preparation.
Iztok Podbregar: Methodological Review, Interpretation of Results, Supervision, and Writing – Review & Editing.
Both authors contributed to the scientific evaluation, interpretation, and critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version and agree to take responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of their respective contributions.

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used OpenAI's ChatGPT to assist with language editing, manuscript organization, statistical output verification, and interpretation of reported results. The original statistical analyses were conducted using SmartPLS 3.2. All AI-assisted interpretations and manuscript revisions were critically reviewed by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the collaborating research institution in Turkey to the data collection process conducted among employees of small and medium-sized enterprises in Mersin between July and December 2024. The authors also express their appreciation to the assistans involved in the collecting data and to all participating organizations and employees for their contributions to the research.

References

Agruña Barrón, E. M., Belizón Cebada, M. J., & Redondo Palomo, R. (2025). Exploring commonalities in unconventional organization design: evidence from Spanish SME case studies. *Journal of Organization Design, 14*(4), 295–317. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41469-025-00191-7

Anderson, N., Potočnik, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and creativity in organizations: A state-of-the-science review, prospective commentary, and guiding framework. *Journal of Management, 40*(5), 1297–1333. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314527128

Aslam, H., Blome, C., Schleper, M. C., Ramish, A., & Bajwa, S. U. (2025). Investigating the supply chain agility–Innovation link: The role of organizational context. *European Management Journal, 43*(2), 246–256. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2024.02.006

Choi, J. (2006). A motivational theory of charismatic leadership: Envisioning, empathy, and empowerment. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 13*(1), 24–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/10717919070130010501

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1987). Toward a behavioral theory of charismatic leadership in organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review, 12*(4), 637–647. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.2307/258069

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1998). *Charismatic leadership in organizations*. Sage.

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (2016). A model of charismatic leadership. In *Organizational influence processes* (pp. 242–262). Routledge.

Cruz-Páez, F. O. (2025). Leadership in managerial knowledge management: Continuous and innovative learning in Colombian companies. *European Journal of Studies in Management and Business*, *36*, 32–53. https://doi.org/10.32038/mbrq.2025.36.03

De Massis, A., Audretsch, D., Uhlaner, L., & Kammerlander, N. (2018). Innovation with limited resources: Management lessons from the German Mittelstand. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 35*(1), 125–146. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12373

Dierdorff, E. C., Fisher, D. M., & Rubin, R. S. (2019). The power of percipience: Consequences of self-awareness in teams on team-level functioning and performance. *Journal of Management, 45*(7), 2891–2919. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318774622

Dong, B. (2024). Environmental dynamism's influence on firm growth: Transformational leadership and strategic flexibility insights. *The Journal of High Technology Management Research, 35*(2), 100499. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hitech.2024.100499

Ficapal-Cusi, P., Enache-Zegheru, M., & Torrent-Sellens, J. (2021). Enhancing team performance: A multilevel model. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 289*, 125158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.125158

Gerlach, F., Hundeling, M., & Rosing, K. (2020). Ambidextrous leadership and innovation performance: a longitudinal study. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 41*(3), 383–398. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2019-0321

Globocnik, D. (2019). Taking or avoiding risk through secret innovation activities—the relationships among employees' risk propensity, bootlegging, and management support. *International Journal of Innovation Management, 23*(03), 1950022. https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919619500221

González-Romá, V., Fortes-Ferreira, L., & Peiró, J. M. (2009). Team climate, climate strength, and team performance: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 82*, 511–536. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317908X370025

Gunasekaran, A., Rai, B. K., & Griffin, M. (2011). Resilience and competitiveness of small and medium size enterprises: an empirical research. *International journal of production research, 49*(18), 5489–5509. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2011.563831

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLSSEM). 2nd ed. Sage Publications Inc.

Hansen, S. D., Miller, D. R., & Noack, D. (2020). The Impact of Charismatic Leadership on Recruitment, Development and Firm Performance. Journal of Managerial Issues, 32(2), 215–229. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48617793

He, Z. L., & Wong, P. K. (2004). Exploration vs. exploitation: An empirical test of the ambidexterity hypothesis. *Organization Science, 15*(4), 481–496. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1040.0078

Hirst, G., Van Knippenberg, D., & Zhou, J. (2009). A cross-level perspective on employee creativity: Goal orientation, team learning behavior, and individual creativity. *Academy of Management Journal, 52*(2), 280–293. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.5465/AMJ.2009.37308035

Hoang, G., Wilson-Evered, E., & Lockstone-Binney, L. (2021). Leaders influencing innovation: A qualitative study exploring the role of leadership and organizational climate in Vietnamese tourism SMEs. *Employee Relations: The International Journal, 43*(2), 416–437. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-07-2019-0279

Howell, J. M., & Shamir, B. (2018). “The Role of Followers in the Charismatic Leadership Process: Relationships and Their Consequences", Leadership Now: Reflections on the Legacy of Boas Shamir, Israel Katz, Galit Eilam-Shamir, Ronit Kark, Yair Berson. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-357120180000009019

Imran, M., Li, J., Bano, S., & Rashid, W. (2025). Impact of democratic leadership on employee innovative behavior with mediating role of psychological safety and creative potential. *Sustainability, 17*(5), 1879. https://doi.org/10.3390/su17051879

Jin, H., & Peng, Y. (2024). The impact of team psychological safety on employee innovative performance a study with communication behavior as a mediator variable. *PLoS ONE 19*(10): e0306629. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0306629

Johnson, R. E., & Chang, C. H. (2006). “I” is to continuance as “we” is to affective: The relevance of the self-concept for organizational commitment. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *27*(5), 549-570. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.364

Jun, K., & Lee, J. (2023). Transformational leadership and followers' ınnovative behavior: Roles of commitment to change and organizational support for creativity. *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland), 13*(4), 320. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13040320

Knezović, E., & Drkić, A. (2021). Innovative work behavior in SMEs: the role of transformational leadership. *Employee Relations: The International Journal, 43*(2), 398–415. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-03-2020-0124

Le Blanc, P. M., González-Romá, V., & Wang, H. (2021). Charismatic leadership and work team innovative behavior: The role of team task interdependence and team potency. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 36*(2), 333–346. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-019-09663-6

Levitt, B., & March, J. G. (1988). Organizational learning. *Annual Review of Sociology, 14*(1), 319–338. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.14.080188.001535

Li, C. Y. (2018). Self-efficacy and innovation effectiveness in the online game industry. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence, 29*(11–12), 1482–1502. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2016.1266247

Li, K., & Griffin, M. A. (2023). Unpacking human systems in data science innovations: Key innovator perspectives. *Technovation, 128*, 102869. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102869

Litchfield, R. C., Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, Z., Gumusluoglu, L., Carter, M., & Hirst, G. (2018). When team identity helps innovation and when it hurts: team identity and its relationship to team and cross-team innovative behavior. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 35*(3), 350–366. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12410

Magistretti, S., Dell'Era, C., & Doppio, N. (2020). Design sprint for SMEs: an organizational taxonomy based on configuration theory. *Management Decision, 58*(9), 1803–1817. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-10-2019-1501

McAdam, M., McAdam, R., Dunn, A., & McCall, C. (2014). Development of small and medium-sized enterprise horizontal innovation networks: UK agri-food sector study. *International Small Business Journal, 32*(7), 830–853. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242613476079

Musaigwa, M. (2023). The role of leadership in managing change. *International Review of Management and Marketing, 13*(6), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.13526

Paul, J., Costley, D. L., Howell, J. P., Dorfman, P. W., & Trafimow, D. (2001). The effects of charismatic leadership on followers’ self-concept accessibility. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 31*(9), 1821–1842. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2001.tb00206.x

Paulsen, N., Maldonado, D., Callan, V. J., & Ayoko, O. (2009). Charismatic leadership, change and innovation in an R&D organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 22*(5), 511–523. https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810910983479

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879–903. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879

Popadić, D., Živanović, V., & Živanovic, N. (2022). The importance of small and medium enterprise development for efficient global market environment. *Chinese Business Review, 21*(3), 102–107. https://doi.org/10.17265/1537-1506/2022.03.003

Psychogios, A. G., & Garev, S. (2012). Understanding complexity leadership behaviour in SMEs: Lessons from a turbulent business environment. *Emergence: Complexity and Organization, 14*(3), 1–22.

Ren, L., & Shen, H. (2024). The relationship between servant leadership and team innovation performance: Mediating effect of self-efficacy. *Heliyon, 10*(6). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e27723

Rosing, K., Frese, M., & Bausch, A. (2011). Explaining the heterogeneity of the leadership innovation relationship: Ambidextrous leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(5), 956–974. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.07.014

Selivanovskikh, L. (2023). Exploring firm innovation capability as the 'black box' between human capital and performance in Russian SMEs. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, 28*(01), 2350007. https://doi.org/10.1142/S1084946723500073

Sen, S., Savitskie, K., Mahto, R. V., Kumar, S., & Khanin, D. (2023). Strategic flexibility in small firms. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 31*(5), 1053–1070. https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2022.2036223

Shaik, A. S., Alshibani, S. M., Mishra, S., Papa, A., & Cuomo, M. T. (2023). Does learning from innovation failure enhance innovation performance? A quantitative investigation of small businesses. *Technovation, 127*, 102818. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102818

Shamir, B. (1991). The charismatic relationship: Alternative explanations and predictions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 2*(2), 81–104. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/104898439190024V

Srholec, M., & Verspagen, B. (2012). The Voyage of the Beagle into innovation: explorations on heterogeneity, selection, and sectors. *Industrial and Corporate Change, 21*(5), 1221–1253. https://doi.org/10.1093/icc/dts026

Takeed, Z., Ali, M. D., Shah, S. I., Muhammad, A., & Qiu, S. (2025). The effect of entrepreneurial leadership on innovative work behavior: the mediating roles of creative self-efficacy and organizational learning. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies, 17*(5), 1288–1310. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-08-2024-0326

Thommes, M. S., Uitdewilligen, S., Rico, R., & Waller, M. J. (2024). Switching gears: How teams co-construct adaptive leadership style transitions in dynamic contexts. *Organizational Psychology Review, 14*(4), 542–570. https://doi.org/10.1177/20413866231214238

Varga, J. (2021). Defining the economic role and benefits of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the 21st century with a systematic review of the literature. *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica, 18*(11), 209–228. https://www.epa.oszk.hu/02400/02461/00116/pdf/EPA02461_acta_polytechnica_2021_11_209-228.pdf

Wang, C., Wu, C., & Ou, C. (2025). Does intellectual capital matter in small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) decisions? Roles of resource integration capability and top management team involvement. *Journal of Intellectual Capital, 26*(1), 229–252. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIC-07-2024-0222

Widmann, A., & Mulder, R. H. (2018). Team learning behaviours and innovative work behaviour in work teams. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 21*(3), 501–520. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-12-2017-0194

Zeng, J., & Xu, G. (2020). How Servant Leadership Motivates Innovative Behavior: A Moderated Mediation Model. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *17*(13), 4753. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134753

Zhang, L., Seong, J. Y., Hong, D. S., & Yoon, H. J. (2025). The effects of charismatic leadership on performance: exploring key boundary conditions at multilevel. *Frontiers in Psychology, 16*, 1487886. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1487886