

Effects of Employee Learning, Knowledge, and Creativity on Employee Performance in Cigarette Companies in Kudus

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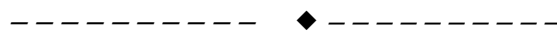
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Abstract

Current competitive conditions are increasing and very competitive. This requires companies to be able to improve the performance of their employees in terms of increasing productivity. Competitiveness: To survive in an ever-changing market environment, companies need to utilize Human Resources (HR), especially employee performance. Employees are a key element of an organization; the success or failure of an organization depends on the performance of its employees. This research aims to determine the relationship and analyze the effect of employee learning on employee knowledge, employee creativity and employee performance, employee creativity on employee satisfaction, employee knowledge on employee performance, and employee satisfaction on employee performance. Respondents in this study were 135 respondents. The sample in this study was employee staff at a cigarette company in Kudus. This research is quantitative in nature with an analysis method using the PLS Structural Equation Model (SEM). The research results show that employee learning has a positive effect on employee knowledge, employee creativity, and employee performance, employee creativity has a positive effect on employee satisfaction, employee satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance, and employee knowledge has a positive effect on employee performance.

Keywords: *Employee Creativity; Employee Knowledge; Employee Learning; Employee Performance; Employee Satisfaction.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the competitive landscape is intensifying and highly competitive. This demands companies to enhance their employees' performance in terms of productivity improvement, enabling them to compete and even outperform other companies. Competitiveness to survive in the ever-changing market environment requires companies to leverage Human Resources (HR), particularly employee performance (Salman & Al-Omari, 2022). Employees constitute a key element of organizations. The success or failure of an organization depends on its employees' performance. Performance evaluation is based on understanding the knowledge, skills, expertise, and behaviors required to perform a job effectively (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020).

An organization's learning capability is considered a key factor in sustaining economic growth and enhancing competitiveness. Training is regarded as one of the most significant strategies to help develop organizational capabilities by facilitating the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Hernita et al., 2021). The overall level of learning support provided by organizations is believed to be crucial in attracting,

motivating, and retaining employees. Organizations need to support employee learning and assist in career growth opportunities while signaling to employees that they are valued and respected by the organization (Gyurák Babel'ová et al., 2020).

According to Akdere & Egan with the increasing demand for individual skills, employees at all levels have become the most significant asset for organizations. Korzynski state that future organizations will heavily depend on employee creativity. Employee creativity plays a vital role in enhancing organizational productivity and efficiency and helps organizations to survive and thrive amidst dramatic changes (Akdere & Egan, 2020). Employee learning refers to all policies, programs, processes, and activities used to identify, nurture, develop, and appreciate individual talents and capabilities appropriately. Employee learning from failures is the key to individual performance and ultimately towards organizational success (Kaliannan et al., 2023).

Gregory argues that employee satisfaction is crucial for the success of any business. Maintaining employee satisfaction with their careers is a top priority for employers. Kurdi add that the need to enhance employee satisfaction is crucial as it is the key to better business operations by enhancing long-term employee productivity (Sekar et al., 2023). According to Ojstersek employee knowledge is important for generating new and useful solutions that can be used to solve existing or potential problems. Ojstersek further add that the level of employee knowledge also varies depending on cultural influences and tasks (Chang et al., 2020).

Improving an employee's personal performance will influence or enhance the company's organizational performance, thus achieving the organization's predetermined goals. Because if an employee's capabilities are low, it will affect their performance. Budur & Demir reveal that employee performance depends on workload, working hours, and cost-effectiveness. Ojstersek found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are significant forces driving employees or individuals to improve their performance (Mora et al., 2020).

Asdar conducted research on the five largest banks in the South Jakarta region and found a positive relationship between learning and training and employee competence. Cheung in his study on electronic manufacturing companies in Taiwan, stated that employee creativity would have a stronger effect on employee performance when there is a match between the type of creativity and resources to implement new ideas (Arokiasamy et al., 2023). The negative relationship between performance goal orientation and knowledge donation is stronger than the relationship between performance goal orientation and knowledge collection in 5-star hotels in Busan, Korea. Arubayi also added that there is a significant relationship between training and employee commitment and satisfaction, as well as a significant relationship between information sharing and employee satisfaction in three companies in Warri, Delta State (Zia, 2020).

The above research results indicate that discussions on the direct and indirect effects of learning, creativity, and satisfaction on employee performance have been widely conducted. However, what distinguishes it from previous research is the use of variables of learning, knowledge, creativity, and satisfaction in one study. Research on

employee performance conducted in cigarette companies more often focuses on marketing and finance, while human resources, in particular, are still rarely studied. Based on the aforementioned research gap, this study aims to examine the influence of learning, knowledge, employee creativity, and employee satisfaction on employee performance in Cigarette Companies in Kudus.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Employee Learning

Employee learning is the process by which individuals utilize knowledge and skills and experience personal growth. According to Coleman employee learning is a driver for changing behavior and skills. Valentine defines employee learning as the extent to which employees are committed to continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills for their performance (Kruszyńska-Fischbach et al., 2022). Mavunga & Cross outline employee learning as a field of study that has historically evolved, initially known as adult education, recurrent education, continuing education, human resource development, community education, and currently referred to as lifelong learning. Employee learning is crucial because learning is a continuous and repetitive process (Brandi & Iannone, 2021).

2. Employee Knowledge

An employee's knowledge is an individual who possesses a level of education and specific skills that can be used for the benefit and advancement of the company. According to Yang employee knowledge is someone who works by applying symbols and concepts and using knowledge or information. Employees as knowledge carriers play a crucial role in inter-company competition, innovation, and the utilization of knowledge and reasonable resource configurations (Dachner et al., 2021). Thembisile defines knowledge as an individual's information scope or theoretical or practical understanding of subjects or languages, among others. Employee knowledge is highly skilled expert employees with professional or technical backgrounds that support businesses by gaining product advantages, streamlining processes, improving customer experiences, or supporting fiscal strategies (Liu et al., 2020).

3. Employee Creativity

Creativity can be defined as the construction of new and valuable ideas offered by an individual or group of people or employees (Yoopetch & Nimsai, 2021). Chaudhary & Akhouri (2019) stated that creativity is the result of overall creative thinking, skills, and expertise depending on formal education and past experiences. Employee creativity contributes to organizational growth and success. Saraç mentioned employee creativity as a complex behavior that includes social and intellectual competencies. Creative employees can drive overall employee creativity, thus assisting in all tasks they undertake. According to Shaikh employee creativity is the creation of useful and new ideas by individual employees. Meanwhile, according to Zhang & Bartol employee creativity is an essential component of human resources

consisting of original and valuable ideas. Creativity demonstrates valuable method concepts and procedures by employees working in an organization (Bousinakis & Halkos, 2021).

4. Employee Satisfaction

Band defines employee satisfaction as a pleasant or positive experience. Employee satisfaction is a term used to describe whether employees are happy, satisfied, and fulfill their desires and needs in the workplace. Arubayi states that employee satisfaction is the general attitude of employees towards their jobs. Employee satisfaction is the level of job enjoyment or job maintenance through their cognition of various job aspects that affect individuals (Ugheoke et al., 2022).

Employee satisfaction is the attitude of employees towards work related to work situations, cooperation among employees, rewards received in work, and matters related to physical and psychological factors. Bustamam states that employee satisfaction is a mental feeling of liking someone's job. Satisfaction plays a vital role because most people spend most of their lives in their workplaces (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2021). Additionally, employee satisfaction also affects employees' lives in general because satisfied employees are satisfied and happy individuals. Jyoti & Sharma add that employee satisfaction is the extent to which employees feel that their interests are considered by management. If employees are satisfied with their organization, they will ultimately satisfy customer needs in a better and more efficient manner (Meynhardt et al., 2020).

5. Employee Performance

Employee performance is the work outcome that can be achieved by an individual or group of people in an organization, in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities, in an effort to achieve the organization's goals legally, morally, and ethically (Pavlyshyn et al., 2021). Employee performance is the action taken by employees in providing their contributions to an organization in terms of quality, quantity, output over a period of time, presence in the workplace, and cooperative attitudes. Employee performance is defined as a function of many factors, including motivation, but also includes abilities and resources. These resources can include many things such as tools, time, opportunities, environmental characteristics, and cultural levers Akla & Indradewa (Jufrizen & Kandhita, 2021).

Employee performance can be defined in terms of employee output, fulfillment of expected job tasks in the job description, in addition to extra-role performance. Employee performance is influenced by many factors such as employee motivation, employee satisfaction, and HRM practices such as employee training, compensation, and performance appraisals (HERmanto & Srimulyani, 2022). Performance provides evidence of employee productivity within the company. Performance in an organization is measured at all organizational levels, individuals, processes, and relationships. Employee performance is completing assigned tasks with

predetermined standards of completeness, accuracy, cost, and speed (Beuren et al., 2022).

6. Relationship between Employee Learning and Employee Knowledge

Kuruppuge & Gregar stated a positive influence between employee learning and employee knowledge in knowledge-based industries. Research by Prompreing & Hu showed a significant relationship between employee learning and employee knowledge. Recognizing the importance of knowledge sharing and learning, which refers to employees' tendencies or willingness to enhance their skills or knowledge. There is a positive relationship between employee learning and employee knowledge in various organizations in South Korea.

H₁: Employee Learning has a positive effect on Employee Knowledge

7. Relationship between Employee Learning and Employee Creativity

Organizational learning can be described as changes in established beliefs that occur as an event. There is a significant relationship between learning and employee creativity in automotive manufacturing companies. Tran stated in their research that there is a significant relationship between learning and the creativity of their employees. Learning in employees shapes inherent thought patterns and can drive individuals to enhance their competencies and creativity. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between employee learning and employee creativity.

H₂: Employee Learning has a positive effect on Employee Creativity

8. Relationship between Employee Learning and Employee Performance

Ilmiah in their research stated that learning positively influences employee performance. The importance of training and development can only be appreciated with a clear understanding of its direct impact on employee performance. Thus, learning has a positive influence on employee performance. In a study by Younas, training greatly impacted employee performance. Learning is important for individual growth; learning is a dynamic concept that gradually evolves from individual learning to organizational learning. The learning effect enhances employees' awareness of knowledge and skills, subsequently leading to employee performance.

H₃: Employee Learning has a positive effect on Employee Performance

9. Relationship between Employee Creativity and Employee Satisfaction

Employee creativity is an important factor for an employee's commitment and job satisfaction; an employee should be given the opportunity to unleash their creativity in the workplace. Thus, there is a positive influence between employee creativity and employee satisfaction. When organizations foster an employee's creativity, the likelihood of employee satisfaction increases as employees are given more opportunities to structure their daily work in a more creative manner. It can be concluded that employee creativity positively affects employee satisfaction. Bamfo

revealed that there is a significant influence between creativity and employee satisfaction in the Banking industry.

H₄: Employee Creativity has a positive effect on Employee Satisfaction

10. Relationship between Employee Knowledge and Employee Performance

Research conducted by Firman stated that knowledge creation is obtained from individual experiences and expertise information. Firman added that knowledge acquisition can be done in various ways, such as observing companies, as it would be easier to gain new knowledge, which can facilitate the job completion process. With knowledge, employees can acquire, capture, share, and use knowledge to enhance their learning and performance in a company. Thus, it can be said that employee knowledge positively influences employee performance. According to Na-Nan, there is a significant relationship between knowledge and employee performance in SMEs.

H₅: Employee Knowledge has a positive effect on Employee Performance

11. Relationship between Employee Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Employee satisfaction is a significant determinant of employee performance and can influence organizational performance. Kawiana stated in his research that employee satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on employee performance because the higher the job satisfaction of employees, the higher their job performance. Employee satisfaction factors have a positive and significant impact on employee performance, meaning satisfaction is crucial in improving employee performance.

H₆: Employee satisfaction has a positive influence on employee performance

C. METHOD

There are four exogenous variables, namely employee learning, employee knowledge, employee creativity, and employee satisfaction, and one endogenous variable, namely employee performance in this study. The employee learning variable is measured using 4 questions, employee knowledge is measured using 3 questions, and employee satisfaction is measured using 4 questions. The employee creativity variable is measured using 3 questions. Meanwhile, employee performance is measured using 9 questions, 7 questions, 2 questions. All questions are measured using a Likert scale with 4 points ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Data collection in this study used a survey method by distributing questionnaires online through Google Form. The population in the study focuses on staff employees of Cigarette Companies in Kudus, where the sample in this study is a saturated sample. The criteria for respondents are permanent employees of cigarette companies in Kudus. Data was collected for 2 months from August to September 2023. The sample was obtained from 3 companies in Kudus, including gender, age, work unit, highest education, and length of employment. Furthermore, a sample of 135 people who met the criteria was obtained. The data collection technique was carried out by distributing initial questionnaires (pre-test) to 30 respondents.

The pre-test sample testing used SPSS 25 software, the aim was to determine whether respondents understood the questions on the questionnaire provided. Furthermore, from the 23 questions given, valid and reliable results were obtained to proceed to the next stage. This study is a quantitative research using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with data processing and analysis using SmartPLS 3.0 software. One of the goals of CFA/SEM is to test the level of validity of a construct in representing the theory of the model empirically. Hair explained that reflective measurement models are used to test accurate validity and meet the requirements through: 1). Convergent Validity, which is a reflective measurement model to measure the extent to which indicator constructs can explain variables by considering outer loading and AVE, if the outer loading value is above 0.7 or between 0.6 - 0.70 (exploratory research) and average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5; 2). Discriminant Validity is the extent to which variable constructs are unique and different from others and can capture phenomena, this can be seen from the outer loading value of a construct greater than the value of all other cross loadings and the value of The Fornell-Larcker criterion (the value of the square root of each construct AVE) is greater than the value of other latent variable constructs. The purpose of reliability testing is to find out how variables can be internally measured by indicators or in other words to what extent all indicators can measure the same variables. The reliability test of a construct can be fulfilled if the cronbach's alpha value is less than the composite reliability value (0.6 - 0.7 or greater than 0.70).

Then, testing the structural equation model is measured by: 1). Coefficient of determination (R^2), which is the combined effect of exogenous latent variables (independent) on endogenous latent variables (dependent). This means that the coefficient value indicates the ability of exogenous variables to explain endogenous variables or in other words is the change in endogenous variables that can be explained by exogenous variables. The rule of thumbs is 0.75 (strong), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (weak). 2). Predictive relevance (Q^2) is the strength of the model to accurately and relevantly predict data not used in the research model with the rule of thumbs Q^2 greater than 0; 3). Path value coefficients are the results of the bootstrapping process consisting of sample mean, standard deviation values, critical t values, and p values.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Employees from several cigarette companies were selected as respondents in this study, resulting in 135 respondents. The respondents in this study were dominated by males at 51.2% and females at 48.8%, with the most common age range being 18 - 30 years at 48.2%, and the majority of respondents having a bachelor's degree as their highest education level at 50.4%, with the distribution of work experience between 3.5 - 5 years at 42.9%.

The data processing results show that the outer loading values of all indicators for each variable are above 0.6. These outer loading values are considered valid as validation criteria. Furthermore, testing the CR and AVE values, if they are greater than 0.6 and 0.5 respectively, indicates that the validity and reliability criteria are met.

In this study, the calculation results for all variables show CR values above 0.60 and AVE values above 0.50. The calculation results for CR and AVE are as follows: for the Employee Satisfaction variable (CR=0.924; AVE=0.753), Employee Performance (CR=0.911; AVE=0.534), Employee Creativity (CR=0.834; AVE=0.630), Employee Learning (CR=0.889; AVE=0.669), and Employee Knowledge (CR=0.865; AVE=0.683). Based on the calculation results above, it can be concluded that all CR and AVE calculations in this study meet the criteria.

Table 1. Outer Loading Value

Item	Employee Satisfaction	Employee Performance	Employee Creativity	Employee Learning	Employee Knowledge
EC_1			0.893		
EC_2			0.634		
EC_3			0.831		
EK_1					0.908
EK_2					0.731
EK_3					0.831
EL_1				0.725	
EL_2				0.899	
EL_3				0.759	
EL_4				0.876	
EP_1		0.774			
EP_2		0.628			
EP_3		0.655			
EP_4		0.778			
EP_5		0.721			
EP_6		0.657			
EP_7		0.884			
EP_8		0.802			
EP_9		0.629			
ES_1	0.833				
ES_2	0.845				
ES_3	0.913				
ES_4	0.87				

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability and AVE

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Employee Satisfaction	0.891	0.916	0.923	0.75
Employee Performance	0.889	0.898	0.91	0.533
Employee Creativity	0.719	0.82	0.833	0.63
Employee Learning	0.833	0.851	0.889	0.669

Employee Knowledge	0.766	0.783	0.865	0.683
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Structural testing is conducted to estimate the cause-and-effect relationships between variables that cannot be directly measured, hence the R2 value can be found in each equation. Based on the results of structural testing, the R2 value for the Employee Satisfaction variable is 0.568, meaning that the employee creativity variable has a sufficiently strong influence, thus employee satisfaction can be obtained. For the R2 value of the Employee Performance variable, it is 0.853, indicating that the variables of employee satisfaction, employee learning, and employee knowledge have a strong influence, thus explaining employee performance. Furthermore, the R2 value for the Employee Creativity variable is 0.136, meaning that the employee learning variable has a weak influence, resulting in suboptimal employee creativity. For the Employee Knowledge variable, the R2 value obtained is 0.383, indicating that the employee learning variable has a weak influence, thus unable to explain the employee knowledge variable.

Table 3. Structural Testing (R²)

Variables	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Satisfaction	0.568	0.565
Employee Performance	0.853	0.85
Employee Creativity	0.136	0.129
Employee Knowledge	0.383	0.378

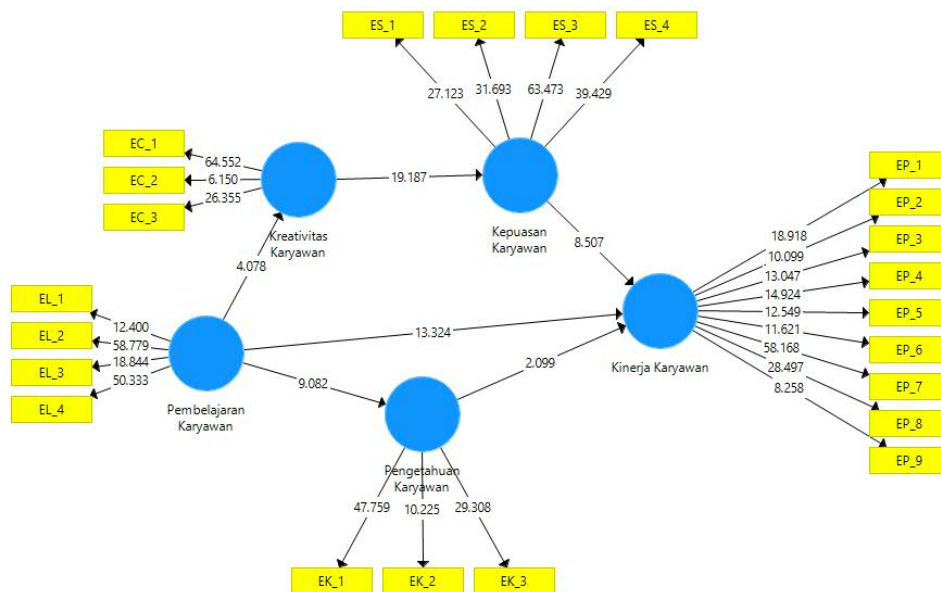


Figure 2. Path Diagram T – Value

The results of the Quality Model test indicate a good fit. This can be observed from the R square and SRMR values. Based on the Path Diagram T-Value in the above Figure 2, the hypothesis testing of the research model can be presented as follows:

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing of Research Model

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statements	T-Value	Explanation
H1	Employee learning positively influences employee knowledge	9,082	The data supports the hypothesis
H2	Employee learning positively influences employee creativity	4,078	The data supports the hypothesis
H3	Employee learning positively affects employee performance	13,324	The data supports the hypothesis
H4	Employee creativity positively influences employee satisfaction	19,187	The data supports the hypothesis
H5	Employee knowledge positively influences employee performance	2,099	The data supports the hypothesis
H6	Employee satisfaction positively influences employee performance	8,507	The data supports the hypothesis

Based on the hypothesis testing table above and the path value coefficients measurement results, it can be explained that Employee Learning has a positive and significant effect on Employee Knowledge, with a value of $t = 9.082 > 1.96$. Employee Learning has a positive effect on Employee Creativity, with a value of $t = 4.078 > 1.96$. Employee Learning has a positive effect on Employee Performance, with a value of $t = 13.324 > 1.96$. Employee Creativity has a positive effect on Employee Satisfaction, with a value of $t = 19.187 > 1.96$. Employee Knowledge has a positive effect on Employee Performance, with a value of $t = 2.099 > 1.96$. and Employee Satisfaction has a positive effect on Employee Performance, with a value of $t = 8.507 > 1.96$.

Employee Learning and Employee Knowledge

This study shows that employee learning has a positive effect on employee knowledge. The learning provided by the company in the form of training, workshops, seminars, and so on allows employees of the company to enhance their knowledge. Learning is considered one of the strategies to help organizations develop their capabilities, by facilitating employees with new knowledge and skills. A continuous learning process is imperative to improve employee knowledge. With an increasing understanding of knowledge by an employee, they will be able to handle job-related and non-job-related issues effectively and efficiently. Because the knowledge possessed by employees through continuous learning is crucial in helping the organization achieve its goals.

Employee Learning and Employee Creativity

Furthermore, this study also states that employee learning has a positive effect on employee creativity. This statement is supported by research which suggests that learning provided to employees in an organization can stimulate employee creativity in developing ideas and creative behavior. The personalities of employees in the tobacco company, supported by the learning they receive from the organization/superiors, will prompt them to think of more creative things, such as seeking new ideas or new ways to solve work-related problems, and developing new methods of working.

Employee Learning and Employee Performance

The next finding is that employee learning has a positive effect on employee performance. This is consistent with research conducted by Younas where learning, sometimes in the form of training provided by the organization, has a significant impact on employee performance. Learning is important for individuals; it is a dynamic concept that changes gradually. The effect of learning enhances employees' knowledge awareness and skills, which in turn leads to employee performance. The learning implemented by the tobacco company is intended to prepare for challenges such as digital technology. Training and development provided by the company will benefit employees, such as better positions and careers. Skills acquired through training and development will result in better performance for employees. In the tobacco company, employee performance is highly optimal because the majority of employees in the company are committed to learning.

Employee Creativity and Employee Satisfaction

This study also found that employee creativity has a positive effect on employee satisfaction. Employee creativity can help improve employee satisfaction because employees can find new ways to manage things. In enhancing employee creativity, organizations need to create a positive and conducive work environment, so that not only creativity is formed but also employee satisfaction. The personalities of a tobacco company employee can support the creativity of that employee in completing their work. A conducive work environment and appropriate workload can bring out new creative ideas from an employee.

Employee Knowledge and Employee Performance

Furthermore, this study also reveals that employee knowledge has a positive effect on employee performance. The higher the knowledge possessed by an employee, the higher their performance. This is consistent with research Trivellas which suggests that when employees are driven by the desire to improve their knowledge, they will have more opportunities to develop their skills and enhance their performance in an organization. Rohim & Budhiasa state that the better the knowledge possessed by employees, the better their performance will be, which includes technical expertise, training, and collaboration. The knowledge possessed by

employees of the tobacco company can be seen in how they meet deadlines effectively and efficiently in accordance with the company's quality standards. These employees are also required to have good effectiveness and capabilities and be able to be accountable for their work results.

Employee Satisfaction and Employee Performance

The last finding is that employee satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance. Edeh stated in their research that satisfaction is an individual's general attitude towards their job outcomes. Satisfied employees will have an impact on performance, driving factors of satisfaction include adequate salary payments, supportive coworkers, and job suitability with capabilities. Mira added that employee satisfaction is an important factor that contributes positively to employee performance. Employee satisfaction in the tobacco company is highly regarded, so the company achieves improved employee performance according to the company's desires.

E. CONCLUSION

The hypotheses constructed have been successfully supported, where employee learning has a direct influence on employee knowledge, employee creativity, and employee performance. Employee satisfaction has a direct influence on employee performance. Employee creativity has a direct influence on employee satisfaction. This study has several limitations that can be considered for future recommendations. Firstly, the respondents in this study are limited to staff employees only, different results may be found when using other respondents such as production employees or other supporting units in similar companies. Secondly, there are other factors that may affect employee performance, such as work motivation, organizational culture, and leadership, which should be investigated in the future to determine their influence on employee performance. Recommendations for further research include using different respondents such as employees working in specific units or other non-similar companies, using moderation or mediation variables to obtain different results, and using other variables that can affect employee performance.

The managerial implications of this research lie in how an organization can provide for the needs and desires of employees in order to improve performance. Firstly, employee satisfaction plays a crucial role in the performance of tobacco company employees, where the intended satisfaction creates a comfortable and conducive work environment. Providing benefits such as salary bonuses or promotions should also be considered as it greatly influences the performance of an employee. Secondly, employee learning and employee knowledge also play important roles in improving the performance of an organization's employees. Companies need to facilitate each employee with training or workshops that are aligned with their work to enhance effectiveness and capabilities, which will greatly influence an employee's performance in completing their tasks.

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