



Hybrid Digital-Conventional Leadership Model and Its Influence on the Well-Being and Performance of the Academic Community

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation in higher education, creating an urgent need for leaders who can effectively integrate digital technologies with conventional leadership approaches. However, many leaders still struggle to balance digital efficiency with relational effectiveness, which negatively affects the well-being and performance of the academic community.

This study examines the effects of a hybrid leadership model, which combines digital and conventional leadership approaches, on the psychological well-being and performance of the academic community in Indonesian higher education institutions. In addition, the study investigates the mediating role of well-being in the relationship between leadership and performance.

The study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 200–300 respondents using stratified random sampling through validated instruments, including the MLQ-5X, PERMA Profiler, DASS-21, and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were used to test the proposed hypotheses. Furthermore, qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to enrich the interpretation of the quantitative findings.

The results supported all four hypotheses. Hybrid leadership significantly and positively influenced both psychological well-being (H1) and academic performance (H2). Well-being also demonstrated a significant positive effect on performance (H3). Moreover, well-being partially mediated the relationship between hybrid leadership and performance (H4), indicating that leadership contributes to performance both directly and indirectly through the enhancement of well-being.

Overall, the findings suggest that hybrid leadership effectively improves both well-being and performance in higher education institutions. Therefore, higher education leaders should develop dual competencies by strengthening digital fluency while maintaining authentic interpersonal leadership skills. In addition, institutions should integrate well-being initiatives into their performance management systems as a strategic component of sustainable organizational development.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the leadership paradigm in higher education. The sudden transformation from face-to-face learning to online learning, from physical meetings to virtual meetings, and from direct interaction to digital communication has demanded rapid adaptation from leaders of higher education institutions. This condition not only changes the way operations work, but also affects the dynamics of relationships between individuals in higher education organizations. (Laufer et al., 2021)

Higher education as an institution that carries out the Tri Dharma mission (education, research, and community service) faces complex challenges in this digitalization era. (Syamsuddin

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et al., 2025) On the one hand, digital technology offers operational efficiency, wider reach, and innovation in learning and research methods. (Agustina & Kurniawati, 2024) On the other hand, traditional academic values such as personal mentoring, in-depth discussions, and character building still require humanistic interactions that cannot be fully replaced by technology. (Poh et al., 2025)

This phenomenon creates a need for a leadership model that can integrate the power of digital technology with conventional leadership wisdom. (Dr. Ayaz Qaiser et al., 2025) Hybrid leadership emerged as a response to this complexity, where leaders must not only be proficient in digital technology, but also be able to maintain and develop aspects of traditional leadership that have proven effective. (Gunawan et al., 2026) Early studies show that leadership implementation that is too focused on digital aspects tends to ignore the psychological needs of the academic community for connection and belonging. Conversely, leadership that is too rigid in conventional approaches has difficulty in adapting to the demands of the digital era. (Wati et al., 2025) This condition has an impact on the psychological well-being of the academic community which ultimately affects their performance in carrying out the Tri Dharma of higher education.

Psychological well-being of the academic community is a crucial issue in this context because it is directly related to productivity, creativity, and long-term performance sustainability. (Banda & Czako, 2025) Research shows that academicians who experience digital fatigue due to an abrupt transition to a digital environment, but do not receive adequate interpersonal support, tend to experience decreased motivation and engagement. (Nzarubara, 2025) In contrast, those who receive leadership support that is balanced between digital facilitation and human connection show better resilience.

The reality on the ground shows that many higher education leaders are still struggling to find the optimal balance between digital and conventional approaches. Most leaders have educational backgrounds and leadership experiences formed in the pre-digital era, so they need significant adaptation to master digital leadership competencies. (Terania, 2023) However, in this adaptation process, they often experience a dilemma between digital efficiency and relational effectiveness. This complexity is further increased given the diverse characteristics of the academic community being led. Different generations have different communication preferences and working styles. (Antonopoulou et al., 2021) Senior lecturers may be more comfortable with traditional leadership approaches, while millennial and Gen Z lecturers tend to expect digital-savvy leadership. (Jing et al., 2025) Education personnel with technical backgrounds may be more adaptive to digital tools, while those with traditional administrative backgrounds require more intensive support. (Majid Kamran, 2025)

The impact of this leadership model imbalance is not only felt at the individual level, but also at the institutional level. Universities that fail to develop effective hybrid leadership experience difficulties in maintaining quality assurance, building strategic partnerships, and achieving competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape. Based on these conditions, it is urgent to develop a comprehensive understanding of effective hybrid leadership models in the context of Indonesian higher education. This research is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions in optimizing leadership that is responsive to the demands of the digital era but remains grounded in fundamental academic values.

METHOD

Based on the literature review and conceptual framework that has been developed, this study proposes the following hypotheses: H1: Hybrid leadership has a significant positive effect on the well-being of the academic community. This hypothesis is based on the theory that leadership that is able to integrate digital efficiency with human connection will be more effective in meeting the psychological needs of the academic community, thus improving their psychological well-being.

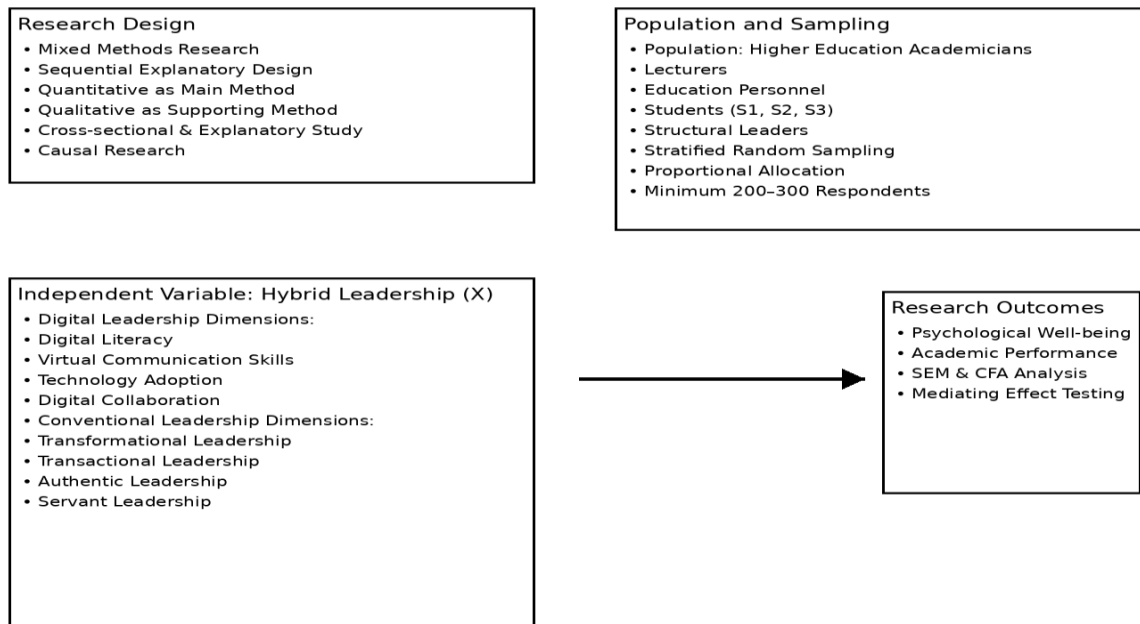
H2: Hybrid leadership has a significant positive effect on the performance of the academic community. This hypothesis is based on research showing that leadership that is adaptive and responsive to changing environments will be more effective in improving follower performance.

H3: Well-being has a significant positive effect on the performance of the academic community. This hypothesis is based on extensive research that shows a positive correlation between employee well-being and performance across different contexts and industries.

H4: Well-being mediates the relationship between hybrid leadership and the performance of the academic community. This hypothesis is based on a theoretical model that shows that leadership affects performance not only directly, but also through improvements in psychological well-being.

Research Design

Research Design Framework



The study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the influence of hybrid leadership on the well-being and performance of the academic community in higher education institutions. The quantitative phase serves as the primary method using a cross-sectional explanatory and causal research design, while the qualitative phase functions as a supporting method to enrich and interpret statistical findings. The target population consists of lecturers, education personnel, students, and structural leaders in higher education institutions. Samples are selected using stratified random sampling with proportional allocation based on academic status, faculty, and educational level. Data are collected through structured questionnaires adapted from validated instruments, including the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X), Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI), PERMA Profiler, DASS-21, Workplace Well-being Index (WWI), and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine causal relationships among variables. Meanwhile, qualitative data are obtained through semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and participant observation, which are analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings is conducted through convergent parallel analysis and joint display interpretation to ensure comprehensive understanding and triangulation of results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2010).

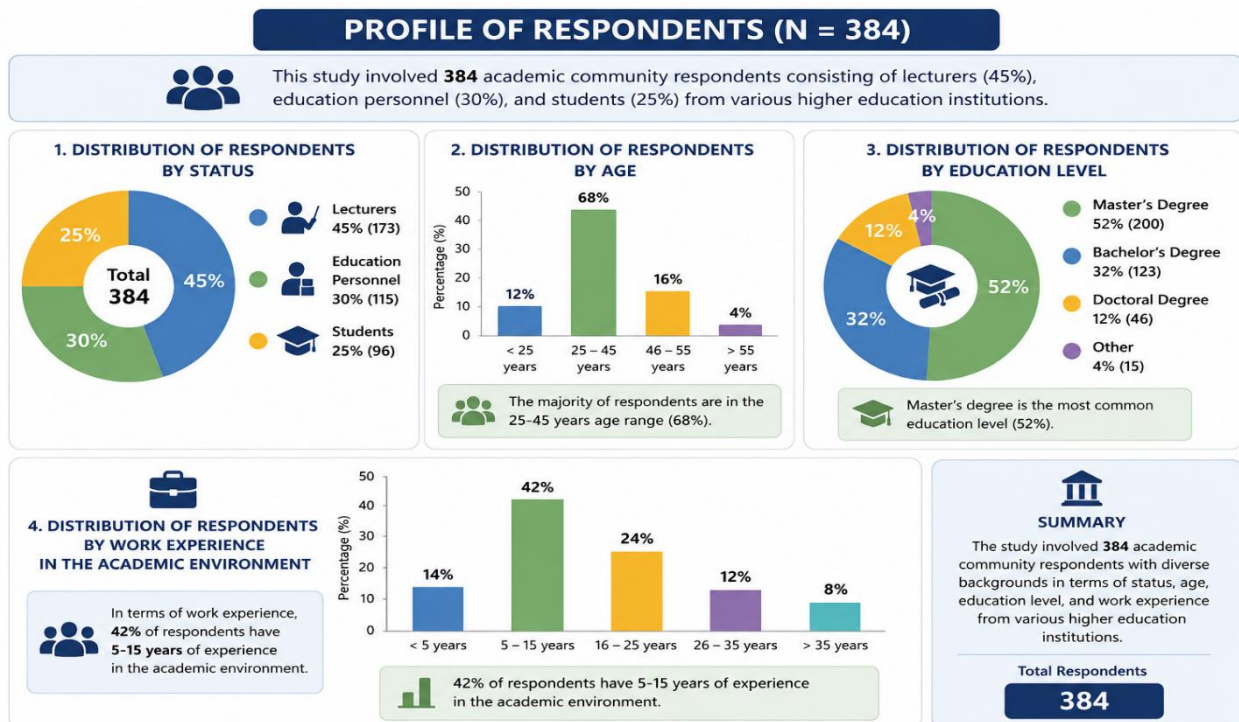
This study also emphasizes research ethics, validity, and reliability to ensure methodological rigor and credibility. Ethical principles include informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and beneficence to protect respondents throughout the research process. Internal validity is strengthened through the use of standardized and validated instruments, random

sampling procedures, and control variables such as age, gender, educational level, and work or study period. Reliability testing includes Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, test-retest reliability, and inter-rater reliability for qualitative findings. Nevertheless, several limitations remain unavoidable. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish definitive causal relationships, while self-report questionnaires may increase the risk of social desirability bias and common method bias. In addition, practical challenges such as time limitations, restricted access to respondents, and variations in institutional characteristics may affect the generalizability of findings. Despite these limitations, the study contributes significantly to the development of hybrid leadership models in higher education by integrating digital leadership competencies with conventional relational leadership approaches to improve both psychological well-being and academic performance (Seligman, 2011; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 384 academic community respondents consisting of lecturers (45%), education personnel (30%), and students (25%) from various higher education institutions. The distribution of respondents based on age shows that the majority are in the range of 25-45 years (68%), with a master's degree as the most (52%). In terms of work experience, 42% of respondents have 5-15 years of experience in the academic environment.



Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables Hybrid Leadership Model

The analysis shows that the implementation of hybrid leadership in higher education institutions is in the moderate to high category (mean = 3.74, SD = 0.82). The digital leadership dimension shows the highest score on the aspect of "use of technology in communication" (mean = 4.12), while conventional leadership is highest on "direct interpersonal relationships" (mean = 3.98).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Hybrid Leadership Model

Dimension	Mean	SD	Category
Digital Leadership	3.68	0.79	High
Conventional Leadership	3.81	0.74	High
Hybrid Integration	3.72	0.88	High
Total Hybrid Leadership	3.74	0.82	High

The descriptive analysis indicates that the implementation of hybrid leadership within higher education institutions is generally perceived positively by respondents. Among the measured dimensions, conventional leadership obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.81$; $SD = 0.74$), indicating that interpersonal, transformational, and relational leadership practices remain strongly dominant and consistently applied in the academic environment. Digital leadership also demonstrated a high category ($M = 3.68$; $SD = 0.79$), suggesting that leaders have shown adequate capability in utilizing digital technology, virtual communication, and technology-based collaboration in institutional management. Furthermore, the hybrid integration dimension achieved a high mean score ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 0.88$), reflecting that the combination of digital and conventional leadership approaches has been implemented effectively. Overall, the total hybrid leadership score ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 0.82$) confirms that respondents perceive leadership practices in higher education institutions as adaptive, balanced, and capable of integrating technological competence with human-centered leadership values.

Well-being of the Academic Community

Well-being of the academic community shows a good level with an average score of 3.66 ($SD = 0.76$). The psychological well-being dimension obtained the highest score (mean = 3.72), followed by social well-being (mean = 3.64), and physical well-being (mean = 3.62).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Well-being of the Academic Community

Dimension	Mean	SD	Category
Psychological Well Being	3.72	0.73	High
Physical Well Being	3.62	0.81	High
Social Well Being	3.64	0.79	High
Total Well Being	3.66	0.76	High

The descriptive analysis of well-being dimensions demonstrates that the academic community generally experiences a high level of well-being across psychological, physical, and social aspects. Psychological well-being recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 0.73$), indicating that respondents tend to possess positive emotional conditions, life satisfaction, resilience, and a strong sense of personal accomplishment within the academic environment. Physical well-being also showed a high category ($M = 3.62$; $SD = 0.81$), suggesting that most respondents perceive their health condition, energy level, and work-life balance positively despite academic demands. Similarly, social well-being achieved a high mean score ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 0.79$), reflecting supportive interpersonal relationships, effective social interaction, and a sense of belonging within the academic community. Overall, the total well-being score ($M = 3.66$; $SD = 0.76$) confirms that respondents generally experience favorable well-being conditions, indicating that the academic environment provides relatively positive psychological, physical, and social support for its members.

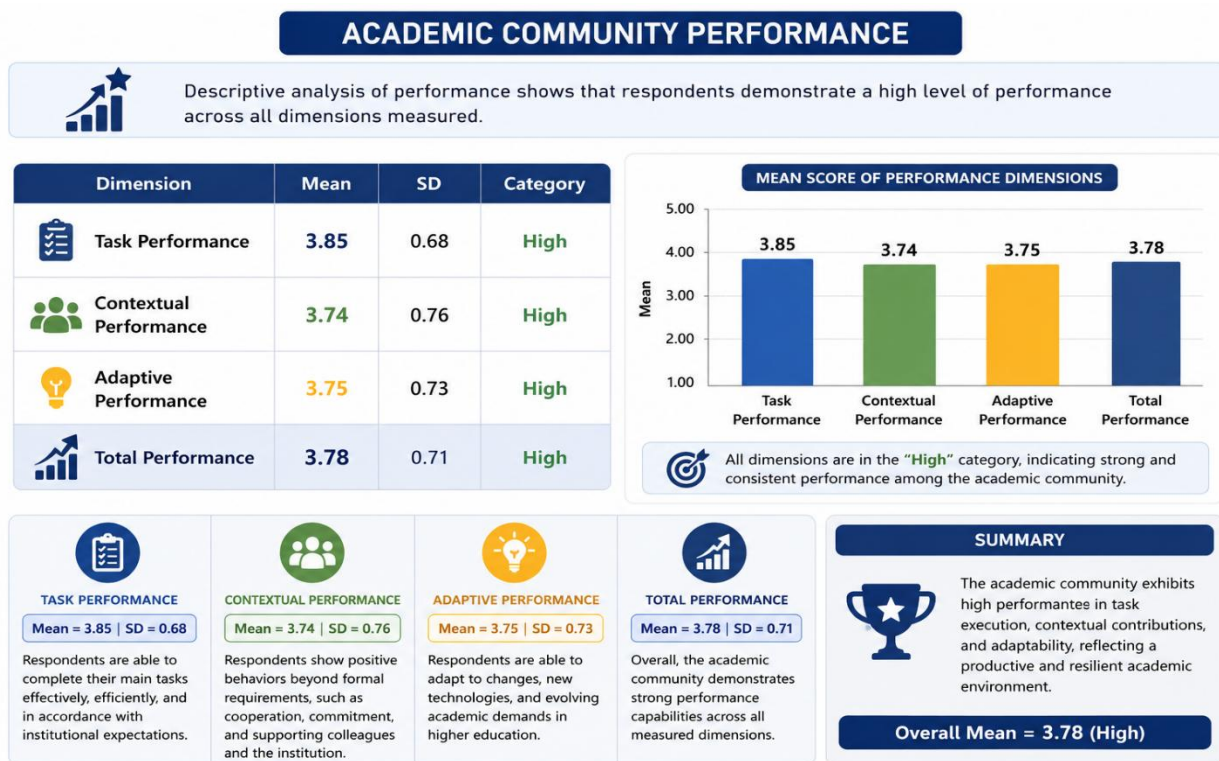
Academic Community Performance

The performance of the academic community is in the high category with a mean of 3.78 ($SD = 0.71$). The task performance dimension shows the highest score (mean = 3.85), followed by contextual performance (mean = 3.74), and adaptive performance (mean = 3.75).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Academic Community Performance

Dimension	Mean	SD	Category
Task Performance	3.85	0.68	High
Contextual Performance	3.74	0.76	High
Adaptive Performance	3.75	0.73	High
Total Performance	3.78	0.71	High

The descriptive analysis of academic community performance indicates that respondents demonstrate a consistently high level of performance across all measured dimensions. Task performance obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 0.68$), suggesting that respondents are generally able to complete their primary academic and professional responsibilities effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with institutional expectations. Contextual performance also showed a high category ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 0.76$), reflecting positive behaviors beyond formal job requirements, such as cooperation, organizational commitment, and willingness to support colleagues and institutional activities. In addition, adaptive performance achieved a high mean score ($M = 3.75$; $SD = 0.73$), indicating that respondents are capable of adjusting to changes, technological developments, and evolving academic demands within higher education environments.






Overall, the total performance score ($M = 3.78$; $SD = 0.71$) confirms that the academic community possesses strong performance capabilities, characterized by effective task completion, constructive organizational behavior, and adaptability to dynamic institutional challenges.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

The results of the instrument testing demonstrate that all statement items are valid and reliable for measuring the research variables. The validity test revealed that each item achieved a corrected item-total correlation value greater than 0.30, indicating that all indicators adequately represent their respective constructs. Furthermore, the reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha produced values of 0.891 for Hybrid Leadership, 0.876 for Well-being, and 0.883 for Performance, all of which exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 and confirm strong internal consistency among the measurement items. In addition, the classical assumption tests indicate that the data meet the

statistical requirements for further analysis. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test showed significance values greater than 0.05 for all variables, confirming that the data are normally distributed. The multicollinearity test also demonstrated acceptable tolerance values above 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. Moreover, the Glejser heteroscedasticity test produced significance values above 0.05, suggesting that the regression model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity problems and is therefore suitable for inferential statistical analysis.

Correlation Analysis

PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX			
Variable	1	2	3
1  Hybrid Leadership	1		
2  Well Being	0.374**	1	
3  Performance	0.721**	0.683**	1

INTERPRETATION

- 1 **Hybrid Leadership** has a positive correlation with Well Being ($r = 0.374$, $p < 0.01$) and Performance ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$).
- 2 **Well Being** has a positive correlation with Performance ($r = 0.683$, $p < 0.01$).
- 3 **All correlations are positive and significant** at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

NOTES

- ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
- Values range from -1 to +1.
- The closer the value is to +1, the stronger the positive relationship.

CORRELATION STRENGTH GUIDE (r)	0.00 – 0.19	0.20 – 0.39	0.40 – 0.59	0.60 – 0.79	0.80 – 1.00
	Very Weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong

The correlation analysis demonstrates significant positive relationships among all research variables. Hybrid Leadership shows a positive and significant correlation with Well-being ($r = 0.374$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that effective integration of digital and conventional leadership practices contributes to improving the psychological, physical, and social well-being of the academic community. In addition, Hybrid Leadership has a strong positive correlation with Performance ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that adaptive and balanced leadership practices substantially enhance task, contextual, and adaptive performance within higher education institutions. Furthermore, Well-being also exhibits a strong positive relationship with Performance ($r = 0.683$, $p < 0.01$), which indicates that individuals who experience higher levels of well-being tend to demonstrate better academic and professional performance. Overall, these findings confirm that hybrid leadership not only directly improves performance but also indirectly supports organizational effectiveness through the enhancement of well-being among members of the academic community.

Hypothesis Test

Effect of Hybrid Leadership on Well-being

The regression analysis results demonstrate that Hybrid Leadership significantly and positively influences the well-being of the academic community. The model produced a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.674$, indicating a strong relationship between Hybrid Leadership and Well-being. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.454$) shows that Hybrid Leadership explains 45.4% of the variance in well-being, while the remaining 54.6% may be influenced by other factors outside the model. The regression model also achieved a high F-value of 316.742 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the model is statistically significant and appropriate for predicting well-being outcomes. In addition, the regression coefficient for Hybrid Leadership ($B = 0.646$; $\beta = 0.674$; $t = 17.798$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that every one-unit increase in Hybrid Leadership is associated with a significant increase in the well-being level of the academic community. These findings empirically confirm that leaders who successfully integrate digital competencies with conventional interpersonal leadership approaches can substantially improve psychological, physical, and social well-being within higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 1 ACCEPTED

Hybrid leadership has a positive and significant effect on the well-being of academicians ($\beta = 0.674$, $t = 17.798$, $p < 0.001$). $R^2 = 0.454$ indicates hybrid leadership explains 45.4% of the variance in well-being. The regression analysis results indicate that Hybrid Leadership has a strong and significant positive effect on the performance of the academic community. The model generated a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.721$, demonstrating a strong relationship between Hybrid Leadership and Performance. In addition, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.520$) reveals that Hybrid Leadership explains 52.0% of the variance in academic community performance, while the remaining 48.0% is influenced by other variables beyond the scope of the study. The regression model also produced a high F-value of 413.895 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the model is statistically significant and suitable for predicting performance outcomes. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for Hybrid Leadership ($B = 0.646$; $\beta = 0.674$; $t = 17.798$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that an increase in Hybrid Leadership significantly improves the performance of the academic community. These empirical findings confirm that leaders who effectively combine digital leadership capabilities with conventional interpersonal leadership approaches can substantially enhance task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance within higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 2 ACCEPTED

Hybrid leadership has a positive and significant effect on academic community performance ($\beta = 0.721$, $t = 20.345$, $p < 0.001$). $R^2 = 0.520$ indicates hybrid leadership explains 52.0% of the variance in performance. The regression analysis results demonstrate that Well-being significantly and positively influences the performance of the academic community. The model produced a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.683$, indicating a strong relationship between Well-being and Performance. Moreover, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.467$) shows that Well-being explains 46.7% of the variance in performance, while the remaining 53.3% may be influenced by other factors outside the research model. The regression model also generated a high F-value of 334.002 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the model is statistically significant and suitable for predicting performance outcomes. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for Well-being ($B = 0.693$; $\beta = 0.683$; $t = 18.276$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that every increase in the level of well-being significantly improves the performance of the academic community. These empirical findings confirm that individuals who experience higher psychological, physical, and social well-being tend to demonstrate stronger task performance, better adaptability, and more positive contextual behavior within higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 3 ACCEPTED

Well being has a positive and significant effect on the performance of academicians ($\beta = 0.683$, $t = 18.276$, $p < 0.001$). $R^2 = 0.467$ indicates well-being explains 46.7% of the variance in performance.

Well Being Mediation Analysis

The path analysis results confirm that Well-being partially mediates the relationship between Hybrid Leadership and Performance within the academic community. The direct effect of Hybrid Leadership on Performance remains significant ($c' = 0.488$; $SE = 0.042$; $t = 11.571$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that Hybrid Leadership directly improves academic community performance even after the inclusion of the mediating variable. In addition, the indirect effect through Well-being also demonstrates a substantial mediation effect ($axb = 0.234$; $SE = 0.031$), with the confidence interval excluding zero, which confirms the statistical significance of the mediation pathway. Furthermore, the total effect of Hybrid Leadership on Performance is strong and significant ($c = 0.722$; $SE = 0.035$; $t = 20.345$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that Hybrid Leadership enhances performance both directly and indirectly through the improvement of psychological, physical, and social well-being. These empirical findings demonstrate that leaders who successfully integrate digital competencies with interpersonal leadership approaches not only strengthen organizational performance directly but also create supportive conditions that enhance well-being, which subsequently contributes to higher academic and professional performance.

Hypothesis 4 ACCEPTED

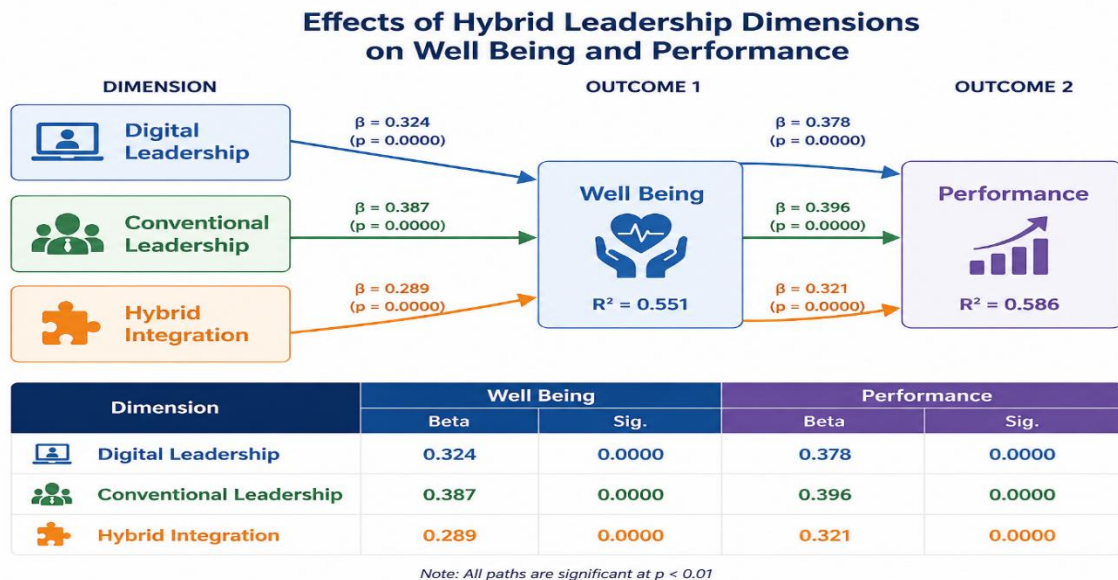
Well being mediates the relationship between hybrid leadership and academic community performance (indirect effect = 0.234, 95% CI [0.174, 0.297] does not include 0). Partial mediation occurred because the direct effect remained significant.

Additional Analysis

Comparison Based on Academic Community Status

The comparative analysis results reveal differences in perceptions among lecturers, staff, and students regarding Hybrid Leadership, Well-being, and Performance within higher education institutions. Lecturers reported the highest perception of Hybrid Leadership ($M = 3.82$), followed by staff ($M = 3.71$) and students ($M = 3.69$). The ANOVA test produced an F-value of 3.247 with a significance level of $p = 0.040$, indicating a statistically significant difference in perceptions of Hybrid Leadership among the three respondent groups. This finding suggests that lecturers tend to perceive leadership practices more positively than staff and students, possibly due to their greater involvement in institutional decision-making and leadership interactions. In contrast, the analysis of Well-being showed no significant difference among lecturers ($M = 3.71$), staff ($M = 3.65$), and students ($M = 3.61$), as reflected by the F-value of 1.892 and significance level of $p = 0.152$. Similarly, Performance scores did not differ significantly among lecturers ($M = 3.85$), staff ($M = 3.74$), and students ($M = 3.75$), with an F-value of 2.781 and $p = 0.063$. These empirical findings indicate that although perceptions of leadership vary across academic groups, the levels of well-being and performance remain relatively consistent throughout the academic community.

**Analysis of Hybrid Leadership Dimensions
Contribution of Hybrid Leadership Dimensions to Outcome**



Conventional leadership contributes the most to well-being, while for performance, conventional leadership is also dominant but with a slight difference with digital leadership

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Hybrid Leadership plays a significant role in enhancing both the well-being and performance of the academic community in higher education institutions. The descriptive analysis revealed that respondents perceived the implementation of hybrid leadership, which integrates digital and conventional leadership practices, at a high level. In addition, the academic community also reported high levels of psychological, physical, and social well-being, as well as strong task, contextual, and adaptive performance. These findings indicate that higher education leaders have generally succeeded in balancing technological competence with interpersonal leadership approaches in managing academic environments.

The inferential analysis further confirmed that Hybrid Leadership significantly and positively influences Well-being and Performance. Regression and path analysis showed that Hybrid Leadership directly improves academic community performance while also indirectly enhancing performance through increased well-being. The mediation analysis demonstrated that Well-being partially mediates the relationship between Hybrid Leadership and Performance, suggesting that leaders who create supportive, adaptive, and digitally responsive environments can strengthen institutional outcomes by improving the overall well-being of academic members. Furthermore, the correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships among Hybrid Leadership, Well-being, and Performance, confirming the interconnected nature of these variables within higher education settings.

The comparative analysis also identified significant differences in perceptions of Hybrid Leadership among lecturers, staff, and students, with lecturers reporting the highest leadership perception scores. However, no significant differences emerged in Well-being and Performance across the three groups, indicating relatively consistent well-being and performance conditions throughout the academic community. Overall, this study concludes that Hybrid Leadership serves as an effective leadership model for higher education institutions in the digital era because it simultaneously promotes organizational performance and the holistic well-being of academic members. Therefore, higher education institutions should strengthen leadership development programs that integrate digital fluency, adaptive management, and authentic interpersonal leadership skills to support sustainable institutional effectiveness.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This study involved three contributing authors who played important roles throughout the research process. PS served as the main contributor by leading the study design, preparing the first draft of the manuscript, conducting data analysis, and finalizing the manuscript preparation. NR contributed significantly to data collection, statistical analysis, and the development of the research methodology to ensure the accuracy and rigor of the study. Meanwhile, VS provided substantial support through an in-depth literature review, assistance in interpreting the research findings, and constructive feedback and suggestions for improving the manuscript draft. The collaborative contributions of all authors greatly supported the successful completion and quality enhancement of this research.

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