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Leadership Integrity and Organizational Performance in the Indonesian Navy: A Multilevel Model of Change Capability and Change Cynicism

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Abstract

Naval units face a leadership challenge: maintaining credible commitments while changing established ways of working. Drawing on dynamic capabilities theory, this study examines whether organizational change capability (OCC) mediates the relationship between leadership integrity (LI) and organizational performance (OP), and whether cynicism toward change (CTC) weakens the LI–OCC relationship. A multisource, cross-sectional survey collected staff assessments of LI and CTC and leadership team assessments of OCC and OP within the Indonesian Navy. Responses were linked by organizational unit, and the hypothesized relationships were estimated at the between-unit level using robust maximum likelihood and bootstrap confidence intervals. LI was positively associated with OCC, which was positively associated with OP after accounting for LI. The indirect association between LI and OP through OCC was significant at the mean level of CTC. However, the proposed negative interaction between LI and CTC was not statistically supported. The model accounted for 45.6% of the variance in OCC and 41.5% in OP. These findings position change capability as a plausible organizational link between leadership credibility and performance, while leaving the proposed moderating role of cynicism unresolved. For naval management, the study highlights the value of embedding leadership commitments in collective practices that support coordinated implementation and continuity during change.

1. Introduction

A naval unit's response to change extends beyond receiving and executing a command. It also involves adapting established routines, coordinating interdependent activities, and sustaining improvements in everyday work. Recent research in military organizations identifies organizational change capability as a multidimensional capacity that requires explicit attention within public management (Vanhengel et al., 2026). This perspective raises an important leadership question: how do leaders' personal qualities become a collective capability that supports organizational performance? For the Indonesian Navy, understanding this connection can inform how leadership practices support adaptation within a formal command structure.

Leadership integrity (LI) provides a compelling starting point. In this study, LI refers to personnel's perceptions of consistency between their leaders' words and actions, including whether leaders honor commitments and enact their stated values (Simons, 2002). A recent systematic review maps the multiple mechanisms and outcomes associated with leadership integrity, underscoring the need to specify how its influence operates (Nawaz et al., 2023). Evidence from commercial vessels further connects leaders' alignment of safety expectations and actions with preventive maintenance behavior and operational performance (Choo et al., 2024). These findings suggest that integrity can have practical consequences for coordinated work. They leave open a more specific question, however: whether credible leadership contributes to performance through the organization's capacity to implement change.

Organizational change capability (OCC) offers a mechanism for addressing this question. Research on OCC connects organizational and individual antecedents with organizational outcomes, although its conceptualization and explanatory relationships remain fragmented (Supriharyanti & Sukoco, 2023). Empirically, Sukoco et al. (2022) found that OCC mediated the relationship between middle manager capabilities and organizational performance in Indonesian universities. This evidence establishes a useful basis for examining managerial contributions to adaptation, while leaving the distinctive role of behavioral credibility to be explained. Managerial capability concerns what leaders can accomplish; integrity concerns whether personnel perceive consistency in what leaders promise and enact. Their implications for collective change therefore require separate theoretical attention.

Drawing on dynamic capabilities theory, we propose that LI relates to organizational performance (OP) through its contribution to OCC. Dynamic capabilities theory emphasizes the organizational processes through which resources and competencies are renewed as conditions change (Teece, 2007). Applied to this study, consistent leadership conduct should make commitments to change more credible and provide personnel with clearer expectations about implementation. We argue that this credibility encourages the information sharing, coordination, and sustained involvement through which a unit develops its capacity to change. OCC can subsequently support performance by enabling the unit to incorporate these contributions into its working practices. The proposed mechanism thus locates the organizational value of integrity in the collective processes that translate credible commitments into implementation.

Whether this translation occurs may also depend on cynicism toward change (CTC). CTC combines pessimism about the prospects of change with negative attributions concerning those responsible for implementing it (Wanous et al., 2000). Social information processing theory suggests that personnel interpret workplace initiatives using cues from their social environment (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Building on this perspective, we propose that personnel may regard a leader as consistent while remaining doubtful that organizational change will succeed. Such doubts could weaken the additional participation and coordination that LI would otherwise encourage, thereby constraining the development of OCC. Nevertheless, recent evidence indicates that cynicism has complex relationships with change recipients' reactions, cautioning against treating its consequences as uniformly detrimental (Ferrari, 2024). Its proposed moderating role therefore warrants direct examination. This distinction separates confidence in a leader's conduct from confidence in the prospects of organizational change.

Accordingly, this study examines whether LI is associated with OP through OCC and whether CTC weakens the relationship between LI and OCC in Indonesian Navy units. A multisource survey combines staff assessments of LI and CTC with leadership team assessments of OCC and OP, linking these perspectives through their organizational units. The study offers three contributions. First, it extends research on the antecedents of change capability by specifying the potential contribution of leaders' behavioral credibility. Second, it specifies OCC as an organizational mechanism connecting perceived integrity with unit performance. Third, it examines whether pessimistic expectations about change constrain the capability benefits associated with LI. Together, these contributions clarify how leadership

conduct, organizational capability, and personnel's interpretations of change jointly relate to performance in a military public organization.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1 Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT)

Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) explains how organizations adapt to changing environments by integrating, developing, and reconfiguring their competencies and resources (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007). Within this perspective, organizational change capability (OCC) represents the collective capacity to renew established practices through learning, coordinated implementation, and a supportive organizational context (Supriharyanti & Sukoco, 2023). Its relevance extends to military organizations, as demonstrated by the development and validation of a public-sector OCC measure using personnel from Belgian military organizations (Vanhengel et al., 2026). In the Indonesian Navy, we apply DCT to explain how leadership integrity provides a credible foundation for collective adaptation, while cynicism toward change constrains personnel's engagement in capability development. Leadership integrity is therefore positioned as an antecedent of OCC, and cynicism as a boundary condition. This framework connects leadership and individual responses to the organizational processes through which adaptation may improve performance.

2.2 The relationship between Leadership Integrity (LI) toward Organizational Change Capability (OCC)

Leadership integrity (LI) concerns the perceived coherence of leaders' moral principles, expressed commitments, and actual conduct (Nawaz et al., 2023). Such coherence should make change priorities more credible and reduce uncertainty about whether leaders will sustain their commitments during implementation. Related empirical evidence shows that transformational leadership is positively associated with OCC through employees' trust in leadership (Cao & Le, 2024). Extending this relational logic, we argue that leaders who consistently enact their stated principles encourage personnel to share implementation problems, participate in learning, and coordinate adjustments. These individual contributions can develop into collective routines through repeated interaction, consistent with research emphasizing the social emergence of collective responses to change (Bouckenooghe et al., 2023). Within naval units, maintaining promised support and applying stated standards consistently should strengthen the credibility of proposed changes and facilitate their coordinated implementation. Accordingly, we propose: H1. LI has a positive effect on OCC.

2.3 The relationship between Organizational Change Capability (OCC) toward Organizational Performance (OP)

OCC can improve organizational performance by enabling units to identify implementation problems, revise ineffective routines, and institutionalize useful changes. Its learning component supports the acquisition and application of experience, while its process and contextual components facilitate

coordination and sustained implementation (Supriharyanti & Sukoco, 2023). Consistent with this argument, multilevel evidence links OCC positively to organizational change performance in Indonesian higher education institutions (Supriharyanti et al., 2024). Research on Indonesian local government also reports a positive relationship between OCC and organizational performance (Aldhi et al., 2026). Applied to the Indonesian Navy, these mechanisms suggest that units with stronger OCC should be better able to incorporate lessons from training and task execution, coordinate procedural adjustments, and align resources with changing requirements. Such capabilities are expected to improve task effectiveness and resource utilization by making organizational adjustments more consistent and actionable. Therefore: H2. OCC has a positive effect on OP.

2.4 The Mediating Role of Organizational Change Capability (OCC)

From a dynamic capability perspective, leadership integrity (LI) should contribute to organizational performance (OP) partly by strengthening the collective capacity to implement and sustain change. This explanation is consistent with research highlighting the intervening organizational mechanisms through which dynamic capabilities generate performance benefits (Scheuer & Thaler, 2023). We propose that consistency between leaders' commitments and actions makes change priorities credible, encouraging personnel to communicate operational problems, coordinate adjustments, and maintain implementation efforts. OCC consolidates these contributions into repeatable processes for collective learning, procedural revision, and resource deployment. It therefore provides the organizational mechanism through which leadership credibility can produce sustained adaptation. Empirical findings from related settings support this proposed mechanism. Q. Cao et al. (2024) found that project governance mediated the relationship between leader behavioral integrity and project performance, suggesting that organizational arrangements help translate integrity into performance outcomes. In commercial shipping, Choo et al. (2024) showed that supervisors' enacted safety commitments supported preventive maintenance behavior, which was positively associated with OP. Together, these findings support the broader argument that integrity generates performance benefits through its expression in organizational practices. Extending this reasoning to Indonesian Navy units, we posit that LI strengthens OCC by encouraging coordinated engagement in change, while OCC translates this engagement into changes in routines and resource deployment. This reasoning yields the following hypothesis: H3. OCC mediates the relationship between LI and OP.

2.5 The Moderating Role of Cynicism Toward Change (CTC)

Cynicism toward change (CTC) reflects pessimism about the success of organizational change and negative attributions concerning those responsible for implementing it (Wanous et al., 2000). Social Information Processing Theory suggests that employees interpret organizational cues through their social environment and prior experiences (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Building on this perspective, we propose that CTC conditions the extent to which leadership integrity mobilizes contributions to

organizational change. When CTC is low, consistency between leaders' commitments and actions should make change initiatives credible, encouraging personnel to share information, address implementation problems, and sustain coordinated effort. These contributions provide the behavioral foundations for developing OCC.

When CTC is high, established expectations of failure may reduce the persuasive value of credible leadership conduct. Personnel may recognize a leader's integrity yet remain unconvinced that their participation will produce lasting organizational improvements. Consequently, greater LI should generate smaller increases in the initiative, collective learning, and implementation persistence required to strengthen OCC. Relevant evidence links change cynicism to reduced follower championing behavior, although empowering leadership can buffer this association (Sabar et al., 2022). Lestari et al. (2024) also provide tentative evidence that CTC weakens the relationship between dynamic managerial capabilities and trust in leadership. These findings suggest that leadership influence depends partly on how personnel interpret the prospects of change. Extending this reasoning to Indonesian Navy units, we expect high CTC to constrain the additional engagement that LI would otherwise stimulate. Personnel may comply with formal directives while contributing fewer improvement suggestions and less proactive coordination. Because OCC develops through sustained collective adjustments, this restricted engagement should weaken the translation of LI into OCC. Accordingly, we hypothesize H4. CTC weaken the effect of LI on OCC.

3. Research Method

3.1 Population and Sampling

This study focused on leadership teams and staff within the Indonesian Navy. Data were collected using Google Forms, with the survey link circulated through multiple communication groups spanning different organizational units. Recruitment followed a nonprobability convenience approach with voluntary self-selection, as participation depended on access to the circulated link and the decision to complete the questionnaire (Andrade, 2021). The resulting dataset covered 106 organizational units (*satuan kerja*), comprising 439 leadership team records and 1,905 staff records (Table 1). These units represent the organizational coverage achieved through recruitment. The two respondent groups contributed complementary perspectives: the leadership questionnaire addressed organizational change capability and organizational performance, while the staff questionnaire captured perceived leadership integrity and cynicism toward change. Responses were associated with their respective units through the reported unit affiliation. Given the recruitment procedure, the sample does not establish statistical representativeness of the Indonesian Navy as a whole. The demographic profiles highlight the coexistence of extensive institutional experience and relatively recent unit membership. Among leadership respondents, 82.00% had served in the Navy for more than 20 years, yet 48.75% had spent less than one year in their current unit. Staff displayed greater variation in age and service experience, with the largest age category being 38–47 years (35.54%). Educational backgrounds also differed: master's degrees were most common among leadership respondents (44.19%), whereas senior

secondary education predominated among staff (58.74%). Commissioned officers constituted 66.25% of staff, indicating that the distinction between the respondent groups reflected organizational roles rather than military rank alone.

Table 1
Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Leadership team (*f*)	%	Staff (*f*)	%
Age (years)				
17–27	4	0.91	359	18.85
28–37	18	4.10	306	16.06
38–47	147	33.49	677	35.54
48–58	270	61.50	563	29.55
Gender				
Male	430	97.95	1,717	90.13
Female	9	2.05	188	9.87
Highest educational attainment				
Doctoral degree (S3)	15	3.42	14	0.73
Master's degree (S2)	194	44.19	212	11.13
Bachelor's degree (S1)	103	23.46	429	22.52
Diploma (D1/D2/D3)	16	3.64	131	6.88
Senior education (SMA/SMK/MA)	111	25.28	1,119	58.74
Length of service in the Indonesian Navy (years)				
< 5	10	2.28	380	19.95
5–10	6	1.37	101	5.30
11–15	12	2.73	187	9.82
16–20	51	11.62	291	15.28
> 20	360	82.00	946	49.66
Tenure in the current unit (years)				
< 1	214	48.75	567	29.76
1–3	179	40.77	769	40.37
4–5	7	1.59	202	10.60
> 5	39	8.88	367	19.27
Military rank category				
Commissioned officer *(Perwira)*	438	99.77	1,262	66.25

Characteristic	Leadership team (*f*)	%	Staff (*f*)	%
Age (years)				
Non-commissioned officer *(Bintara)*	1	0.23	526	27.61
Enlisted personnel *(Tamtama)*	0	0.00	117	6.14
TOTAL	**439**	**100.00**	**1,905**	**100.00**

3.2 Data Collection and Item Measurement

Data were collected through Google Forms, with questionnaire links circulated through communication groups across Indonesian Navy units. Two respondent groups provided complementary assessments: staff evaluated leadership integrity (LI) and cynicism toward change (CTC), whereas leadership respondents assessed organizational change capability (OCC) and organizational performance (OP). Responses were linked through reported unit affiliations. The administered questionnaires used five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). LI was operationalized as perceived consistency between leaders' words and actions using eight items adapted from Simons et al. (2007). CTC was assessed using an adapted 12-item set informed by Wanous et al. (2000), comprising four items each addressing pessimism, dispositional attribution, and situational attribution. These components captured expectations about change outcomes and explanations for unsuccessful change. OCC was measured using 32 items adapted from Judge and Douglas (2009), covering eight domains: trustworthy leadership, involved middle management, capable champions, innovative culture, trusting followers, systems thinking, accountable culture, and effective communication. Each domain comprised four items, collectively addressing the leadership, cultural, and coordination capacities underlying organizational change. OP was assessed through leadership respondents' evaluations of their unit's performance. This allocation of measures combined staff perceptions of leadership and change with leadership assessments of organizational capabilities and outcomes (van Elten and van der Kolk, 2025). Table 2 summarizes the measurement framework, including the source measures, construct dimensions, item codes, and corresponding standardized factor loadings. The items are organized by construct and, for CTC and OCC, by their respective dimensions, providing a reference for the measurement assessment reported in Section 4.2.

Table 2
Research items and factor loadings

Construct / dimension / item	**Loading Factor**
Leadership integrity (LI), 8-item; Simons et al. (2007)	
LI1	0.692
LI2	0.742
LI3	0.705
LI4	0.715
LI5	0.739
LI6	0.727
LI7	0.714
LI8	0.762
Cynicism toward change (CTC), 12-item; Wanous et al. (2000)	
Pessimism, 4-item	
CTC1	0.724
CTC2	0.752
CTC3	0.726
CTC4	0.724
Dispositional attribution, 4-item	
CTC5	0.718
CTC6	0.706
CTC7	0.737
CTC8	0.717
Situational attribution, 4-item	
CTC9	0.751
CTC10	0.746
CTC11	0.721
CTC12	0.718
Organizational change capability (OCC), 32-item; Judge and Douglas (2009)	
Trustworthy leadership, 4-item	

Construct / dimension / item	Loading Factor
OCC1	0.714
OCC2	0.697
OCC3	0.670
OCC4	0.703
Involved middle management, 4-item	
OCC5	0.736
OCC6	0.704
OCC7	0.777
OCC8	0.713
Capable champions, 4-item	
OCC9	0.721
OCC10	0.727
OCC11	0.750
OCC12	0.700
Innovative culture, 4-item	
OCC13	0.724
OCC14	0.696
OCC15	0.682
OCC16	0.659
Trusting followers, 4-item	
OCC17	0.703
OCC18	0.734
OCC19	0.741
OCC20	0.681
Systems thinking, 4-item	
OCC21	0.741
OCC22	0.724
OCC23	0.736

Construct / dimension / item	Loading Factor
OCC24	0.718
Accountable culture, 4-item	
OCC25	0.697
OCC26	0.747
OCC27	0.703
OCC28	0.713
Effective communication, 4-item	
OCC29	0.696
OCC30	0.740
OCC31	0.726
OCC32	0.700
Organizational performance (OP), 7-item; van Elten and van der Kolk (2025)	
OP1	0.757
OP2	0.827
OP3	0.821
OP4	0.750
OP5	0.764
OP6	0.842
OP7	0.763

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis combined respondent-level measurement assessment with organizational-unit path analysis. Separate maximum-likelihood confirmatory factor analyses examined the measurement structure of LI, CTC, OCC, and OP. Standardized factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) were examined for convergent validity, while Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) assessed internal consistency. The suitability of aggregating responses was evaluated using ICC(1), ICC(2), and within-group agreement, rWG(J), distinguishing between-unit variability, the reliability of unit means, and agreement among respondents within units (LeBreton & Senter, 2008).

Structural relationships were estimated using robust maximum likelihood (MLR) in Mplus 8.3. Although implemented within a two-level specification, all hypothesized paths were specified at the between-unit level using observed composite scores. OCC was regressed on LI, CTC, and their interaction, with the

interaction calculated from mean-centered predictors. OP was regressed on OCC and LI, allowing the indirect association between LI and OP through OCC to be evaluated. Supplementary analyses used 10,000 bootstrap resamples of entire organizational units to obtain 95% confidence intervals. The LI–OCC association and the corresponding indirect effect were interpreted at the mean level of CTC.

For the available 106-unit model retaining the original eight-item OP measure, structural fit statistics were $\chi^2(2) = 1.094$, $p = 0.579$, RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.030, and between-unit SRMR = 0.027. These statistics indicated limited discrepancy between the observed and model-implied relationships among composite scores. However, the model had only two degrees of freedom, and its structural fit was considered separately from item-level measurement adequacy (Kline, 2023). Explained variance was assessed using R^2, yielding 0.456 for OCC and 0.415 for OP.

3.4 Data Aggregation

Leadership respondents' assessments of OCC and OP were averaged within each naval unit to obtain organizational-level scores. Aggregation was evaluated by jointly considering within-unit agreement, between-unit variability, and the reliability of unit means using rWG(J), ICC(1), and ICC(2), respectively (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). As reported in Table 3, mean rWG(J) values were 0.994 for OCC and 0.984 for OP, indicating very strong agreement under a uniform null distribution. ICC(1) values of 0.268 and 0.274 indicated that approximately 26.8% and 27.4% of the variance in individual ratings was attributable to differences between units. These differences were statistically significant for OCC ($F = 2.808$, $p < .001$) and OP ($F = 2.868$, $p < .001$). However, ICC(2) values of .644 and .651 indicated moderate reliability of the unit means and fell below the commonly used .70 benchmark. Collectively, the findings supported aggregation with qualifications: respondents demonstrated strong agreement and meaningful between-unit differentiation, while the limited reliability of unit means warranted caution when interpreting organizational-level relationships.

Table 3
Data aggregation

Variable	ICC(1)	ICC(2)	rWG(J)	F-ratio	p-value
OCC	0.268	0.644	0.994	2.808	< .001
OP	0.274	0.651	0.984	2.868	< .001

4. Results

4.1 Common Method Bias (CMB)

The study used multiple respondent sources, with staff assessing LI and CTC and leadership respondents assessing OCC and OP. Preliminary single-factor diagnostics were conducted separately for these two groups. Unrotated principal component analyses showed that the first component explained 34.27% of the variance in staff responses and 43.63% in leadership responses. Supplementary single-

factor principal axis analyses yielded corresponding estimates of 31.90% and 42.35%. All estimates were below the conventional 50% benchmark, indicating that no single component or factor accounted for most of the item variance. However, these diagnostics cannot establish the absence of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2024). Although source separation provides a procedural safeguard for relationships between staff-rated and leadership-rated constructs, potential same-source effects remain relevant to the OCC–OP relationship.

4.2 Descriptive, Reliability, and Validity Analysis

Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, AVE, and correlations among the four constructs. Unit-level mean scores were relatively high for LI (M = 4.070, SD = 0.271), OCC (M = 4.128, SD = 0.285), and OP (M = 4.123, SD = 0.280), whereas CTC was below the scale midpoint (M = 2.557, SD = 0.345). This pattern suggests favorable perceptions of leadership integrity, change capability, and performance alongside comparatively lower cynicism. Respondent-level Cronbach's alpha and CR values ranged from 0.898 to 0.971, indicating high internal consistency. AVE values ranged from 0.511 to 0.619, exceeding the conventional .50 criterion and providing preliminary evidence of convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Nevertheless, these favorable reliability and AVE estimates did not resolve the CFA misfit previously identified for LI and OP. The unit-level correlations revealed a coherent pattern of associations. LI was positively associated with OCC (r = 0.550, p < .001) and OP (r = 0.442, p < .001). OCC exhibited the strongest positive association with OP (r = 0.635, p < .001). Conversely, CTC was negatively associated with OCC (r = − 0.384, p < .001) and OP (r = − 0.291, p = 0.003). The association between LI and CTC was negligible and statistically nonsignificant (r = − 0.022, p = 0.830).

Table 4
Descriptive statistics, reliability, validity, and correlation matrices

Variables	Mean	SD	Cα	CR	1	2	3	4
1) LI	4.070	0.271	0.898	0.898	**0.525**	< .001	0.302	0.195
2) CTC	2.557	0.345	0.931	0.931	-0.022	**0.531**	0.148	0.085
3) OCC	4.128	0.285	0.971	0.971	0.550***	-0.384***	**0.511**	0.403
4) OP	4.123	0.280	0.929	0.928	0.442***	-0.291**	0.635***	**0.619**
** p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 (two-tailed)*								

4.3 Multilevel Analysis

The between-unit structural results supported three of the four hypotheses (Table 5). At the mean level of CTC, LI was positively associated with OCC (β = 0.529, p < .001), supporting H1. OCC was positively associated with OP after accounting for LI (β = 0.562, p < .001), supporting H2. The indirect association between LI and OP through OCC was significant at mean CTC (β = 0.297, p < .001), supporting H3. The corresponding unstandardized indirect effect was 0.307, with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of [0.187, 0.429], consistent with the proposed mediating role of OCC. The LI × CTC interaction was

negative but statistically nonsignificant (β = −0.129, p = 0.109); therefore, H4 was not supported. Although the coefficient followed the hypothesized direction, the evidence was insufficient to conclude that CTC weakened the association between LI and OCC. Overall, the model explained 45.6% of the variance in OCC and 41.5% of the variance in OP. These findings indicate that LI was associated with OP indirectly through OCC, while the proposed moderating role of CTC remained unsupported. Figure 1 presents the research model and structural estimates, including the hypothesized relationships and the explained variance in OCC and OP

Table 5
Hypothesis testing results

H	Path	β	Est./S.E.	p-value	Result
H1	LI → OCC	0.529	6.940	< .001	Supported
H2	OCC → OP	0.562	6.989	< .001	Supported
H3	LI → OCC → OP	0.297	5.169	< .001	Supported
H4	LI × CTC → OCC	-0.129	-1.601	0.109	Not supported

Note

**** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.*

5. Discussion

The findings draw attention to a productive tension in naval leadership: personnel are expected to change established practices while relying on leaders to remain dependable. The association between LI and OCC suggests that these expectations can be compatible. Consistency in honoring commitments may provide continuity while procedures and responsibilities evolve. Personnel may then be more willing to adjust how they work because they can anticipate whether leaders will support implementation when difficulties arise. Cao and Le (2024) identify trust as a mechanism connecting leadership with change capability. Our findings suggest that the dependability underlying such relationships deserves attention in its own right. From a dynamic capabilities perspective, integrity may stabilize the expectations on which organizational adaptation depends (Teece, 2007).

The mediation pattern further suggests that the performance relevance of integrity may reflect whether leadership credibility becomes embedded in how a unit works. A leader’s commitment to resolve coordination problems may have limited organizational reach if every adjustment continues to require that leader’s personal intervention. When commitments become established responsibilities, communication practices, and follow-up arrangements, they could support a more durable capacity for change. This interpretation extends the capability mechanism examined by Sukoco et al. (2022) by identifying the conversion of personal credibility into collective working arrangements as a process

worth investigating. It also resonates with Choo et al. (2024), whose findings connect leaders' alignment of safety expectations and actions with preventive maintenance behavior and operational performance.

This interpretation acquires particular relevance from the respondent profile, in which extensive naval service coexists with relatively recent membership of the current unit. Familiarity with the institution may therefore coexist with an ongoing need to learn whether a particular leader's commitments are dependable. This combination raises a question about the durability of leadership influence when personnel move between units. If confidence remains attached primarily to an individual leader, a transfer could require working relationships and expectations to be rebuilt. If credible commitments become embedded in shared practices, some of their organizational value may persist. The study did not examine leadership transitions over time, but its findings identify OCC as a plausible locus for investigating whether the benefits associated with integrity become less dependent on the continued presence of a particular leader.

The cynicism finding challenges the expectation that unfavorable attitudes necessarily diminish the organizational relevance of leadership integrity. Units with greater average CTC tended to receive less favorable capability and performance assessments, yet the proposed weakening of the LI–OCC relationship was not established. This pattern is compatible with two distinct objects of judgment: the dependability of a leader and the feasibility of organizational change. A unit may regard its leader as consistent while remaining doubtful about the resources, coordination, or continuity required for an initiative to succeed. Improving perceptions of a leader's integrity might therefore leave some doubts about implementation unresolved. Ferrari's (2024) account of the complex relationships between cynicism and change reactions supports examining these judgments more carefully. The unsupported interaction invites such refinement; it does not demonstrate that integrity neutralizes cynicism.

For naval organizations, this distinction raises the possibility that continued execution can coexist with weaker voluntary support for change. Personnel could fulfill a revised reporting requirement while becoming less inclined to identify emerging problems, suggest improvements, or encourage colleagues to engage with the initiative. Sabar et al. (2022) found that cynicism was negatively related to follower championing behavior, with empowering leadership buffering that relationship. Their findings direct attention to the discretionary contributions through which change is sustained and improved. In our setting, formal responsibilities might help maintain implementation even when enthusiasm is limited, while the consequences of cynicism could become more apparent in initiative and collective learning. This possible separation between required execution and voluntary contribution suggests that visible compliance alone would be an incomplete basis for judging the quality of engagement with change.

The unsupported interaction also raises a question about how cynicism is distributed within a unit. Similar average scores can describe a broadly shared outlook, a skeptical minority, or opposing groups with strongly different views. These configurations may present different challenges for translating leadership credibility into coordinated action. Bouckenooghe et al. (2023) emphasize the processes through which individual reactions become collective responses, while Nguyen et al. (2026) distinguish

convergent, minority-belief, fragmented, and bimodal patterns of change attitudes. Applying this perspective, the organizational consequences of cynicism may depend on its concentration and alignment across personnel, as well as its average intensity. Examining these configurations, which were not modeled here, could clarify when skepticism becomes consequential for collective capability.

6. Theoretical Contributions

The principal theoretical contribution is to position leadership credibility within a capability-based explanation of organizational performance. DCT emphasizes the processes and organizational arrangements that support adaptation (Teece, 2007), while behavioral integrity concerns the perceived alignment between leaders' words and actions (Simons, 2002). Connecting these perspectives through OCC identifies a plausible route through which dependable leadership acquires organizational significance. The findings support an account in which credible commitments are associated with the collective capacity to implement change, which is, in turn, associated with performance. This brings attention to the credibility of leadership commitments as a potential condition supporting capability development.

This argument also distinguishes consistency in leadership conduct from persistence in existing practices. Reliable commitments may make organizational adjustments more manageable by providing stable expectations about how leaders will act as working arrangements evolve. The resulting theoretical proposition is that behavioral consistency and organizational flexibility can be complementary. Evidence from matched staff and leadership assessments places this proposition within a naval setting and locates the observed relationships at the organizational-unit level. The study consequently offers a basis for investigating how credibility becomes embedded in collective practices, while leaving the temporal process of capability formation open to direct examination.

The findings further refine the proposed role of CTC as a boundary condition. Its negative associations with OCC and OP, alongside the unsupported interaction, show why the general association of cynicism with organizational outcomes should be distinguished from its moderating role. They motivate a more specific distinction between judgments about a leader's dependability and judgments about the prospects of organizational change. These judgments may carry different implications for participation and capability development. The contribution lies in identifying this distinction for further theorization; the findings do not establish that leadership integrity offsets cynicism or that the LI–OCC relationship is invariant across contexts.

7. Managerial Implication

For naval commanders and leadership teams, the findings suggest treating the delivery of commitments as part of change management. Before announcing an initiative, leaders should clarify its purpose, resource requirements, responsibilities, and expected completion dates. Progress reviews can then compare stated commitments with subsequent decisions and actions. When circumstances require a

change of direction, explaining the reasons and revising expectations promptly provides personnel with a coherent account of what remains achievable. Leadership development could incorporate staff feedback on these observable behaviors, making consistency in everyday decisions a practical focus of development.

The role of OCC also directs attention to how commitments are carried through the unit. Assigning responsibility for coordination, maintaining accessible records of implementation decisions, and reviewing unresolved problems can help distribute change responsibilities across the leadership team. The combination of long naval service and relatively short current-unit tenure makes continuity a relevant managerial concern. Handover arrangements could therefore include outstanding commitments, implementation obstacles, and lessons from earlier initiatives. Such practices offer a practical way to preserve knowledge and accountability when personnel change assignments. Their value should be assessed through subsequent implementation progress and performance evidence.

CTC should prompt inquiry into the reasons for scepticism. Leaders can distinguish doubts about their own conduct from concerns about resources, feasibility, or the continuity of change initiatives. Confidential feedback and structured opportunities to discuss implementation problems may help surface these differences. Responding visibly to substantiated concerns could make participation more credible, particularly when personnel have previously seen problems remain unresolved. Monitoring should encompass both completion of required tasks and voluntary contributions, such as reporting emerging difficulties and proposing improvements. These complementary indicators would help leadership teams assess how actively personnel engage with change.

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations define the scope of these findings. The cross-sectional design establishes associations without resolving temporal order or causal mediation. Better-performing units may evaluate leadership and change capability more favorably, and unmeasured conditions may influence all three constructs. Longitudinal research following specific change initiatives could assess whether earlier LI predicts subsequent changes in OCC and whether those changes precede performance improvements. Studying leadership transitions would also help determine whether capability persists after the departure of a trusted leader.

Recruitment through widely circulated survey links involved convenience sampling and voluntary self-selection. Access to communication groups and willingness to participate may have shaped the units and personnel represented. The findings therefore cannot establish representativeness of the Indonesian Navy or be assumed to generalize to other military organizations. Future research could use a defined unit sampling frame and compare units with different functions, staffing conditions, and change demands. Comparisons across military services and civilian public organizations could examine whether the relationships vary with organizational context.

Finally, the hypothesized paths were estimated between units using composite scores, so they do not demonstrate how individual perceptions become collective capability. Unit averages may conceal differing patterns of cynicism, including concentrated scepticism or polarized attitudes. Future research could model both the level and distribution of change attitudes, consistent with Nguyen et al. (2026), and examine required participation separately from discretionary support. Designs with sufficient numbers of units, repeated observations, and qualitative evidence of implementation would offer a stronger basis for assessing moderation and the processes underlying the observed associations.

9. Conclusion

This study identifies organizational change capability as a plausible link between leadership integrity and organizational performance in Indonesian Navy units. The findings suggest that dependable leadership has organizational relevance through its association with the capacity to carry out change. The proposed weakening effect of cynicism was not established, leaving open when and how scepticism becomes consequential for this relationship. The central implication is to consider leadership credibility together with the practices through which a unit implements and sustains adjustments. For naval organizations, developing those practices may help extend the value of credible leadership across personnel transitions and successive change initiatives. Establishing how this occurs over time remains an important next step.

Declarations

Author Contribution

Conceptualization, S., B.T. and F.S.; methodology, B.T., F.S. and I.F.A.; validation, N.F.A.R.; formal analysis, I.F.A.; investigation, S.; data curation, I.F.A.; writing (original draft preparation), S.; writing (review and editing), B.T., F.S., I.F.A. and N.F.A.R.; visualization, I.F.A.; supervision, B.T. and F.S.; project administration, S. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability

The authors will provide the original data that supported the conclusions of this article without any undue reservation.

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Figures

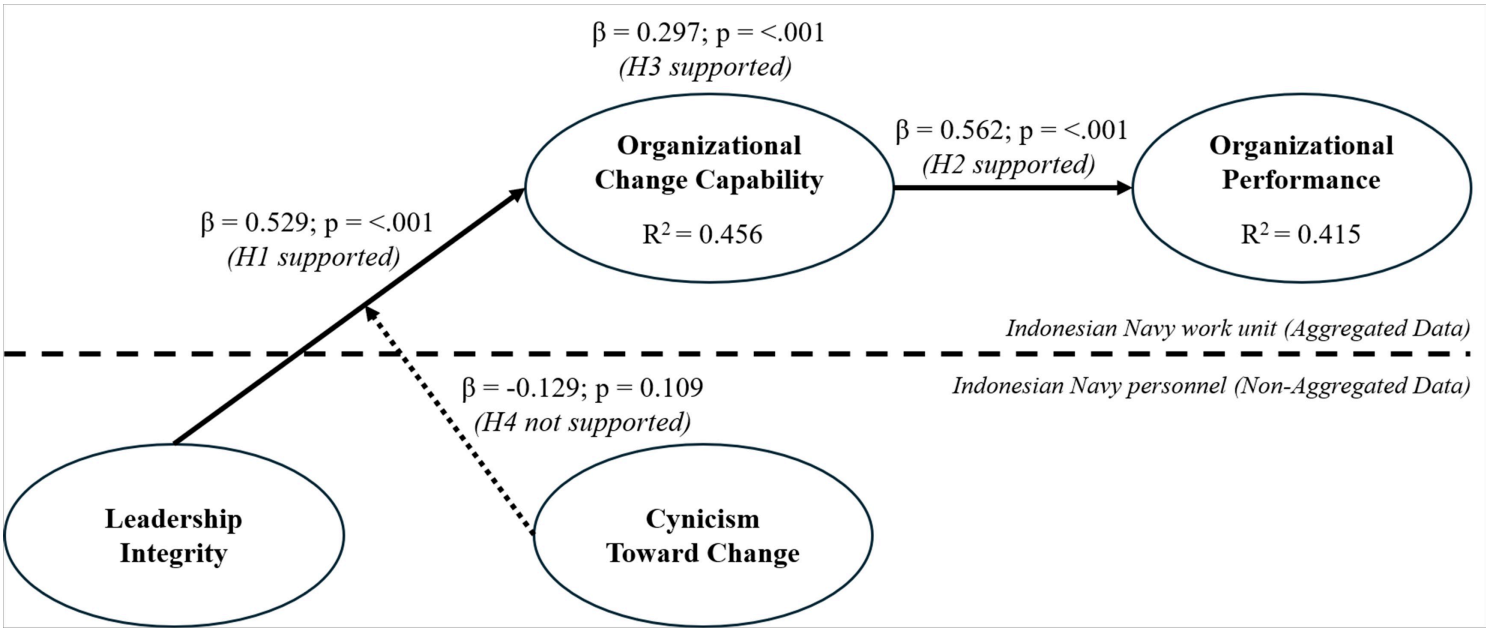


Figure 1

Research Model and Analysis Result. Source: Created by authors, 2026

*Note: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.*

Supplementary Files

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- DatasetSIS02.xlsx