




“Factors affecting the performance of independently practicing midwives”

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF INDEPENDENTLY PRACTICING MIDWIVES

Abstract

The performance of midwives needs to be measured to provide guaranteed health services to mothers and children. Therefore, the aim of this study is to measure the performance of midwives using several variables, including internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior, both directly and indirectly. The analysis was conducted in 29 districts and nine cities in East Java, Indonesia, with a sample of 330 midwives. Primary data were obtained by distributing questionnaires and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The research results show that all the variables tested have a positive and significant influence on midwives' performance. Innovative behavior has the strongest direct influence (73%), and meaningfulness of work has the weakest direct influence on midwives' performance (6%). Meanwhile, indirect relationships through work engagement provide a positive and significant influence, but are not as strong as the direct influence. These results offer practical insight for midwives to maintain and improve their individual performance, considering that more and more new midwives are ready to compete in providing health services for mothers and children.

Keywords

midwife, health services, suburban, developing countries

JEL Classification

I12, I18

INTRODUCTION

As an agricultural country, the majority of Indonesia's population lives in rural areas, and they fall into the lower middle economic category. Midwives have become idols of rural communities because the services midwives provide are cheaper than services in hospitals. Midwives who provide services in rural areas practice independently. They must compete with other midwives, touch the hearts of the community by providing sincere service, and behave innovatively to suit community needs. Midwives' performance is mostly measured based on their capacity as government employees in hospitals or health centers or as employees in private hospitals (Kool et al., 2023; Marfu'ah et al., 2016). Midwives who practice independently are rarely researched or often marginalized. Meanwhile, they are unique in their duties. They really have to provide excellent service to maintain individual performance. They do not get a salary but struggle to sell services to the community, with a social mission, and earn income.

The individual performance of a midwife should continue to be evaluated to be chosen by the community because, currently, there are more and more midwives practicing independently. Internal branding is important for midwives because it will provide awareness and continue to strengthen the midwife's image by providing good services for childbirth and maternal and child health. Midwives, in their

profession, must be truly sincere. Apart from earning an income, midwives are required to do it with their hearts: there is a social mission to help others. Midwives must also be engaged with their work and devote all their attention and energy to providing services to the community. That way, their services will be transferred positively to the mothers and children served.

Apart from all these efforts, considering that midwife services are also a business, midwives must act innovatively. Their customers usually have a low educational background and a weak economy, so they tend to be sensitive. Midwives are required to have flexible communication, be friendly, and provide comfortable solutions that make their patients feel comfortable instead of afraid. A midwife will achieve maximum individual performance if she can meet the needs of society, especially mothers and children, with a spirit of social mission, in addition to earning an income.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Independently practicing midwives in Indonesia have made a significant contribution to improving the welfare of mothers and children. Their services include health education, family planning counseling, antenatal care, pregnancy exercises, breast care, childbirth care, postpartum care, baby care, family planning services, baby immunizations, adolescent reproductive health, and post-miscarriage care. In addition, independently practicing midwives also provide examinations for sick people and health services for women of childbearing age and the elderly.

Mardiah et al. (2012) and Luyben et al. (2013) state that “expectations for the midwives’ vision and mission, as well as skills and motivation, all support midwives’ performance.” Midwifery is a unique profession. When an individual chooses this profession, it can be confirmed that, before choosing, numerous considerations are taken, and, finally, a positive perception is formed. If so, surely an individual should dedicate herself properly by showing the best performance. Several variables to measure midwife performance include internal branding, work engagement, meaningfulness of work, and innovative behavior.

Internal branding is “a personal image which reflects skills, a belief system, a bright idea, and shared values that other people find attractive” (Razeghi et al., 2016). Internal branding is everything about oneself that differentiates and sells, such as the ability to convey messages and self-presentation (Thompson-Whiteside et al., 2018). In relation to business activities, internal branding is

“the art of attracting and maintaining more clients by actively shaping public perception” (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007). The ability to use attributes freely shows the capability to manage the expectations that other people want to receive. In terms of leadership, it is divided into brand commitment, brand knowledge, and brand fit (Tergraven et al., 2016). Strong internal branding conveys familiarity, feelings, and trust, reduces risk, and serves as a basis for engagement and dialogue with others. In relation to internal branding, there is a process to consider the values and ethics both in the organization and the work itself. If there is conformity and compatibility with oneself, this will create a sense of attachment (Hardy et al., 2020).

“Internal branding refers to the strategic ways of making, positioning, and keeping a good impression of oneself based toward a unique mix of types that signal promises to others through appearance and capabilities” (Gorbatov et al., 2018). Internal branding helps individuals achieve positive career outcomes (Gandini, 2016), financial well-being (Vallas & Cummins, 2015), and pursue self-realization to obtain future career opportunities (Pagis, 2020). Much research has been done on the relationship between internal branding and a person’s success (Gorbatov et al., 2018; El Massah et al., 2019; Razeghi et al., 2016), and few have studied the influence of internal branding and individual performance, while individual performance is a representation of a person’s career success (Thompson-Whiteside et al., 2018; Ogutu & Ogo, 2016).

Wingerden and van der Stoep (2017) argued that the meaningfulness of work is the personal subjective meaning of the work done. Everyone tries

to give what he needs to reach values, goals, and self-esteem. Despite the different underlying motives for fulfilling these needs for personal purposes (family factors, making money, social work), the basic perception is finding a way to mirror the deeper meaning of things that are done. The meaning of work can also be divided into statements on positive meaning, meaning-making by doing work, and greater good motivation (Steger et al., 2012). Meaningfulness of work has positive value for the individual. The positive values in the meaningfulness of work include the eudaimonic (referring to the orientation toward growth and goals) and hedonic (referring to the orientation toward pleasure or happiness) values (Albrecht et al., 2021). In other words, the work is meaningful since it provides meaningful experiences and space for self-expression.

An individual assesses the meaningfulness of work when he/she has experience with a job that has been planned and has clear rules (Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). "Work is meaningful for individuals when they can contribute to their work and fulfill goals not only for themselves but also for other parties and their organization" (Kim et al., 2018). In addition, "individuals feel the meaningfulness of work when they feel well-being in life when they carry out their work well" (Keles & Findikli, 2016). Under the above conditions, it is likely that when someone feels the meaningfulness of work, a strong work attachment is created. Developing and testing the meaningfulness of work can help businesses overcome problems and understand work holistically, especially in terms of work engagement. Ahmed et al. (2016) highlight companies' efforts to make work feel meaningful to their employees and how companies facilitate employees to complete their work to get them engaged. Albrecht et al. (2021) believe that "the concept of meaningful work can become such a fundamental psychological need that strengthens employee self-esteem." Thus, when employees feel this way, they will choose to be attached to their organization. Geldenhuys et al. (2014) stated "that employees will consider engaging when they feel their work is interesting and provides satisfaction and career promotion." Vermooten et al. (2019) argued "that meaningful work can be done through job crafting so that employees will consider being connected to their work."

"The meaningfulness of work shows a deeply individual effect of a person and also his or her work and encourages to become loyal and show optimal performance when he/she has satisfaction with security, income, career image, and even working hours" (Steger et al., 2012). Martela and Pessi (2018) and Zeglal and Janbeik (2019) stated "that meaningfulness is related to an individual's existence, such as the opportunity to convey the social status of the work being undertaken." Thus, in order to get a "stamp," an individual needs to perform well in the work, which will have an impact on reputation.

Work engagement can be known as positive feelings, encouragement, and work-related psychological state types by dedication, enthusiasm, and appreciation (Ha et al., 2021). The term work engagement can be defined as a state of well-being or satisfaction toward work, shown by strong energy and identification with one's work (John & Raj, 2020; Hasan, 2023). According to Lisbona et al. (2018), "work engagement can become a commitment to reaching purposes, enthusiastically devoting one's energy to a job, and displaying a favorable opinion of working conditions through vigor, dedication, and absorption." Vigor is reflected by resilience, good energy, and the feeling of not giving up. Dedication is shown by feeling inspired, valuable, enthusiastic, valuable, and challenging; absorption is defined by full concentration on a task. This encouragement helps people develop and improve their performance at its best. This energy can become commitment, job sense, pride, effort (time and energy), enthusiasm, interest, and commitment to their work (Haider & Akbar, 2017).

To achieve success, an individual should be active and committed until good results are achieved (Laguna & Razmus, 2019; Zeglal & Janbeik, 2019) using positive thoughts, satisfaction, and feeling connected to work, that is defined by dedication, enthusiasm, and understanding (Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2017), as well as health and well-being feeling (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Lisbona et al. (2018) state "that an organization in a healthy condition is the key for employees to feel connected and then with full awareness, employees develop themselves to achieve individual and organizational performance." Shmailan (2016) found that organizations with low employee engagement result in low profits, low quality of service to consumers, high

turnover rates, and low performance. Wingerden and van der Stoep (2017) described that employees with positive psychology, namely a positive perception of the company, can be categorized as engaged employees and are very close to good performance. According to Gorgievski et al. (2014), engagement does not mean workaholicism but rather a positive sense of belonging to the organization to achieve optimal performance. Laguna and Razmus (2019) showed that organizations with engaged employees will more easily achieve success.

Innovative behavior is one that emphasizes creatively so that there is a process of changing attitudes from traditional to modern (Latif et al., 2020), or from undeveloped to advanced attitudes (John & Raj, 2020). "Innovative behavior is the desire to introduce, propose, and apply new ideas, processes, products, and also procedures of work, work unit, or place where one works" (Haider & Akbar, 2017). As a process, it starts with trying to come up with ideas, implement them, evaluate obstacles, and have clarity on the results and outputs (Lukes & Stephan, 2017). In a similar vein, Ratnawati et al. (2018) argued "that innovative behavior can be known as the entire actions done by person which brings into emergence, introduction, and implementation of something new and profitable at all levels of the organization." Another opinion regarding the phases or stages of innovative behavior was put forward by Anser et al. (2021): "the stages starting from recognizing the problem, emerging good idea or solution, support, and application." It can also be interpreted as an individual's efforts to utilize thinking, imagination abilities, various stimulants, and the individuals who surround them to produce new products, either for themselves or the environment (Pukkeeree et al., 2020). The crucial thing about innovative behavior is how an individual can look for creative ideas, seek support, and end with implementation in the work environment. Innovation made continuously will positively affect the performance of both individuals and organizations (Ridha & Hidayat, 2021). "An individual will choose to behave innovatively in their work when they feel that the work brings benefits to them" (Latif et al., 2020) "and the belief that his or her choice of action will be accepted or appreciated" (Anderson et al., 2014). The innovative behavior chosen should refer to daily work activities, namely by generating ideas or supporting

others to realize ideas (Sudarnice, 2020). The ability to innovate allows them to move up the ladder (Soetjipto et al., 2023; Mendona et al., 2023).

"Individual performance is not only about results of work during a certain period, but also the way process of work takes place" (Ibrahim et al., 2020). "Work is a liberation process and affirmation of humanistic values" (Sani et al., 2016), and this requires intention (Prastyaningtyas et al., 2019). There is interaction, motivation, and the ability to use opportunities (Alkaseh & Kweik, 2019). "An innovative behavior is more about how individuals can quickly adapt to existing changes and choose the right ways and tools to adapt to these changes" (Amir, 2015). How to come up with ideas when facing problems, inconsistencies, or discontinuities in carrying out daily work is called creativity or efforts to be innovative (Ibrahim et al., 2020). According to Adam and Alarifi (2021), Ridha and Hidayat (2021), and Susanto and Wasito (2017), innovative behavior is defined as the novelty of methods, processes, or actions to accelerate work (Anser et al., 2021) to achieve optimal performance.

Individual performance is an action related to the goals of the organization (Allan et al., 2018). "Individual performance can be defined as outcomes of work through the tasks of a job according to skill, seriousness, experience, and time" (Zeglat & Janbeik, 2019). Individual performance is the result of doing job functions or activities (Shmailan, 2016). Performance can be measured, assessed, monitored, and taken action (Gorgievski et al., 2014; Alkaseh & Kweik, 2019). Individual performance is assessed by the satisfaction people receive, either from the results of the work itself or awards given by the organization (Shmailan, 2016). Individual performance can be measured from the performance of assigned tasks and the resulting contextual performance (Zeglat & Janbeik, 2019), significant task results and appreciation for their work and high levels of attendance (Allan et al., 2018), and focus on other assessments as developments occur.

This study examines the effect of internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior on the individual performance of a midwife. This study seeks to identify the variables that most strongly contribute to mid-

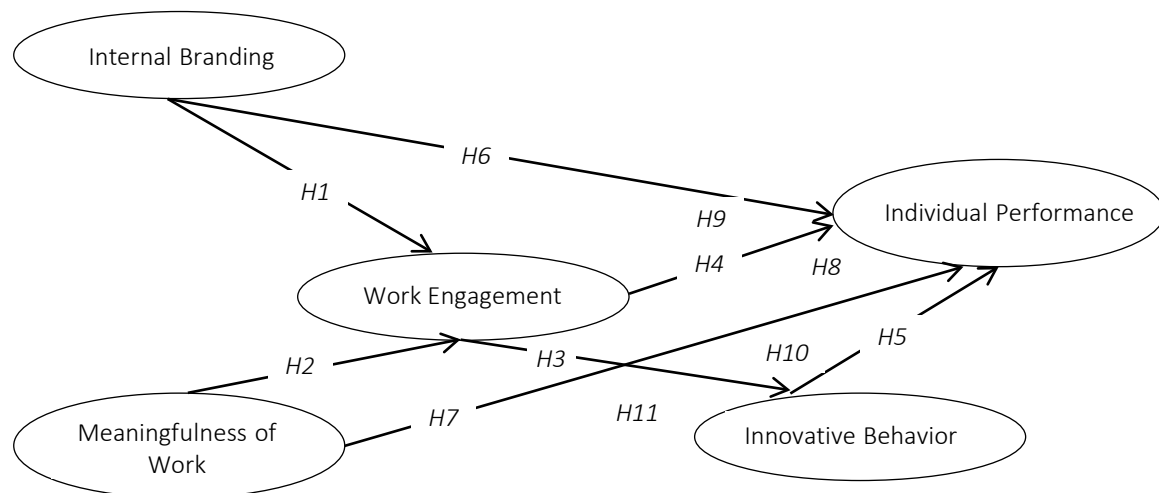


Figure 1. Conceptual model

wife's individual performance. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model, and the hypotheses are:

H1: Internal branding affects work engagement.

H2: Meaningfulness of work affects work engagement.

H3: Work engagement affects innovative behavior.

H4: Work engagement affects individual performance.

H5: Innovative behavior affects individual performance.

H6: Internal branding affects individual performance.

H7: Meaningfulness of work affects individual performance.

H8: Work engagement mediates the relationship between meaningfulness of work and individual performance.

H9: Work engagement mediates the relationship between internal branding and individual performance.

H10: Work engagement mediates the relationship between internal branding and innovative behavior.

H11: Work engagement mediates the relationship between meaningfulness of work and innovative behavior.

2. METHODOLOGY

Inferential statistical analysis was used to test hypotheses and produce a suitable model. Structural equation modeling (SEM) and partial least squares (PLS) are the analysis tools, using the measurement (outer) and the structural model (inner model). The sample consisted of 300 midwives who practiced independently in East Java, Indonesia. Those midwives fell into the category of an entrepreneur who provides health services for mothers and children.

Validity and reliability were checked using measurement model analysis (outer model). An indicator can be claimed to be valid if the result of the coefficient is in the range of 0.6 and 0.7 and it is a significant level of alpha 0.05 or a t-statistic of 1.96. In addition to looking at the outer loading value, it can also be seen from the value of average variance extracted (AVE). The expected value of AVE > 0.5 (Hussein, 2015). The value of validity test is done to test the validity of indicators. This value comes from a value of cross-loading factor and shows if a construct has enough discriminants by checking the value of loading from the targeted construct against another. It should be higher than the value of other constructs (Hussein, 2015).

Meanwhile, reliability was tested by using composite reliability values. The instrument can be claimed reliable if the value of composite reliability is greater than 0.7, also using the value of Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.7. Structural model analysis (inner model) ensured that the structural model constructed is accurate. The analysis of the inner model uses such indicators: coefficient of determination (R -square/ R^2) and predictive relevance (Q -square/ Q^2). Q^2 measures how good the observation values produced by the model of research are. The Q^2 value is between 0 and 1. The strength and weakness criteria of the model are according to the value of Q^2 , 0.35 (strong model), 0.15 (moderate model), and 0.02 (weak model) (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Next, the goodness-of-fit index (GoF) should give a value from 0 to 1. The strength and weakness criteria of the model are related to its GoF measurements, which are 0.36 (large GoF), 0.25 (medium GoF), and 0.10 (small GoF) (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

3. RESULTS

Midwife competency consists of seven competency areas: legal ethics and safety of client, effective communication, self-development, and professionalism; health promotion and counseling; clinical skills of midwifery practice; scientific foundations of midwifery practice; and management and leadership

(Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 320 as of 2020). The present study dealt with midwives' self-development competence and professionalism rather than legal ethics and client safety. It focused on how midwives behave professionally with good individual performance (internal branding), interpret their work properly (meaningfulness of work), love their work (work engagement), and behave innovatively to complementary facilities outside the code of practice (innovative behavior); midwives' performance as measured by self-assessment of the midwives' achievements. The statistical results are explained in this section, with a detailed description of the research instruments in Table A1, Appendix A.

The validity testing shown in Table 1 indicates that the entire measurement indicators produce loading factors higher than 0.5. Thus, the indicator can be claimed to be valid. Subsequently, reliability was calculated. The value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability can be calculated to test construct reliability. If composite reliability is higher than 0.7 and Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.6, it is reliable.

Table 2 indicates that the values of composite reliability are higher than 0.7. It means that all indicators are reliable. The value of Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.6, confirming the reliability of indicators.

Table 1. Validity test

Variable	Indicators	Factor Loading	SE	T-Statistics	P-Values
Internal branding	Brand commitment	0.853	0.023	36.373	0.000
	Brand knowledge	0.731	0.053	13.842	0.000
	Brand fit	0.870	0.018	47.526	0.000
Meaningfulness of work	Positive meaning	0.843	0.026	32.956	0.000
	Meaning-making through work	0.935	0.008	115.486	0.000
	Greater good motivation	0.869	0.023	37.835	0.000
Work engagement	Vigor	0.896	0.016	57.748	0.000
	Dedication	0.933	0.010	93.258	0.000
	Absorption	0.659	0.052	12.798	0.000
Innovative behavior	Idea generation	0.875	0.020	44.660	0.000
	Idea search	0.908	0.009	103.624	0.000
	Idea communication	0.904	0.014	64.458	0.000
	Implementation	0.741	0.047	15.688	0.000
	Involving others	0.809	0.034	23.726	0.000
	Overcoming obstacles	0.797	0.035	22.439	0.000
	Innovation outputs	0.772	0.024	32.045	0.000
Individual performance	Task performance	0.910	0.008	108.872	0.000
	Contextual performance	0.892	0.015	59.383	0.000

Table 2. Reliability test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Internal branding	0.860	0.762
Meaningfulness of work	0.914	0.858
Work engagement	0.874	0.778
Innovative behavior	0.940	0.925
Individual performance	0.896	0.769

Table 3. Results of the goodness-of-fit model test

Endogenous	R Square
Work engagement	0.149
Innovative behavior	0.076
Individual performance	0.727

$$Q^2 = 1 - [(1-R_1^2) (1-R_2^2) (1-R_3^2)]$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - [(1-0.149) (1-0.076) (1-0.727)] = 0.785$$

PLS is used to determine the magnitude of GoF model. GoF determines the ability of endogenous variables magnitude to define the exogenous variables variance, or the contribution of exogenous variables. GoF is made by seeing the *R*-Square and *Q*-Square predictive relevance (Table 3).

The work engagement value of *R*-square is 0.149 (14.9%). This shows that the variance of work engagement can be described by internal branding and meaningfulness of work with 14.9%, while the remaining 85.1% is from other variables that are not included. The *R*-square of the innovative behavior variable is 0.076 (7.6%). This shows that the variance of innovative behavior can be described by work engagement with 7.6%, while the remaining 92.4% comes from other variables.

The *R*-square of the individual performance variable is 0.727 (72.7%). This shows that 72.7% of the variance of individual performance can be described by internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior, and the contribution is 72.7%, while 27.3% is the contribution of other variables outside the study.

The result of *Q*² is 0.785 (78.5%). This shows that 78.5% of the variance of individual performance can be explained by the overall model, and internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior contribute 78.5% of the overall individual performance, while 21.5% is influenced by other variables.

Hypotheses are tested to determine the significance of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. The results indicate that if the coefficient of the path is positive and the value of probability (one-tailed) \leq level of significance ($\alpha = 5\%$), there is a positive and significant influence.

The influence of internal branding on work engagement has resulted in a path coefficient of 0.265 with a probability value of 0.000 (Table 4). It shows that the coefficient of path is positive and the value of probability (one-tailed) $<$ significance level ($\alpha = 5\%$). Internal branding has a direct (positive) and significant influence on work engagement. Thus, the higher the internal branding, the greater the work engagement (H1 is accepted).

Table 4. Results of direct effect hypotheses testing

Exogenous	Endogenous	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values (One-Tailed)
Internal branding	Work Engagement	0.265	3.921	0.000
Meaningfulness of work	Work Engagement	0.192	3.035	0.002
Work engagement	Innovative Behavior	0.276	4.307	0.000
Internal branding	Individual Performance	0.070	2.021	0.022
Meaningfulness of work	Individual Performance	0.069	2.113	0.018
Work engagement	Individual Performance	0.157	4.879	0.000
Innovative behavior	Individual Performance	0.734	30.743	0.000

The effect of meaningfulness of work on work engagement produces 0.192 of a path coefficient and a value of probability (one-tailed) of 0.002. It means that the path coefficient remains positive and the value of probability < significance level (Alpha (α) = 5%). Meaningfulness of work has a unidirectional (positive) and significant influence on work engagement. Thus, the stronger the meaningfulness of work, the greater the work engagement (H2 is accepted).

The effect of work engagement on innovative behavior is 0.276, with a probability value of 0.000. It indicates that the result is positive and the value of probability < level of significance (Alpha (α) = 5%). It can be defined that work engagement has a directional (positive) and significant influence on innovative behavior. Thus, the higher the work engagement, the higher the innovative behavior (H3 is accepted).

The influence of work engagement on individual performance resulted in a 0.157 path coefficient with a probability value 0.000. The test results show that the result is positive and the value of probability < level of significance (Alpha (α) = 5%). It can be explained that work engagement has a direct, positive, and significant effect on individual performance. Thus, an increase in work engagement increases individual performance (H4 is accepted).

The impact of innovative behavior on individual performance produces a path coefficient of 0.734 with a value of probability of 0.005. It indicates that the influence remains positive with the value of probability < significance level (Alpha (α) = 5%). It can be said that innovative behavior has a directional and significant effect on individual performance. Thus, the stronger the innovative behavior, the greater the individual performance (H5 is accepted).

The effect of internal branding on individual performance produces a value of path coefficient 0.070 with a probability of 0.022. This outcome indicates that the value of the coefficient is becoming

positive and the value of probability < significance level (Alpha (α) = 5%). It is shown that internal branding has a directional (positive) and significant influence on individual performance. So, the higher the internal branding, the higher the individual performance (H6 is accepted).

The influence of meaningfulness of work on individual performance resulted in a path coefficient of 0.069 and a probability of 0.018. This value shows a positive contribution with the value of probability < significance level (Alpha (α) = 5%). It is defined that meaningfulness of work has a direct, positive, and significant influence on individual performance. So, the higher the meaningful work, the higher the individual performance (H7 is accepted).

Indirect effect hypothesis testing is done to test the type of influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables through mediating variables. Indirect effects are tested through the Sobel test. If the indirect coefficient is positive and the value of probability \leq significance level (Alpha (α) = 5%), there is a positive and significant influence of exogenous on endogenous variable through the mediating variable. Table 5 and Figure 2 show the outcomes of the indirect effect testing.

The influence of meaningfulness of work on individual performance through work engagement produces an indirect coefficient of 0.030 with a value of probability 0.003. The test results show that the indirect coefficient is positive and the value of probability < level of significance (Alpha (α) = 5%). Meaningfulness of work has a direct (positive) and significant influence on individual performance through work engagement. Thus, the higher the work engagement caused by the meaningfulness of work, the higher the individual performance (H8 is accepted).

The influence of internal branding on individual performance through work engagement gives an indirect coefficient of 0.041 with a value of prob-

Table 5. Result of indirect effect testing

Exogenous	Mediation	Endogenous	Indirect Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values
Meaningfulness of work	Work engagement	Individual performance	0.030	2.747	0.003
Internal branding	Work engagement	Individual performance	0.041	3.118	0.001
Internal branding	Work engagement	Innovative of behavior	0.073	2.491	0.007
Meaningfulness of work	Work engagement	Innovative of behavior	0.053	2.133	0.017

ability 0.001. The results indicate that the indirect coefficient is positive and its value of probability $<$ level of significance ($\text{Alpha } (\alpha) = 5\%$). Internal branding has a direct (positive) and significant influence on individual performance through work engagement. Thus, the higher the work engagement caused by the stronger internal branding, the greater the individual performance (H9 is accepted).

The influence of internal branding on innovative behavior through work engagement produces an indirect coefficient of 0.073 with a probability value of 0.007. The results show that the influence is positive with the value of probability $<$ level of significance ($\text{Alpha } (\alpha) = 5\%$). Personal branding has a unidirectional (positive) and significant influence on innovative behavior through work engagement. Thus, if the work engagement caused by higher internal branding increases, the innovative behavior will increase as well (H10 is accepted).

The influence of meaningfulness of work on innovative behavior through work engagement produces an indirect coefficient of 0.053 and a value of probability of 0.017. Its outcomes show that the indirect coefficient is positive with a value of probability $<$ significance level ($\text{Alpha } (\alpha) = 5\%$). Meaningfulness of work has a unidirectional

and significant influence on innovative behavior through work engagement. Thus, the higher the work engagement caused by the stronger meaningfulness of work, the higher the innovative behavior (H11 is accepted).

4. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that personal branding has a directional (positive) and significant influence on work engagement. According to Hardy et al. (2020), Ghielen et al. (2021), and Samo et al. (2020), when a job can strengthen self-identity and have value, it will encourage an individual to build an emotional attachment. The midwifery profession is not an easy one. It takes passion for an individual to live it. However, there is a good career behind this since midwives are the spearheads of maternal and child health in the lower middle class, those not having strong financial capacities. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, most people live in rural and suburban areas.

Midwives should be able to present themselves differently in a positive sense, such as conveying messages and self-presentation, as argued by Thompson-Whiteside et al. (2018). The ability to convey messages is more about how midwives pro-

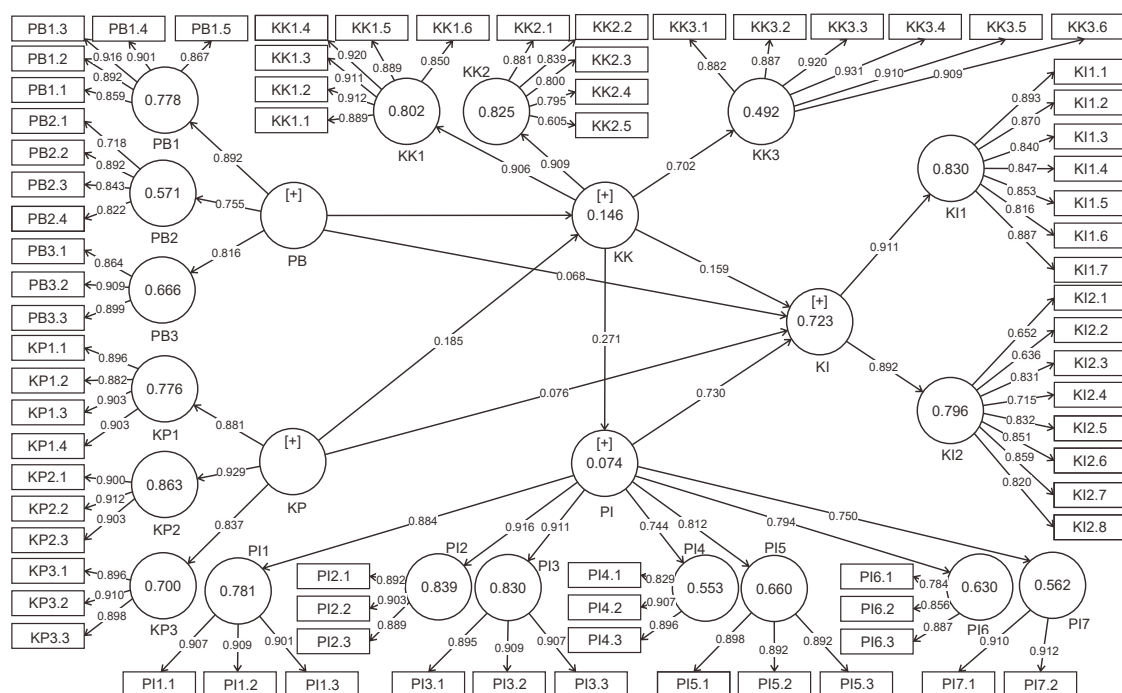


Figure 2. Results of the model testing

vide explanations and considerations to patients using simple and easy-to-understand language, as well as a calm and firm demeanor. The midwifery profession is good in the eyes of the public, and the internal branding of midwives is built by the midwives themselves to show their professional attitudes (Simanullang & Dioso, 2020). Being a midwife requires several series of tests when receiving midwifery education, taking the midwifery profession test, and many parameters for an individual to be declared passed and allowed to open practice (Butler et al., 2008). Thus, this profession provides value for those who carry it out; there is a feeling of pride; it provides a self-identity that reflects personal competence; these are all manifestations of internal branding, which ultimately makes a midwife feel tied to their work.

The midwifery profession is highly respected by the public (Nisa et al., 2019). Independently practicing midwives are often visited by patients, not only mothers who are checking their wombs or are about to give birth, but several patients who seek treatment for their sickness: children, teenagers, and fathers. The midwifery profession is highly respected by the public; it is the oldest profession in the world (Bwalya et al., 2015; Majzobi et al., 2018). In the past, the profession of midwife was that of an old woman respected by the community and therefore trusted to assist with childbirth. However, over time, midwifery became a legal profession requiring knowledge and competence testing via various professional professionalism tests (M. Savella & G. Savella, 2022). An individual who works as a midwife has been aware of her career choice from the start; thus, with all the consequences, she has understood it. Therefore, when making a choice, an individual must have good knowledge of the importance of this work. They understand the meaning of working as a midwife and feel connected to this profession.

Innovative behavior depends on an individual's feelings of attachment or totality to their work (Sari et al., 2020). Likewise, in the midwifery profession, the service quality is affected by the midwife's sense of attachment to her work (Uktutias et al., 2023a). A midwife's work engagement describes her readiness to put forth extra effort in carrying out her work and to invest her energy in her work (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013). A midwife's

work engagement as a personal effort and task identification is seen as a system and value that should be maintained. This makes a midwife experience positive emotions and shows satisfaction with her profession, proven by an open attitude and good cooperation, all of which illustrate the midwife's positive behavior in carrying out her profession (Farida & Hamdan, 2019). As previously stated, when an individual chooses the midwifery profession, from the start, she knows what the opportunities and challenges are, so that consideration of this choice has formed her to be bound by her choice and strives to maintain her choice by behaving properly for the continuity of her career.

An individual with a midwifery profession who is tied to their work will be motivated to achieve maximum performance (Farida & Hamdan, 2019). Midwives' work engagement is important since it affects their performance in providing professional services (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013). Work engagement is the feeling of enthusiasm, dedication, and empathy for others to provide the best service, as shown by the performance of a midwife (Uktutias et al., 2023a). Uktutias et al. (2023b) state that a midwife's work engagement is significant for professional health services since, with attachment, a midwife has a positive perception of the surrounding environment and views every problem as a challenge that must be solved. A midwife's work engagement is a sense of belonging to her work, which includes motivation, commitment, the desire to be involved, and the desire to develop (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013). Work engagement is not burnout or workaholism (Gorgievski et al., 2014) but a positive sense of ownership of one's work to achieve optimal performance.

The innovative behavior of midwives in the present study is more about how midwives demonstrate additional performance, not in core services (birth services and maternal and child health), but in supporting services, such as how to communicate to make patients comfortable and provide comfortable waiting room facilities. In addition, there are several other supporting facilities, such as daycare and baby massage, that provide empathy and sympathy to underprivileged patients through easy payments and even collaboration with hospitals for emergency measures. Innovative behavior is more about adapting to change (Amir,

2015). Midwives' innovative behavior to demonstrate optimal performance should be based on midwifery norms and performance levels (Hattu et al., 2023). Midwives should be able to be pleasant friends to reduce the nervousness of mothers who are about to give birth and be responsive and timely in providing action (Siregar, 2021). The results of the present study are in line with Ibrahim et al. (2020), Anser et al. (2021), Adam and Alarifi (2021), Ridha and Hidayat (2021), and Santoso and Wasito (2017).

The Midwives Association in Indonesia is already aware of the importance of internal branding for individuals in the midwifery profession. There are several seminars on the importance of building personal branding. At one of the seminars, it was stated that "many people think that internal branding is something that only businesses need." All professions, including midwives, nurses, influencers, freelancers, writers, and so on, are required to have internal branding skills. Internal branding is a way to promote oneself, one's achievements in one's career, and one's skills. Midwives, as health workers, are required to have good self-management to show optimal performance (Batbual et al., 2020). One of the ways self-management can

be interpreted is how midwives brand themselves, namely managing themselves to improve performance (Batbual et al., 2020). This means that the more midwives can carry out internal branding, the greater the positive correlation with their performance achievements. Midwives with high meaningfulness of work means that midwives love their work, really appreciate their work both materially and psychologically, and then carry out their work as well as possible (Arifin et al., 2018). These results are supported by Martela and Pessi (2018), Zeglat and Janbeik (2019), and Wingerden and van der Stoep (2017), stating that an individual views their work as meaningful since their work gives them a good reputation and their environment gives them a good perception too. This condition motivates an individual to commit to the work.

The public perceives the midwifery profession positively since midwives have a noble duty of assisting in normal births; thus, midwives should be committed to their work and show good performance as expected. Midwives should respect their work by working professionally according to midwifery ethics (Altınayak et al., 2020; Marfu'ah et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study explores the factors that influence a midwife's performance, such as internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior. The findings confirm that internal branding, meaningfulness of work, work engagement, and innovative behavior significantly affect individual performance. Innovative behavior provides the strongest influence on increasing competition between midwives who practice independently. Meanwhile, the meaningfulness of work has the weakest influence. Work engagement has succeeded in mediating the relationship between internal branding and the meaningfulness of work on individual performance, and the relationship between internal branding and the meaningfulness of work on innovative behavior, although its value is not greater than the direct relationship. Innovative behavior has a stronger direct influence on individual performance, but when mediated by work engagement, this turns out not to be the case.

This study provides several implications for midwives who practice independently to determine the right strategy for their profession. This profession is not only a source of income but also a social mission, as an effort to maintain a sustainable image for the profession.

The paper has several limitations. The present study dealt only with the midwifery profession. The variables used may have different assessments when applied to other professions, even in the same field, such as doctors and nurses. The results will certainly be different when applied to jobs in other fields.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Writing – original draft: Eny Yuniyati, Sudarmiatin.

Writing – review & editing: Eny Yuniyati, Budi Eko Soetjpto.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Description of research instruments

Item Code	Item	Citation
Brand commitment	IB1 I feel emotionally attached to my job as a midwife.	Terglav et al. (2016)
	IB2 I feel like I belong in my job as a midwife.	
	IB3 This work has great meaning for me.	
	IB4 I feel like a family with ties to the midwife profession.	
	IB5 If there is a bad perception about midwives, it is my fault personally.	
Brand knowledge	IB6 I understand the benefits of this work for patients.	
	IB7 I understand the promises or code of ethics of the midwife profession.	
	IB8 I got the right information about the midwifery profession.	
Brand fit	IB9 I know the limits of the authority of the midwife profession.	
	IB10 My profession as a midwife is one of the most important things in my life.	
	IB11 My personality is in line with the midwife profession.	
Positive meaning	IB12 Something valuable in my life is the midwife profession that I pursue.	Steger et al. (2012)
	MW1 I have found a very meaningful career.	
	MW2 I understand that a midwife's career contributes to my life.	
Meaning-making through work	MW3 I have my reasons about the meaning of working as a midwife.	
	MW4 Working as a midwife has given me satisfaction.	
	MW5 Working as a midwife has greatly contributed to my personal growth.	
Greater good motivation	MW6 Working as a midwife helped me understand myself better.	
	MW7 Working as a midwife helps me understand the world around me.	
	MW8 My job as a midwife makes me feel special.	
	MW9 The work of a midwife makes a positive difference in the world.	
Vigor	MW10 The work I do has a noble purpose.	
	WE1 I have full energy when working.	Schaufeli et al. (2006)
	WE2 I feel enthusiastic when working.	
	WE3 I want to go to work, even starting when I wake up.	
	WE4 I can carry out this work for a long period.	
	WE5 I feel tough when doing this job.	
Dedication	WE6 I work diligently.	
	WE7 For me, this work is very meaningful.	
	WE8 I am very enthusiastic about my work.	
	WE9 My work is very inspiring.	
	WE10 I am proud of my work.	
Absorption	WE11 For me, this job is very challenging.	
	WE12 Time seems to move quickly when I work.	
	WE13 I work with focus.	
	WE14 I feel happy when I work.	
	WE15 I feel complacent with the work I do.	
	WE16 I always get carried away when working.	
	WE17 My work is my life.	
Idea generation	IoB1 I tried a new way of doing things at my job.	Lukes and Stephan (2017)
	IoB2 I prefer jobs that require original thinking.	
	IoB3 When something is not working well at work, I try to find a new solution.	
Idea search	IoB4 I try to get new ideas from colleagues or business partners.	
	IoB5 I am interested in things being done elsewhere to use those ideas in my work.	
	IoB6 I try to find new ideas and try to implement those ideas.	
Idea communication	IoB7 When I have a new idea, I try to invite my friends to implement the idea.	
	IoB8 When I have a new idea, I try to get support from the Midwife Professional Organization.	
	IoB10 When I have a new idea, I try to find friends to work with to implement it.	
Implementation	IoB11 I develop appropriate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.	
	IoB12 I seek and secure the funds needed to implement new ideas.	
	IoB13 To implement new ideas, I look for new technologies, processes, or procedures.	

Table A1 (cont.). Description of research instruments

Item Code		Item	Citation
Involving others	IoB14	When problems occur in implementing my new ideas, I accept suggestions and input from my colleagues with open arms.	Lukes and Stephan (2017)
	IoB15	I try to be the decision-maker when implementing new ideas.	
	IoB16	In implementing a new idea, I try to find people who can help implement the idea.	
Overcoming obstacles	IoB17	I can overcome obstacles continuously when implementing ideas.	
	IoB18	I did not give up, even when other people told me that my idea couldn't be done.	
	IoB19	During the implementation of ideas, I can persevere even when work is not going well.	
Innovation outputs	IoB20	I am often successful at work in implementing my ideas and putting them into practice.	
	IoB21	Many innovations resulting from my work have been implemented well.	
Task performance	IP1	I managed to plan my work so that it was completed on time.	Zeglát and Janbeik (2019)
	IP2	The planning I do is always optimal.	
	IP3	I always hope that what I do will yield satisfactory results.	
	IP4	I can work professionally by separating personal problems from work problems.	
	IP5	I can prioritize well.	
	IP6	I can do my work with minimal time.	
	IP7	I can do my job with just a little effort.	
Contextual performance	IP8	I took on extra responsibilities in this job.	
	IP9	I can work independently.	
	IP10	I maintain my work with current knowledge.	
	IP11	I keep my skills up to date to maintain employment.	
	IP12	I always provide creative solutions to new problems in my work.	
	IP13	I am constantly looking for new challenges in my work.	
	IP14	I did more than was expected of me.	
	IP15	I actively participate in professional association meetings.	