

Analysis of the Effect of Personal Characteristics and External Factors on Grit in Business Partners at PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze and identify the influence of the role of Personal Characteristics and External Factors on Grit in business partners at PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera East Java branch.

Methodology – This research is quantitative research with purposive sampling technique. Data collection was carried out online via google form and offline through turnover and learning meetings with business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera branch of East Java as research respondents. A total of 112 data were successfully collected and processed using SmartPLS software using the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling) analysis method.

Findings – The study's findings highlight the importance of identifying and nurturing grit in business partners to enhance their resilience and perseverance in facing challenges, thereby contributing to the company's long-term success and growth.

Practical implications – This research is expected to have implications for the importance of supporting and strengthening personal characteristics and external factors that influence persistence (grit) in business partners at PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch, to increase their resilience in facing business challenges and achieving sustainable success.

Introduction

Businesses that always keep up with the times and continue to grow in the business world are network-based businesses, including MLM (Multi Level Marketing) businesses, which are supported by vertical (upline and downline) and horizontal (crossline) networks, as well as a combination of the two (Herwati, 2015). Business and marketing are two things that are interrelated and become important factors in the success of a company. Business without marketing will not be able to reach a broad market and will not be able to obtain optimal profits.

Successful businesses need effective marketing strategies to market their products or services to consumers.

According to the records of the Indonesian Tiered Direct Selling Association (APLI), currently in Indonesia there are nearly 280 companies engaged in a tiered direct selling system. Of these figures, around 90% are APLI members. The number of PLB or MLM actors in Indonesia is around 12.73 million people (Nisak, 2020).

In order for members to continue to have the spirit of doing business it is important for members of MLM to improve the performance of the business they are building, members who have just joined MLM must have a commitment to doing business and maintain their commitment to the MLM business (Purba, 2020). As a multi-level marketing-based company with business partners, the success of business partners is very important to achieve company goals. Therefore, it is important for companies to understand the factors that can affect the Grit level of their business partners.

According to Duckworth (2016), Grit is an attitude in which a person has very high passion, enthusiasm and enthusiasm accompanied by very high perseverance, resilience, consistency to achieve a long-term goal, a goal that is certainly not easy but very meaningful and worth fighting for.

The business image of Multi Level Marketing in the eyes of the Indonesian people is very bad. This is caused by irresponsible elements acting on behalf of the Multi Level Marketing system (Arum, 2012). The public looks down on the MLM business because of the rampant cases of fraud that have occurred related to investing in this business. Fraud that is rife usually occurs in the business sector that offers services, such as insurance, investment, and online gatherings, thus triggering a money game that requires investors to find as many members as possible in order to increase investment funds (Nadlifatin et al., 2021).

Challenges in business travel can be overcome by the presence of a strong entrepreneurial mentality in each individual entrepreneur and support from positive personality traits, one of which is through the development of a Grit attitude within the individual (Duckworth et al., 2007). Members and leaders thus have to build the spirit of Grit within themselves. Members and leaders need to align and provide an understanding that a Multi Level Marketing Company is a marketing strategy. Submissions can be made elegantly, logically and rationally to prospective business partners who will join the Multi Level Marketing Company.

The results of previous research studies, found that four of the five personality traits of the Big Five Personality Traits - Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Intellect/Imagination significantly predict Grit. Extraversion cannot predict Grit (Chang & Lin, 2017). There is an influence between emotional/esteem support, tangible/instrumental support, informational support, and companionship support on Grit. Informational support has a greater influence on Grit than the other three types of support (Pangaribuan & Savitri, 2019).

Summarizing the results of previous research, it can be predicted that the Big 5 Personality and Social Support can influence a person's Grit. Which Big 5 Personality and Social Support act as independent variables and Grit acts as the dependent variable. Therefore, a further analysis was carried out on the business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch.

Literature Review

Human Resource Management

Human resource management according to Handoko is the withdrawal, selection, development, maintenance, and use of human resources to achieve both individual and organizational goals. Basically the purpose of human resource management is to provide an effective workforce for the organization to achieve predetermined goals (Fauziah et al., 2016). Human resource management is something that is related to the utilization of humans in carrying out a job to achieve the maximum level or be effective and efficient in realizing the goals to be achieved within the company, an employee and also the community (Barney & Wright, 1998).

Multi Level Marketing

Clothier (1994), explains that there are several things that distinguish Multi Level Marketing businesses from conventional businesses, namely:

1. Sales Fleet. Since the marketers in a Multi Level Marketing system are distributors, those distributors become bosses and hire themselves. In conventional business, products must go through the hands of producers-distributors-retailers-consumers.
2. Profit Sharing. In a Multi Level Marketing system, distributors will be rewarded based on a direct comparison of the efforts they put in. Those who benefit from conventional companies are owners, directors and distributors. Retailers will also profit, but only by a small margin.
3. Product sale. All Multi Level Marketing sales will be made in person. Meanwhile, in conventional trade, new consumers will obtain the goods they want by shopping at certain stores.

Personal Characteristics

The different personal characteristics of each individual create a different performance contribution to the company. Differences in the characteristics of employees are caused by several things, for example background attitudes, abilities, interests and other factors of the employees themselves. The diversity of these behaviors will affect the course of organizational activities. Increasing employee performance is influenced by several factors, one of which is the characteristics of employees (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). According to Thoha (2012), Personal Characteristics are views, goals, needs and abilities that differ from each other from each person. This difference will carry over into the world of work, which will cause one person's satisfaction with another to be different, even though they work in the same place.

Big 5 Personality

The history of the big five begins with Friske as the first person to discover it, but has not been able to identify the structure precisely, then in 1961 Tupes and Christal test a structure called the five factor model which consists of surgency or extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and culture (Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997). This structure was then replicated by Norman in 1963 under the name big five personality.

Big Five Personality is an approach used in psychology to see human personality through traits that are arranged in five personality domains that have been formed using factor analysis. The five personality traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experiences (Zaidi et al., 2013).

External Factors

External factors are factors that arise from outside the individual (Ingarianti, 2017). External factors that affect career commitment, namely work situations (Nazish, et al., 2013; Smith, Conley, & You, 2015; Ugboro & Obeng; 2015; Cai, 2017; Pasha, Hamid, & Shahzad, 2017) which include working conditions, perceptions of retirement, perceptions of threats at work, offered inducements, expected contributions of the organization, promotion opportunities, and rewards. External factors are obtained from interactions between individuals and their families, friends, neighbors and the community where they are (Chairilisyah, 2012).

Social Support

There are 4 kinds of support that can be provided by the people around them, namely tangible support, belonging support, self-esteem support, and appraisal support (Swift & Wright, 2000). Tangible support refers to assistance that is direct, practical, and usually in the form of material. The support provided can be in the form of lending money, means of transportation, helping with stressful tasks. Appraisal support refers to the availability of someone to provide meaningful knowledge/information to help solve problems. The support provided can be in the form of suggestions, advice, directions, feedback on what is done by individuals. Belonging support refers to someone's availability to spend time with others. This support can provide a sense of belonging in a social group. The support provided can be in the form of joint recreation, hangouts, or sports together. Self-esteem support refers to someone's availability to listen sympathetically when the individual is experiencing a problem. This support can provide a sense of comfort, acceptance, and being loved. The support given can be in the form of empathy, caring, positive appreciation, and encouragement to someone. High social support will help someone avoid the effects of stress in stressful situations (Susanto & Kiswantomo, 2020).

Grit

Grit is the attitude of not giving up easily on someone or a strong ability to survive in someone. Perseverance makes people with consistent interests not easily shaken at any time, no matter what challenges or obstacles they face (Fitzgerald & Laurian-Fitzgerald, 2016). Two important components in Grit are consistency of interest (Passion) and persistence of effort (Perseverance).

Consistency of interest (Passion) is defined as how consistent a person's efforts are towards a direction, and persistence of effort is how hard a person tries to achieve a goal. Passion which is a description of how consistent the efforts made by a person in achieving a goal. This consistency can be seen from the interests and goals that are not easily fluctuated or distracted and focus on the initial goals that have been set (Duckworth in Izaach, 2017). If you encounter a problem, solve it well, and don't easily turn to other things or other jobs.

Persistence of effort (Perseverance) is an effort that is carried out in earnest by someone in order to achieve goals along with the ability to survive within a certain period of time (Duckworth, 2007). This can be shown by the behavior of wanting to work hard, persevering through challenges and sticking to what has become his choice. In this case it can be interpreted that members of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera who have chosen their field of work are expected to have the perseverance to continue to develop and be more optimal in their work results both in quantity and quality.

Research Methods

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this study is a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique in which each member of the population does not have the same chance or opportunity as the sample. When sample representation/representativeness is not important, this technique can be used. Purposive sampling technique is a technique of determining and taking samples determined by researchers with certain considerations (Maharani & Bernard, 2018). The most important goal of sampling in this way is to focus on the distinct characteristics of an interesting population, which will allow researchers to respond to research problems (Lenaini, 2021). The considerations made in this purposive sampling technique can vary and depend on the needs of the research to be carried out. The characteristics of the respondents needed by the researcher are business partners (members and leaders) who are still actively running the business of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera.

Data Collection

Data collection was obtained by distributing questionnaires offline or face to face. After conducting the pilot test, the researcher distributed offline questionnaires in the form of a Google form and distributed them at turnover meetings (Open Plan Presentation and Home Prospect Akbar) and learning meetings (New Member Training, New Leader Training, Home Sharing Akbar). The questionnaires distributed were accompanied by a brief explanation of the research, the identity of the researcher, and the link to the questionnaire used. When distributing questionnaires, researchers can use other attributes such as posters regarding the content of the research and the required characteristics of the respondents.

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

Data processing was carried out after the results of the questionnaires that had been filled out by the respondents were collected. These data are then tabulated based on variables so as to facilitate the process of data analysis (Izam, 2016). In processing this data, there are several stages that are passed, namely descriptive analysis and PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling) analysis.

Results and Discussion

Validity Test

The validity test on the pilot test was carried out to measure the validity of each variable indicator using a Likert scale measurement. The total number of questionnaire statements tested was 33 items. The number of samples tested was 30 respondents, with a value of $df = (N-2)$ namely 28 and a significance value of $\alpha = 0.05$ or 5%. It is known that the value of r table with a df value of 28 and a significance of 0.05 is 0.361. So, research indicators are said to be valid if r count $>$ r table, or r count $>$ 0.361. Table 1 shows that all variable indicators used are valid.

Table 1. Pilot Test Validity Test

Variabel	Indikator	N	r hitung	Hasil	r tabel	Keterangan
Personal Characteristics	PC1	30	0,738	>	0,361	Valid
	PC2	30	0,763	>	0,361	Valid
	PC3	30	0,422	>	0,361	Valid
	PC4	30	0,648	>	0,361	Valid
	PC5	30	0,75	>	0,361	Valid
External Factors	EF1	30	0,835	>	0,361	Valid
	EF2	30	0,776	>	0,361	Valid
	EF3	30	0,891	>	0,361	Valid
	EF4	30	0,813	>	0,361	Valid
Grit	GR1	30	0,847	>	0,361	Valid
	GR2	30	0,809	>	0,361	Valid

Reliability Test

The reliability test on the pilot test was carried out after conducting a validity test and the variable indicators used in the study were declared valid. The reliability test was carried out to measure the consistency of the answers from the questionnaire respondents to the variable indicators being tested. A questionnaire is said to be reliable or reliable if one's answers to the questions are consistent or stable from time to time. The statistical formula used to measure reliability is the Cronbach Alpha (α) statistical test. If the Cronbach Alpha (α) value of a variable is greater than 0.5, then the variable is said to be reliable (Setiawan, 2019). Table 2 shows that all variables are reliable.

Table 2. Pilot Test Reliability Test

Variabel	Indikator	Cronbach's Alpha	Minimum Cronbach's Alpha	Keterangan
Personal Characteristics	PC1	0,514	0,500	Reliabilitas Cukup
	PC2			
	PC3			
	PC4			
	PC5			
External Factors	EF1	0,946	0,500	Reliabilitas Sangat Tinggi
	EF2			
	EF3			
	EF4			
Grit	GR1	0,864	0,500	Reliabilitas Sangat Tinggi
	GR2			

Data Collection

After conducting a pilot test and obtaining the validity and reliability results for each variable and indicator used, the next step is to continue distributing the questionnaires to collect research data. Data collection in this study was conducted from 1 May to 10 May 2023, where questionnaires were distributed online in the form of links and posters which were distributed to various social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp. Questionnaires were also distributed offline or face to face during learning meetings and turnover meetings. This research required a minimum of 110 representative respondents and over a period of 10 days, 125 data were collected. However, 112 respondents who passed the screening test, who are business partners

of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera East Java Branch, are still actively running the business for at least 6 months, and already have a network of right and left teams.

Convergent Validity Test and Internal Consistency Reliability (Before Reduction)

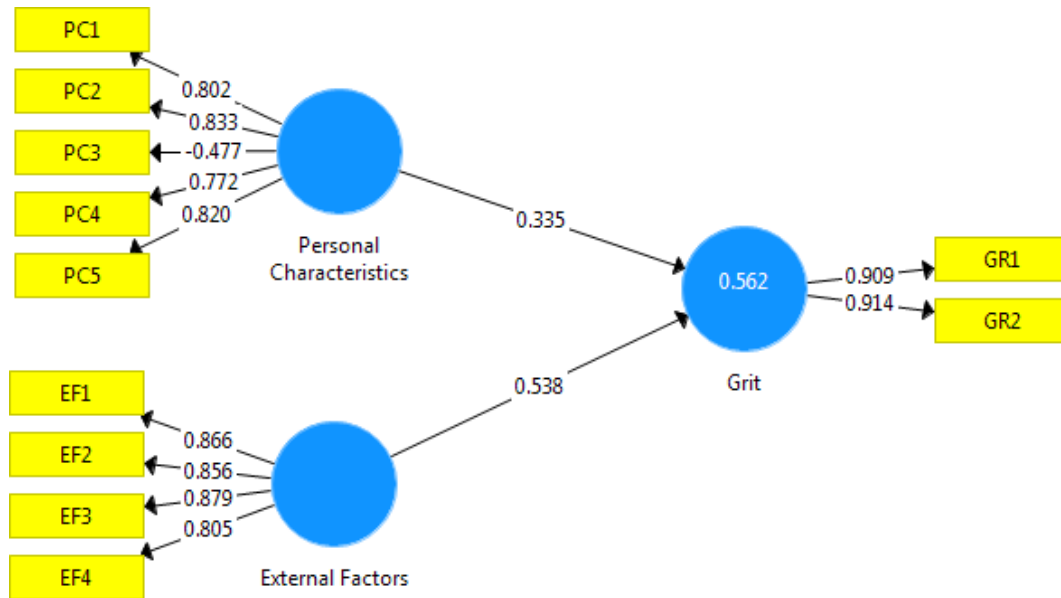


Figure 1. Measurement Model (Outer Model)

In Figure 1, this section tests convergent validity and reliability consistency in the research model. The calculated value is the outer loading value ≥ 0.6 ; AVE value ≥ 0.5 ; CA value ≥ 0.6 ; and CR value ≥ 0.7 .

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test

Variabel	Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR
Nilai Minimum	$\geq 0,6$	$\geq 0,5$	$\geq 0,6$	$\geq 0,7$
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>		0,567	0,686	0,777
PC1	0,802			
PC2	0,833			
PC3	-0,477			
PC4	0,772			
PC5	0,82			
<i>External Factors</i>		0,726	0,874	0,914
EF1	0,866			
EF2	0,856			
EF3	0,879			
EF4	0,805			
<i>Grit</i>		0,832	0,798	0,908
GR1	0,909			
GR2	0,914			

It can be seen in table 3, after conducting validity and reliability tests, there is 1 indicator that does not meet the standard outer loading and AVE values, so reduction must be carried out so that all are declared valid.

Convergent Validity Test and Internal Consistency Reliability (After Reduction)

In Figure 2, after the PC3 indicator is reduced, it can be seen that all indicators are valid and reliable. The results of the validity test can be seen from the outer loading value ≥ 0.6 and the AVE value ≥ 0.5 . In addition, the results of the reliability test were seen from the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) value ≥ 0.6 and the composite reliability (CR) value ≥ 0.7 .

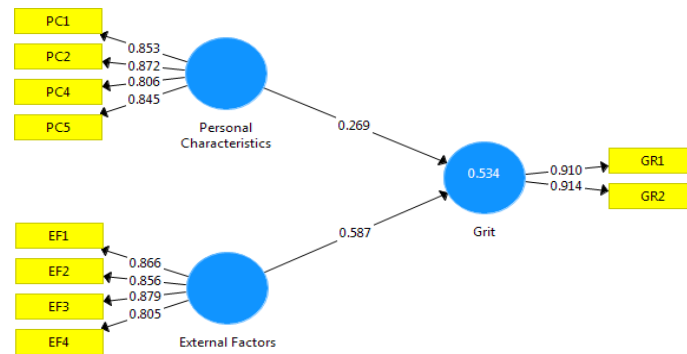


Figure 2. Measurement Model (Outer Model After Reduction)

In Table 4 it can be seen that there are 10 indicators that are valid because the outer loading value meets the validity requirements, namely ≥ 0.6 . However, there is 1 statement from the PC3 indicator that does not meet the validity requirements, namely PC3 so it must be reduced because its outer loading value is < 0.6 .

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Test (After Reduction)

Variabel	Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR
Nilai Minimum	$\geq 0,6$	$\geq 0,5$	$\geq 0,6$	$\geq 0,7$
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>		0,713	0,866	0,908
PC1	0,853			
PC2	0,872			
PC4	0,806			
PC5	0,845			
<i>External Factors</i>		0,726	0,874	0,914
EF1	0,866			
EF2	0,856			
EF3	0,879			
EF4	0,805			
<i>Grit</i>		0,832	0,798	0,908
GR1	0,909			
GR2	0,914			

Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity was carried out with the aim of ensuring that each latent model is different from other variables. In SMART-PLS, the discriminant validity test can be seen by measuring the cross loading of each indicator. The value of discriminant validity is said to be good if the indicator value is higher for each construct than the indicators for other constructs (Wirawan et al., 2019). The following is a description of the cross loading values for each indicator and it can be seen in table 5 that all indicators have passed the discriminant validity test.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Test (After being reduced)

	Personal Characteristics	External Factors	Grit
PC1	0,853	0,303	0,464
PC2	0,872	0,255	0,396
PC4	0,806	0,333	0,36
PC5	0,845	0,359	0,407
EF1	0,352	0,866	0,603
EF2	0,293	0,856	0,561
EF3	0,325	0,879	0,635
EF4	0,284	0,805	0,535
GR1	0,407	0,632	0,91
GR2	0,477	0,621	0,914

Path Coefficients

The path coefficient has a standard value of about -1 to +1. If the path coefficient value gets closer to +1, then the variables have a strong positive relationship. Conversely, a path coefficient value that is close to -1 indicates a weaker relationship (Maulana, 2022). Table 4.6 shows that the path coefficients of each relationship between variables have shown a positive relationship. The relationship between the strongest variables is external factors to Grit with a coefficient value of 0.587. While the weakest relationship between variables is personal characteristics to Grit with a coefficient value of 0.269.

Table 6. Value of Path Coefficients

Hubungan Antar Variabel	Nilai Path Coefficients	Keterangan
PC → GR	0,269	Positif
EF → GR	0,587	Positif

R-Square

R-square (R^2) is a method of structural model analysis, where the higher the R^2 value, the better the model describes the data (in Bucchianico, 2018). The value of $R^2 \geq 0.75$ for endogenous latent variables in the structural model is described as a substantial value. While the R^2 value ≥ 0.50 is described as moderate, and the R^2 value ≤ 0.25 is described as weak (Oki et al., 2020). It can be seen in table 4.13 that all constructs, namely personal characteristics and external factors influence Grit by 0.525 or 52.5%, so that the r-square value is in the medium category.

Table 7. Value of R-Square

Variabel	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Grit	0,534	0,525

Q-Square (Predictive Relevance)

Predictive relevance is a structural model assessment that can show the relevance of a research model. Q^2 value > 0 indicates that the exogenous construct has relevance or a research model is relevant. The greater the Q^2 value, the higher the prediction accuracy (Devi et al., 2022). The Q^2 value can be classified into 3, i.e. if the Q^2 value is 0.02 – 0.14 it means it has small predictive relevance, then the Q^2 value is 0.15 – 0.34 which means it has moderate prediction relevance, and finally the Q^2 value is ≥ 0.35 means it has great predictive relevance. It can be seen in table 8 that the Q^2 value ≥ 0.35 indicates that the exogenous construct variable has predictive relevance to the endogenous construct variable which is included in the large category.

Table 8. Value of Q-Square

Variabel	Nilai Q Square
Grit	0,42

F-Square (Effect Size)

F-Square (effect size) is a method of structural model analysis that functions to determine whether an endogenous variable has an influence on exogenous variables which are classified into small, medium, and large influences. If the f-square value is 0.02 - 0.15 then it is included in the small effect or the effect is small, if the f-square value is 0.16 - 0.35 then it is included in the medium effect or the effect is moderate, if the f-square value > 0.35 , it is included in the large effect or has a large effect (Farouqi et al., 2023). Based on this description,

it can be seen in table 9 that the results of the f-square value on the relationship between the variables tested, namely personal characteristics to Grit have a small effect value, except for the relationship of external factors to Grit which has an f-square value of 0.640 which is classified as having an influence big.

Table 9. Value of F-Square

Hubungan Antar Variabel	Nilai F-Square	Keterangan
PC → GR	0,134	Kecil
EF → GR	0,64	Besar

PLS-SEM Hypothesis Test Results

After carrying out the stages of analysis of the measurement model and structural model, the next step is to carry out an analysis of the PLS-SEM hypothesis test. Hypothesis testing was carried out to determine the level of significance between latent variables in the research model and to determine whether the hypotheses that had been formulated previously could be accepted or rejected. The significance of the hypothesis between latent variables can be tested by looking at the T-statistic and P-value. If the T-statistic is > 1.96 and the P-value is < 0.05 , the hypothesis is accepted (Masruroh et al., 2023). Hypothesis testing in PLS-SEM was carried out by bootstrapping analysis in SmartPLS 3.2.9 software by testing 2 hypotheses on 112 research samples. Table 10 is the result of hypothesis testing in this study.

Table 10 shows that personal characteristics and external factors have an influence on the Grit of business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch. The t-statistic value shows that external factors have the greatest influence on the Grit of business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch. Furthermore, personal characteristics have an influence on Grit in business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch.

Tabel 10. Hasil Uji Hipotesis

Hipotesis	Hubungan Antar Variabel	T-Statistic	P-Value	Keterangan
H1	PC → GR	2,234	0,026	Diterima
H2	EF → GR	3,757	0	Diterima

Conclusion

Based on the results of data processing and analysis in the previous chapter, two conclusions can be drawn regarding the factors that influence the Grit of business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch. First, personal characteristics play an important role in determining the Grit level of the business partners. The research found that of the five Big 5 Personality indicators (namely Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Intellect/Imagination, and Extraversion), only four of them had a significant effect on Grit, namely Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Intellect/Imagination, and Extraversion. In other words, business partners who possess traits such as politeness, orderliness, inventiveness, and extroversion tend to have higher Grit levels. However, the Neuroticism indicator does not have a significant effect on Grit, indicating that a person's level of neuroticism does not significantly affect their persistence and resilience in facing business challenges.

In addition, external factors also make a positive contribution to the Grit level of business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch. The results of the analysis show that all Social Support indicators such as emotional/esteem support, tangible/instrumental

support, information support, and companionship support have a significant influence on Grit. This means that support from the social environment such as family, friends and business partners can influence the level of diligence and enthusiasm of business partners in running their business. This social support assists business partners in overcoming obstacles and difficulties that may arise, so that they can remain firm and never give up in achieving their business goals. Thus, the conclusion of this study confirms that both personal characteristics and external factors have a crucial role in shaping Grit in business partners of PT Melia Sehat Sejahtera, East Java Branch.

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