



Role of Meaningful Work and Self-Leadership on Learning Culture and Adaptive Performance : A Mediated Moderated Model

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Abstract

The purposed of this study was to examine the role of meaningful work as a mediation between learning culture and adaptive performance relationship, and also considering self-leadership as a moderation between meaningful work and adaptive performance correlation on startup employee. This research is a quantitative study with questionnaire as a data collection tool. Data were collected using purposive sampling which obtained 321 respondents. The result of this study is partial mediation which explain that meaningful work are significant to mediating the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance. However, self-leadership has a significant effect as a moderation only at low and medium level.

Introduction

The rapid pace of technological and business industry developments has led to the creation of a dynamic and complex corporate business environment (Jundt & Shoss, 2023). This requires companies to develop adaptive strategies to adjust to various changes and meet business demands, ensuring their sustainability and growth (KPMG, 2022) (Park & Park, 2021). The ability of companies to adapt to new and challenging situations becomes a key factor in their survival. Therefore, organizations need to focus on nurturing, retaining, and developing employees to work effectively in adapting to various changes, particularly in dynamic and uncertain situations (Olafsen et al., 2021; Park & Park, 2021).

The ability of employees to adapt within a dynamic work environment is referred to as adaptive performance (Hesketh & Neal, 1999). Adaptive performance represents individuals' efforts to acquire and adjust competencies and strategies to be effective in dynamic environments (Jundt & Shoss, 2023). Employees with strong adaptive performance can align their competencies, strategies, and behaviors with the emerging demands of new situations (Jundt & Shoss, 2023). This adaptability significantly impacts both individual and organizational levels, including enhancing an organization's ability to identify, implement, and sustain changes (Park & Park, 2019).

According to (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012), adaptive performance consists of two main factors: training & learning effort and interpersonal adaptability. Training & learning effort involves an individual's proactive approach to developing personal knowledge and skills, while interpersonal adaptability refers to the ability and willingness to adjust in forming interpersonal relationships. These two factors are critical components of adaptive performance, addressing the comprehensive need for adaptation, both internally through knowledge and skills and externally through social relationships.

Adaptive performance is often equated with other adaptive constructs such as adaptability and proactivity (Park & Park, 2019). However, they have distinct differences. Adaptability refers

to the extent to which individuals can cope with or support changes affecting their roles, whereas adaptive performance encompasses behaviors and potential that manifest adaptive behavior, including anticipating future changes (Griffin et al., 2007; Hesketh & Neal, 1999). Furthermore, (Jundt et al., 2015) emphasized that adaptive performance is not merely an individual tendency but also a behavior that can be anticipatory or reactive to changes. Additionally, adaptive performance differs from proactivity as it emphasizes the ability to manage uncertainty due to external changes, while proactivity focuses on internal changes—individuals actively modifying themselves and their environment (Griffin et al., 2010).

Various factors influence adaptive performance, including individual, job, group, and organizational characteristics (Park & Park, 2019). However, one vital and most effective factor in shaping adaptive performance is learning culture (Kanten et al., 2015). Learning culture is defined as a culture that supports the acquisition, distribution, and sharing of learning, promoting continuous learning and its application for organizational improvement (Nowakowski & Conlon, 2005). In organizations, learning culture emphasizes open information and idea exchange, facilitating learning processes and their application. Consequently, learning culture is often considered a crucial means for fostering creativity and innovation as it supports inquiry, risk-taking, and experimentation (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005). In (Yang et al., 2004), organizational learning culture consists of several dimensions: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, empowerment, embedded systems, system connection, and strategic leadership. Among these seven dimensions, continuous learning and inquiry and dialogue are the most influential individual-level aspects of learning culture. These dimensions significantly impact individual behavior, knowledge, motivation, and learning capacity, fostering sustainable learning for continuous improvement (Kim et al., 2015; Watkins, 1993). Furthermore, according to (Viterouli et al., 2024), the dimensions of continuous learning and inquiry knowledge are the most significant in influencing adaptive performance as they align with adaptive performance components such as interpersonal ability and training & learning efforts.

Building a learning culture within an organization is crucial because it develops and maintains innovation, enabling organizations to anticipate and adapt to dynamic environments while creating long-term innovations (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005; Kotler et al., 2016). Research by (Park & Park, 2019) shows that enhancing employees' learning capabilities by facilitating learning opportunities and creating a learning culture can help companies develop employees' adaptive performance. This is supported by (Kim & Park, 2022), who found that skill development is a significant solution for adapting in organizations exposed to constant change, with such development being optimal in organizations that provide space for learning.

Although numerous studies (Kanten et al., 2015; Pradhan et al., 2017) have examined the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, they have not explained the mechanisms through which learning culture influences adaptive performance. (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023) attempted to elucidate this relationship by exploring the role of intrinsic motivation specifically, meaningful work. However, their study was conducted on workers with specific characteristics and did not fully explain the role of meaningful work in this relationship, necessitating further investigation. Literature on how organizational culture influences meaningful work, an individual aspect, remains limited. According to (Cardador & Rupp, 2011), an organizational culture rich in innovation and support, facilitated by a strong learning culture, offers employees opportunities to recognize the meaningfulness of their work. (Nevison et al., 2017) also noted that learning culture supports the creation of meaningful work by fostering an organizational environment conducive to personally meaningful learning and encouraging exploration and tailored learning for employees.

Meaningful work can be defined as personally significant and fulfilling work that encompasses three aspects: psychological meaningfulness, meaning-making through work, and greater good motivation (Lysova et al., 2019; Steger et al., 2012). Psychological meaningfulness refers to how individuals find importance and value in their work, based on the subjective experience that their efforts significantly impact their lives (Rosso et al., 2010). Meaning-making through work emphasizes how work meaning affects one's life meaning, accommodating personal growth (Steger et al., 2012). Lastly, greater good motivation reflects an individual's drive to positively impact others through meaningful work, making the work significant if it has a broader impact.

A learning culture fosters meaningful work by meeting two fundamental human needs: the need for control and the need for meaningful experience (Cardador & Rupp, 2011). To fulfill the need for control, learning culture provides autonomy, freedom, and flexibility in learning. For the need for meaningful experience, it helps individuals understand the connections between knowledge, work activities, and the benefits of their roles both within and beyond the workplace (Nevison et al., 2017). (Gregory et al., 2009) further support this by stating that a learning culture fostering an innovative organizational culture enhances employees' creativity and capability growth, either through learning or by encouraging risk-taking decisions.

The development of a learning culture within an organization is crucial because it fosters and sustains innovation, enabling the organization to anticipate and adapt to dynamic environments while creating long-term innovation (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005; Kotler et al., 2017). Research by (Park & Park, 2019) indicates that expanding employees' learning capabilities by providing learning opportunities and fostering a learning culture can help companies develop adaptive performance in their employees. This is also supported by (E. J. Kim & Park, 2022), who found that skill development serves as a significant solution for adapting within organizations constantly exposed to change. Such skill development is facilitated through learning, particularly in organizations that create spaces conducive to learning.

The relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance has been widely examined in several studies (Kanten et al., 2015; Pradhan et al., 2017). However, these studies do not explain the mechanism through which learning culture influences adaptive performance. (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023) attempted to explain this relationship through one form of intrinsic motivation, namely meaningful work. However, their study focused on workers with specific characteristics and did not explicitly elaborate on the role of meaningful work in this relationship, leaving room for further exploration. Literature on how organizational culture influences meaningful work—an individual aspect—remains limited. Nevertheless, (Cardador & Rupp, 2011) suggest that an organizational culture rich in an innovative and supportive climate, facilitated by a learning culture, provides opportunities for employees to recognize the meaningfulness of their work. (Nevison et al., 2017) also found that a learning culture supports the creation of meaningful work by fostering an organizational environment that encourages personally meaningful learning activities and promotes employee-specific exploration and learning.

Meaningful work refers to work that is personally significant and fulfilling, encompassing three aspects: psychological meaningfulness, meaning making through work, and greater good motivation (Lysova et al., 2019; Steger et al., 2012). According to (Steger et al., 2012), each of these aspects corresponds to distinct characteristics of meaningful work. Psychological meaningfulness in work relates to how individuals assign meaning to all aspects of their lives, including work, reflecting whether they perceive their work as important and meaningful. This aspect is rooted in the understanding that meaningful work is a subjective experience where individuals believe their actions have a profound impact on themselves (Rosso et al., 2010).

The second aspect, meaning making through work, examines how work-related meaning can influence an individual's overall life meaning, facilitating personal growth (Steger et al., 2012). Lastly, greater good motivation refers to an individual's drive to create a positive impact on others through meaningful work experiences, making the work significant if it has a broader impact.

Meaningful work arises when basic human needs are fulfilled, and a learning culture can address two of these needs: the need for control and the need for meaningful experience (Cardador & Rupp, 2011). In meeting the need for control, a learning culture provides autonomy, freedom, and flexibility in learning. Meanwhile, for the need for meaningful experience, a learning culture helps individuals understand the connections between knowledge, work activities, and the broader benefits of their roles, both within the workplace and in their wider impact (Nevison et al., 2017).

This is also supported by (Gregory et al., 2009), who state that a learning culture that fosters an innovative organizational culture will enhance employee creativity and promote the growth of employee capabilities, either through learning or by encouraging them to make risky decisions. (Cardador & Rupp, 2011) explain that the freedom and creative space provided by organizations can foster employees' intrinsic motivation and give them opportunities to work independently. This type of work provides a sense of competence and control over their tasks, leading employees to feel deeply engaged in their work. Independence, a sense of competence, and control over their tasks align with the need for control. Additionally, employees are given room to develop their skills, whether through provided learning facilities or their personal learning initiatives, encouraging them to explore various experiences within their work scope and optimize their capabilities, thereby creating meaningful work experiences.

(Steger et al., 2012) assert that the establishment of meaningful work for employees will trigger intrinsic motivation, as employees feel that both they and their work are valuable and that they are appreciated by the company. Moreover, employees who perceive their work as meaningful show better psychological alignment with organizational goals, identify with the company, and develop stronger emotional bonds with the organization. Employees' drive to help the organization achieve its goals is reflected in improved performance, including adaptive performance. This is further reinforced by employees' tendency to develop a sense of responsibility towards the company when they realize that the company strives to create meaningful work.

The impact of meaningful work on performance can generally be explained through the job characteristic theory framework of (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), which suggests that individuals will experience positive affect when they perform well in meaningful work. This positive affect fosters intrinsic motivation in individuals to produce high-quality performance. Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between meaningful work and positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job commitment, work engagement, and high-quality work (Allan et al., 2018; Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Kaur & Mittal, 2020; Kim & Park, 2022). Previous research also indicates that meaningful work has a significant influence on adaptive performance across various settings, though such studies have typically been conducted with participants of specific characteristics (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023).

Currently, there is growing interest in examining other psychological factors that can explain the mechanism linking learning culture to adaptive performance. However, no studies have yet explored the role of meaningful work in this relationship among employees. Meaningful work can elicit intrinsic motivation in individuals, with the assumption that individuals' performance will remain consistent and optimal when driven by intrinsic motivation. Therefore, this study

aims to explore the relationship between learning culture, meaningful work, and adaptive performance, focusing on the role of meaningful work as a mediator in the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance among employees in general.

Adaptive performance, which is essential for navigating changes, can decline when individuals work under uncertain conditions or during crises. Such situations often heighten negative emotions, such as stress and anxiety, which subsequently reduce performance (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). Pearson & Claire (1998) state that good performance can only be achieved by individuals with strong self-regulation when facing crises. Without self-regulation in uncertain situations, individuals may not only feel dissatisfied with their work but also exhibit less adaptive behavior, ultimately failing to address the challenges effectively. Hence, self-regulation skills are crucial for maintaining and enhancing adaptive performance in dynamic and uncertain work environments, and one such advanced form of self-regulation is self-leadership.

Self-leadership is a process through which individuals influence and control their behaviors, cognition, and motivation in the workplace (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). It consists of three components: behavior-focused strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies (Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Behavior-focused strategies aim to improve self-awareness in managing behaviors, particularly when tackling necessary but unpleasant tasks. These include self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, and self-cueing (Manz & Neck, 2004).

Constructive thought pattern strategies involve forming constructive thinking habits and positive thought patterns, such as identifying dysfunctional beliefs, practicing mental imagery, and engaging in positive self-talk (Manz & Neck, 2004).

Natural reward strategies focus on creating situations where individuals feel motivated or rewarded through the enjoyable aspects of tasks. These strategies include either making tasks inherently enjoyable or shifting focus from unpleasant aspects of tasks to their benefits (Manz & Neck, 2004).

When these strategies are applied, an individual is said to have strong self-leadership skills.

As previously mentioned, self-regulation is critical for adaptability in crisis situations. However, self-leadership, as a more complex process, is considered more effective in driving adaptive performance (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). While self-regulation primarily addresses the reduction of discrepancies stemming from internal (e.g., personal goals) or external sources (e.g., organizational goals), self-leadership goes further by involving reduction, management, and creation of differences (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Similarly, adaptive performance is a more proactive form of adaptability. Therefore, self-leadership better supports adaptive performance by enhancing individuals' awareness of their environment and their motivation to engage in situations requiring evaluation and decision-making, regardless of the circumstances (Manz, 1986).

Self-leadership not only helps maintain and improve adaptive performance in uncertain situations but also strengthens the relationship between meaningful work and positive work outcomes. As discussed earlier, meaningful work serves as an intrinsic motivator for employees, encouraging positive performance. However, intrinsic motivation alone is insufficient. (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019) suggest that intrinsic motivation drives individuals to develop new work methods and opt for unstructured tasks, but those with high intrinsic motivation often struggle to implement them effectively. Hence, behavioral strategies like self-leadership are needed to facilitate individuals' adaptability. Therefore, this study also

aims to examine the role of self-leadership as a moderator in the relationship between meaningful work and adaptive performance.

This study will focus on employees working in start-up companies, considering the nature of the environments these companies face. According to (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023), research on adaptive performance is best conducted in organizations with uncertain work environments and rapid changes, as adaptive performance is fundamental in such situations. By its very nature, start-ups continuously deal with uncertainty. (Robehmed, 2013) defines start-ups as companies oriented toward solving problems, but where solutions remain unclear and success is not guaranteed. Another definition, offered by (Moroni et al., 2015), describes start-ups as companies built on extreme uncertainty, with their primary innovation being the creation of desired products and services aimed at revolutionizing the market.

Thus, it can be concluded that start-ups constantly face uncertainty and dynamic environments, requiring adaptive performance from all their employees. Recognizing the urgency of research into the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, especially in navigating dynamic business situations, this study seeks to explore this topic in greater depth using the following research model.

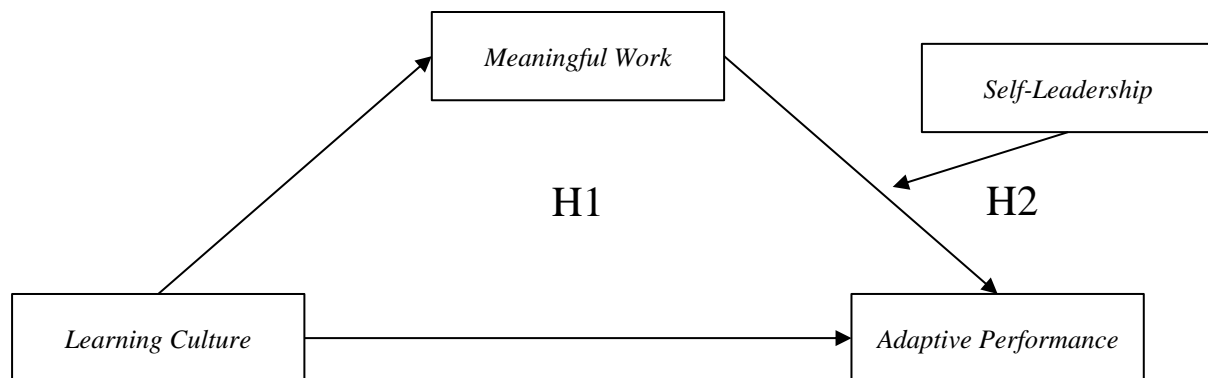


Figure 1. Research Model

To date, no studies have explored the interrelation among the four variables. conducted the first study to examine a mediation model involving three variables: learning culture, meaningful work, and adaptive performance in high-demand, non-permanent job contexts. While research on the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance is lacking, studies on learning organization and individual adaptive performance within mediation frameworks have yielded significant results (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). Another study by Nevison et al. (2017) explored the relationship between learning culture and meaningful work, showing significant findings in the context of meaningful work among student interns. Additionally, only two studies have investigated the effect of self-leadership on adaptive performance (Marques-Quinteiro & Curral, 2012; Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019). The limited research on this topic encourages a deeper examination of the relationships between learning culture, meaningful work, self-leadership, and adaptive performance within the start-up context, aiming to enhance knowledge on this subject while providing practical insights for companies.

Methods

The study targets individuals aged 18–35 who have been permanent employees at start-up companies for at least six months. Based on G*Power analysis, the minimum number of participants required for this study is 74. The total number of participants in the study is 287. Data collection was conducted online from January to February 2024 using purposive

sampling, where only participants meeting the research criteria completed the Google Form survey. Participation was voluntary, and the survey was distributed through various social media platforms, including Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Line.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS, employing PROCESS Hayes model 4 and model 14. Model 4 analysis was used to examine the mediating role of meaningful work in the research model, while model 14 analysis tested both moderation and mediation effects in the model. Four instruments were utilized in this study. The Dimension of The Learning Organization Questionnaire (Marsick & Watkins, 2003) measured the learning culture variable, focusing on two individual-level dimensions: continuous learning and inquiry and dialogue. It consisted of 13 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = almost never, 6 = almost always) and demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$). The Work and Meaning Inventory (Steger et al., 2012), adapted into Indonesian by Parahyanti & Zharifah (2022), assessed individuals' perceptions of the meaningfulness of their work. This unidimensional tool contained 8 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) with good reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$). The Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton et al., 2012), a shorter version of the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002), evaluated individuals' ability to direct their behavior effectively. It comprised 9 unidimensional items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) with good reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$). Lastly, the Adaptive Performance Questionnaire (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012) measured individuals' perceptions of their ability to work adaptively. This unidimensional instrument included 19 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) and demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.95$).

Results and Discussion

Based on the descriptive analysis results regarding participant demographics, it was found that the majority of participants in this study were startup employees aged 23–26 years ($n = 191$; 59.5%), male ($n = 185$; 57.8%), and had a tenure of 1–2 years ($n = 116$; 36.13%). The descriptive analysis of the variables revealed that most participants in this study perceived learning culture at a moderate level ($n = 184$; 60.7%), meaningful work at a moderate level ($n = 185$; 66.7%), self-leadership at a moderate level ($n = 214$; 66.7%), and adaptive performance at a moderate level ($n = 228$; 71%).

Table 1. Results of the Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Variabel	M	SD	Low		Medium		High	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Learning Culture	3.55	0.78	64	21.1	184	60.7	55	18.2
Meaningful Work	3.7	0.99	64	19.9	185	57.6	72	22.4
Self-Leadership	4.25	1.11	75	23.4	214	66.7	32	10.0
Adaptive Performance	4.49	0.86	49	15.3	228	71.0	44	13.7

Source: SPSS Analysis Results, 2024

The first hypothesis of this study examines the role of meaningful work as a mediator in the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance. The hypothesis testing results for the mediating role of meaningful work are illustrated in Figure 2. The analysis indicates that learning culture has a significant positive effect on meaningful work ($b = 1.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that individuals who perceive a strong learning culture are more likely to view their work as meaningful, and vice versa.

Additionally, meaningful work shows a significant positive relationship with adaptive performance ($b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals who perceive their

work as meaningful tend to demonstrate better adaptability. Furthermore, the direct relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance is also significant ($b = 0.12$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the learning culture directly influences an individual's ability to adapt.

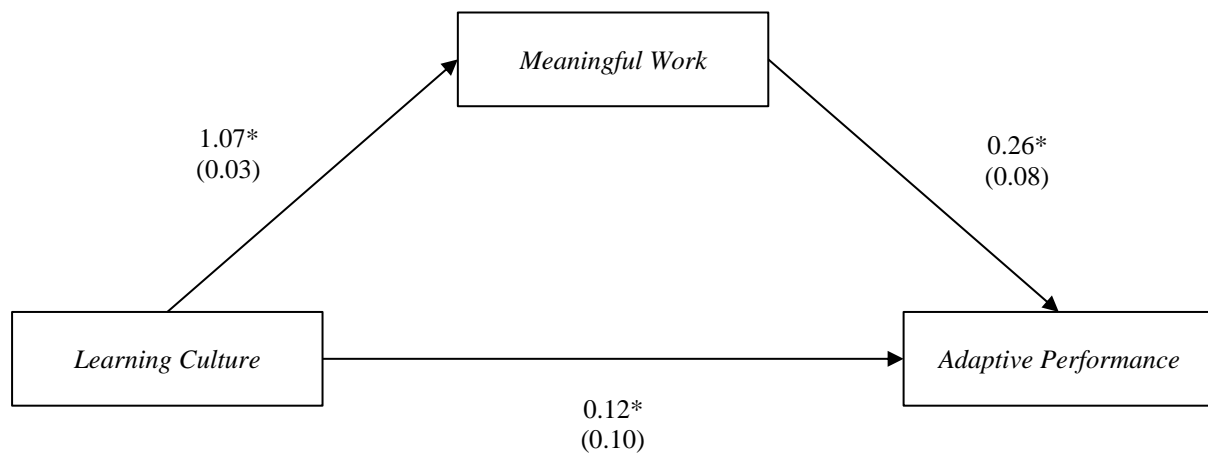


Figure 2. Statistical Model of Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis results indicate that meaningful work acts as a mediator in the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, with a significant indirect effect ($b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.07$, $LLCI = 0.12$, $ULCI = 0.43$). This finding suggests that individuals with a strong learning culture are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful, which in turn enhances their adaptive performance. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

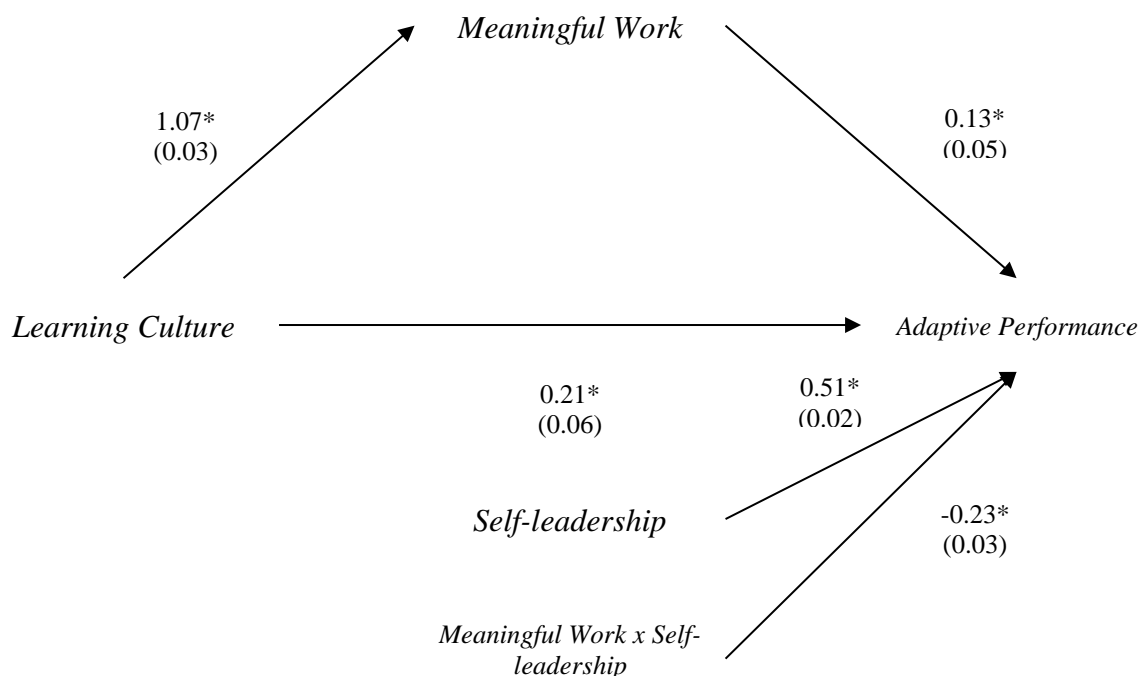


Figure 3. Statistical Model of Moderated Mediation Analysis

The second hypothesis of this study examines the moderating role of self-leadership on the mediating relationship of meaningful work in the connection between learning culture and adaptive performance. The moderation analysis results indicate that self-leadership has a

significant positive influence on adaptive performance ($b = 0.51$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that as an individual's self-leadership increases, their adaptive performance also improves. The interaction effect between meaningful work and self-leadership on adaptive performance is also found to be significant ($b = -0.22$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Results of the Conditional Indirect Effect of Self-leadership

Mediator	Levels	b	SE	Bootstrap 95% CI
Self-leadership	Low	0.41	0.09	[0.26, 0.64]
	Medium	0.14	0.07	[0.03, 0.31]
	High	-0.11	0.06	[-0.23, 0.01]

Table 3 presents the conditional indirect effect, indicating that the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance through meaningful work depends on an individual's self-leadership. The analysis of the conditional indirect effect reveals that the influence of learning culture on adaptive performance through meaningful work is significant at low ($b = 0.41$, $SE = 0.09$, $LLCI = 0.26$, $ULCI = 0.64$) and medium levels of self-leadership ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.07$, $LLCI = 0.03$, $ULCI = 0.31$) but not significant at high levels of self-leadership ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.06$, $LLCI = -0.23$, $ULCI = 0.01$). Therefore, it can be concluded that low and medium levels of self-leadership strengthen the relationship between meaningful work and adaptive performance, while high levels of self-leadership weaken it. Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, confirming the moderating role of self-leadership in the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance through meaningful work.

The results of this study indicate that learning culture positively and significantly affects adaptive performance, both directly and through the mediation of meaningful work. In other words, when employees perceive that their organization facilitates and provides space for continuous learning, they tend to perform better in adapting by aligning their skills and strategies to a dynamic work environment. These findings are consistent with previous research exploring the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, which highlights that fostering a learning culture in organizations enhances their ability to prepare employees to proactively adapt to dynamic environments (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023; Kantan et al., 2015; Pradhan et al., 2017).

The impact of learning culture on employees' adaptive performance can be explained by several factors. First, a learning culture creates an organizational climate that is always prepared, both anticipatively and reactively, for long-term environmental changes (Kim, 2020). Through continuous learning, employees consistently acquire new knowledge related to their work scope, including responsibilities and challenges (Jundt & Shoss, 2023). Second, learning culture facilitates employees in developing their abilities to address challenges arising from changes (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023). By providing a space for learning, organizations offer opportunities for employee development, enabling them to understand changes, identify needs to address challenges, develop personal capabilities aligned with environmental demands, and improve the possibility of enhancing organizational systems and practices to better adapt to change (Jundt et al., 2015; Park & Park, 2021).

In the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, meaningful work is proven to significantly explain their connection. When an organization has a robust learning culture, employees are more likely to find their work meaningful, which positively impacts performance. This aligns with (Budhiraja & Rathi, 2023), who found that organizations that cultivate a learning culture and provide meaningful work to employees help them achieve better outcomes, including improved adaptability. The linkage between learning culture, meaningful work, and adaptive performance can also be explained through job characteristics theory,

which posits that effective job design, such as fostering a learning culture, enhances the meaningfulness of work, leading to better performance.

This mediation model also demonstrates that learning culture positively influences meaningful work. When an organization exhibits a strong learning culture, employees tend to perceive their work as meaningful. This finding aligns with (Nevison et al., 2017), who found that learning culture provides autonomy, freedom, and flexibility in learning, helping individuals connect knowledge, work activities, and job benefits within their work scope and broader contexts. These aspects fulfill individual needs for control and experience, making employees feel highly engaged with their work and perceive it as more meaningful (Lysova et al., 2019). Furthermore, (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009) suggest that meaningful work emerges when work conditions align individual competencies, values, and job goals, such as through the development of a learning culture.

The mediating role of meaningful work also shows that it positively influences adaptive performance. When individuals perceive their work as meaningful, they are more likely to deliver high performance. This is consistent with Subarjo et al. (2024), who found that meaningful work fosters intrinsic motivation, optimizing performance, including adaptive performance. The influence of meaningful work on performance arises because it enables individuals to feel connected to their tasks and outcomes. By delivering optimal results in work they consider meaningful, individuals experience positive affect, which boosts intrinsic motivation to achieve optimal outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2018).

The findings also show that the moderating role of self-leadership significantly affects the relationship between meaningful work and adaptive performance, but only at low and medium levels of self-leadership. This indicates that the influence of meaningful work on adaptive performance depends on the intensity of self-leadership. Meaningful work plays a more significant role for individuals with low and medium levels of self-leadership in driving adaptive performance. However, high levels of self-leadership tend to reduce adaptive performance. This can be explained by (Müller & Niessen, 2018), who argue that self-leadership is energy-intensive as it requires resilience, persistence, and focus, depleting an individual's self-control. Self-control is crucial for achieving adaptive performance, as individuals must evaluate and modify strategies during adaptation (Stasielowicz, 2019). Continuous adaptation to changes may exhaust individuals with high self-leadership, hindering their ability to adapt to subsequent changes.

In contrast, individuals with low to medium self-leadership can still adapt effectively. This aligns with (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019), who found that self-leadership helps employees achieve adaptive performance by enhancing their sensitivity to external situations, motivating them to evaluate and make decisions in any situation, and building their capacity for complex adaptive tasks. The mechanism of self-leadership enables individuals to engage in cognitive restructuring, fostering alternative thinking patterns that meet environmental demands and imagining and simulating alternative strategies for dealing with unexpected circumstances (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019).

Conclusion

This study highlights the mediating role of meaningful work in the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance, as well as the moderating effect of self-leadership. Employees in organizations with strong learning cultures perceive their work as meaningful, which enhances their adaptive performance. Adaptive performance is further strengthened when self-leadership is at low or moderate levels. Organizations are encouraged to cultivate a

learning culture to enhance employees' sense of meaningful work, thereby improving their ability to adapt to dynamic environments. Meaningful work fosters intrinsic motivation, offering a long-term solution to improving adaptive performance. Future studies should explore the specific impact of self-leadership levels on adaptive performance and identify other factors explaining the relationship between learning culture and adaptive performance.

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