

# The Effect of Change Leadership on Adaptive Performance: Meaningful Work as a Mediating Variable

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## **Abstract**

*Organizational change is one continuous study to be carried out because organizational change will definitely occur. The role of the leader as the spearhead of the organization needs to be studied because it will impact on the subordinate's perception and behavior, one of which is so that they have adaptive performance. Of course, to achieve adaptive performance there needs to be a positive perception of own work. The aim of this research is to examine the effect of change leadership on adaptive performance: testing the mediating role of meaningful work on the influence of change leadership on adaptive performance. This research uses a quantitative approach, with a purposive sampling technique. The data used is primary data through surveys distributed online by a sample size was 350 respondents. The data analysis technique uses the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) test. The research results proven that change leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance. Furthermore, meaningful work mediates the influence of change leadership on adaptive performance.*

**Keywords:** Adaptive Performance, Change leadership; Meaningful Work.

## **1. Introduction**

Organizational change is normal for people in all organizations, both large-scale organizations and small-scale organizations (Drucker, 1995; Kotter, 1996; Reinhard, 2007;). Organizational change is definitely occurring and must be managed well. The role of a leader is to be the spearhead in achieving change that leads to be positive change. The existence of change is a challenge that must be faced in maintaining competitive advantage; the challenge of intermittent change rests on the top of organizational leaders and I/O psychologists who influence these leaders (Leonard, 2002; Reinhard, 2007; Williams, 2003).

On the other hand, Lunenburg (2011) stated that still ongoing controversy about the differences between leadership and management. Scientists argued that although management and leadership overlap, the two activities are not synonymous (Bass, 2010). The degree of overlap is a point of disagreement (Yukl, 2010). Lunenburg (2011) asserts that while leaders advocate change and new approaches, managers advocate stability and the status quo. Further, whereas leaders are concerned with understanding people's beliefs and gaining their commitment, managers carry out responsibilities, exercise authority, and worry about how things turn out.

Herold et al. (2008) examined the simultaneous effects of behavior related to change leadership and transformational leadership on employee commitment to actual changes implemented by their leaders in their organizations. On the other hand, the evidence that response to change is a function of the personal impact of that change on the individual (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Fedor et al., 2006). Some research supports the criticism (e.g.

Caniels et al., 2018), suggesting that transformational leadership may not be appropriate for all followers. Especially in the context of organizational change, the roles of a change leader have a stronger influence in shaping adaptive employee performance.

An important factor in changing period is positive perceptions of work are related to affective and cognitive processes that can increase the application of their own work roles (Soane et al., 2013). To achieve adaptive performance, employees need to achieve meaningful work. Therefore, the aims of this research is to examine the effect of change leadership on adaptive performance; examining the mediating role of work meaningfulness on the influence of change leadership on adaptive performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Change Leadership and Adaptive Performance**

The change leader has an important role because in the change process, it is hoped that bring his subordinates to maintain a positive view of the organization and its work. Gill (2001) stated that leaders must be able to use personal power to touch the hearts and minds of subordinates to work together to achieve organizational goals. Effective leadership for change reflects all of these dimensions of leadership. An integrative leadership model for successful change needs to follow the elements of effective leadership (Gill, 2003).

Hooper and Potter (2000) defined change leadership as developing a vision for the future, developing a strategy to make the vision a reality, and mobilizing the energy of all members of the organization to achieve the same goal. This approach is better known as emotional attunement. Adaptive performance is defined as an individual's ability to meet the demands of rapidly changing environments and situations (Shoss et al., 2012). Huang et al. (2014) argued that adaptive performance is about employee performance of adaptive behavior towards changes in the workplace. Adaptive performance is double-edged because it improves individual performance and career success (Park and Park, 2019) and leads to organizational outcomes such as managing change, organizational learning, and performance (Griffin et al., 2007).

*H1: Change leadership has positive significant effect on adaptive performance.*

### **Change Leadership and Meaningful Work**

The change leadership is a leader's ability which includes cognitive or rational processes (cognitive intelligence), the need for meaning in people's work and life (spiritual intelligence), emotions or feelings (emotional intelligence), and volitional actions or behavior (behavioral skills) in order to achieve organizational goals (Gill, 2002).

Chalofsky (2003) described the concept of meaningful work as leading to three interrelated parts. First, the self-perspective, namely achieving work meaningfulness, depends on the employee's view of the work. Second, from the perspective of work itself, Chalofsky (2003) stated that meaningfulness is caused by work because employees believe and know that success and the risk of failure must be faced. Third, from a balanced perspective, meaningful work is a workplace condition that is able to guarantee enlightenment between individual competencies, values, and goals of work (Chalofsky, 2003).

*H2: Change leadership has positive significant effect on meaningful work.*

### **Meaningful Work and Adaptive Performance**

Soane et al. (2013) stated that meaningful work is a potential component to be expanded and build processes. Meaningful work is seen as a medium for providing benefits to organizations and individuals in the company. The meaningful work also a source of achieving meaningfulness in one's life (Baumeister, 1991; in Markow et al., 2005; Steger and Dik, 2009). According to Wiersma and Morris (2009) the meaningful work is a focus for

individuals and organizations. Therefore, the concept of meaningful work continues to be developed by researchers. Soane et al. (2013) stated that positive perceptions of work are related to affective and cognitive processes that can increase the application of their own work roles.

Singh et al. (1996) stated that employee performance can be interpreted as the extent to which someone carries out their responsibilities and work duties. This performance will be a benchmark for fulfilling the tasks for which he is responsible. Employee performance is defined as an action determined and required by an employee's job which be mandated, assessed, and rewarded by the employing organization (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004).

*H3: Meaningful work has positive significant effect on adaptive performance.*

### **Meaningful Work Mediates the Effect of Change Leadership on Adaptive Performance**

May et al. (2004) defined meaningful work as the value of work goals that individuals perceive based on standards or ideals. The meaningful work is a form of individual perception of the conditions of the existing work environment. Leaders' external factors are one source of positive perceptions of meaningful work. Individuals who achieve meaningful work will have an impact on positive results for the organization (Geldenhuis, Profit, and Venter, 2014).

Positive perceptions related to achieving meaningful work by employees will have a positive impact on the organization and employees. According to Michaelson et al. (2014) the meaningful work can facilitate the search for behavior and psychological experiences that have a prosocial impact. Therefore, achieving meaningful work will have an impact on employee behavior.

*H4: Meaningful work mediates the effect of change leadership on adaptive performance.*

### **3. Method**

This research design uses a quantitative approach. The population in this study is employees who work in the service sector, because service companies are companies that are transforming and have direct contact with customers. The sampling technique in the research was a nonprobability sampling method using purposive sampling by a sample size was 350 respondents. The criteria used are employees who have worked for more than 2 years because with this period of work employees are experiencing a transition period in the organization. The data collected by researchers is primary data obtained through surveys using cross-section data. Distribution of questionnaires using the self-administered survey questionnaire method, where questionnaires are distributed by online.

#### **Instrument**

Change leadership was measured with 7 items to see employee perceptions of change leadership which were adapted from (Kotter, 1996). To measure the meaningful work, it is measured using an instrument developed by May et al. (2004), which consists of 6 items. Measurement of the adaptive performance variable from Griffin et al. (2007) which consists of 9 items. The instruments use a Likert scale (1-5), namely: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

#### **Technique Analysis**

The hypothesis testing using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) test. Where, SEM involves two model evaluation tests, namely the outer model and inner model. The outer reflective model is evaluated with convergent and discriminant validity of the indicators and composite reliability for the indicator block. Convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed based on the correlation of the model between item scores and the calculated construct scores. The measure of individual reflection with the rule

of thumb, namely, a loading of 0.50, is considered significant in practice (Hair et al., 2010). The reliability test is assessed based on composite reliability and Cronbach alpha value  $\leq 0.60$ .

The inner model is measured using several criteria, namely: R-square for endogenous latent variables. Hair et al. (2010) stated that effect sizes are grouped into three categories, namely, 0.02 is classified as weak, 0.15 is classified as medium, and 0.35 is classified as large. Hypothesis testing by looking at the path coefficient value and significance value (p-value) consisting of p-value  $< 0.01$  (significant at the 1% level), p-value  $< 0.05$  (significant at the 5% level), and p-value  $< 0.1$  (significant at the 10% level).

#### 4. Result

##### Measurement Evaluation Test

The measurement model evaluation test is used to determine the quality of the measuring instrument for a construct. In evaluating the measurement model there are two measurements (reflective measurement and formative measurement). This research only uses one measurement, namely reflective measurement because it is based on the development of a construct that has been built based on theory and relevant article studies. Reflective measurements are assessed based on the loading value on each construct. Evaluation of the measurement model is used as a test of validity and reliability. The validity tests are discriminant validity and convergent validity tests. The reliability test results are assessed using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The results of the validity and reliability tests are used as an initial step to be able to proceed to the next stage of hypothesis testing.

The validity test results are related to the principle that the measures of a construct are highly correlated. The convergent validity test is assessed based on factor loadings greater than 0.50 on each construct (Hair et al., 2010). The results of convergent validity testing are presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Factor Loading

Variable	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Change Leadership	CL1	0.811	0.907	0.926
	CL2	0.851		
	CL3	0.717		
	CL4	0.758		
	CL5	0.823		
	CL6	0.836		
	CL7	0.806		
Meaningful Work	MW1	0.836	0.932	0.945
	MW2	0.837		
	MW3	0.844		
	MW4	0.913		
	MW5	0.778		
	MW6	0.889		
	MW7	0.795		
Adaptive Performance	AP1	0.691	0.909	0.925
	AP2	0.785		
	AP3	0.745		
	AP4	0.765		

	AP5	0.821		
	AP6	0.856		
	AP7	0.747		
	AP8	0.728		
	AP9	0.699		

Table 1. described that all indicators that have a loading factor value greater than 0.50. Therefore, all item loading higher than 0.50 and all indicators has a convergent validity test criteria. These researches also analyze the internal consistency reliability. It be proven by the cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficient values being higher than 0.60.

The next validity test is the results of the discriminant validity test which is assessed by comparing the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) with the correlation between constructs. Therefore, the results of the discriminant validity test are described in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. Correlation among Variable

	CL	MW	AP
CL	<b>0.801</b>		
MW	0.636	<b>0.843</b>	
AP	0.714	0.805	<b>0.761</b>

Table 2 described that the results of discriminant validity testing in this study have been fulfilled as seen from the value of the square root of AVE in the diagonal column which is greater than the correlation between constructs in the same column. The results of data processing show that there is a greater difference in results for the construct when compared with other constructs in the same column.

### Structural Evaluation Test

The structural model on endogenous variables is evaluated using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ) value. The results of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) test show that the  $R^2$  of the endogenous meaningful work (MW) construct is 0.484. These results mean that the variance of the MW construct can be explained by 48% by the variance of the exogenous construct of change leadership. The adaptive performance (AP) construct is 0.713. These results mean that the variance of the AP construct can be explained by 71% by the variance of the exogenous construct change leadership and meaningful work.

The test results for the Q-Square value on the endogenous construct are higher than zero, the variable of MW of 0.482 and AP of 0.716. This test shows that the Q-Square value for the endogenous construct in this research is higher than zero, so the predictive relevance of this research model is very good.

This research also uses effect size in evaluating the structural model. Effect size is used to see the absolute value of the individual contribution of each predictor latent variable to the  $R^2$  value of the criterion variable. Hair et al. (2010) stated that effect size can be grouped into three parts, namely 0.02 is classified as weak, 0.15 is classified as medium, and 0.35 is classified as large. Table 3 will present in detail the effect size calculation for the path coefficient.

Tabel 3. Table of Effect Size Coefficient

	CL	MW	AP
MW	0.488	-	-
AP	0.559	0.454	-

Table 3 shows that the effect size for change leadership (CL) on adaptive performance (AP) is 0.454 (classified as strong). This effect size shows that change leadership has a strong role from a practical perspective in adaptive performance. The effect size for change leadership (CL) on meaningful work (MW) is 0.488 (classified as strong). The results of the analysis for the effect size show that change leadership (CL) has a fairly strong role from a practical perspective on meaningful work (MW). The effect size for meaningful work (MW) on adaptive performance (AP) is 0.454 (classified as strong). The results of this analysis show that meaningful work (MW) has a less strong role from the practical aspect of adaptive performance (AP).

A positive path coefficient value means that the exogenous variable has a positive effect on the endogenous variable, while a negative path coefficient value means that the exogenous variable has a negative effect on the endogenous variable. The results of the significance values are divided into three categories, namely p-value < 0.01 (significant at the 1% level), p-value < 0.05 (significant at the 5% level), and p-value < 0.1 (significant at the level 10%) Therefore, the results of the hypothesis test are as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Model Test

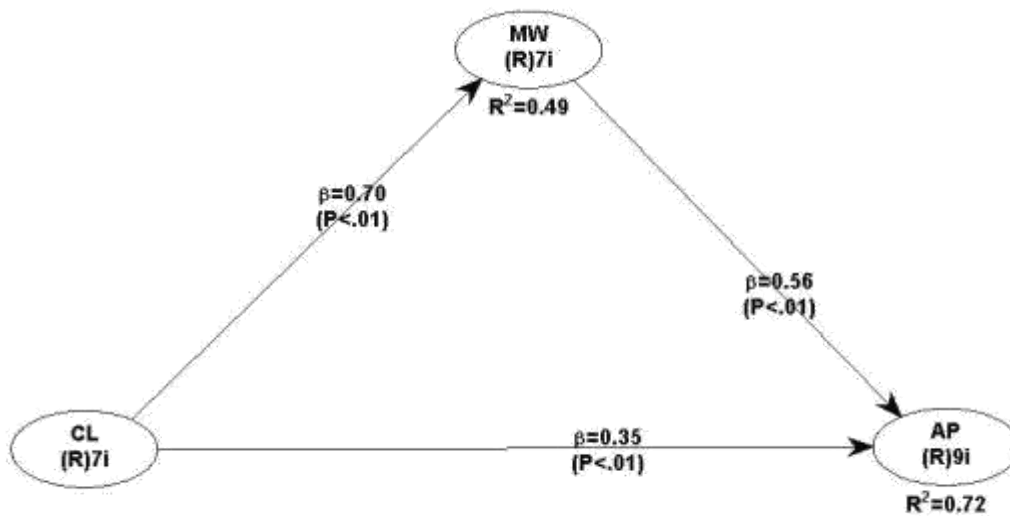


Table 4. Describes the results of each hypothesis proposed in the research. Hypothesis 1 is change leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance. Change leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance as evidenced by the CL→ AP path coefficient value of 0.35, p-value <0.001 (smaller than 0.01). Based on the test results, it can be concluded that change leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance so hypothesis 1 was supported.

Tabel 4. Hypothesis Test

Variable Correlation	Path Coefficient	P-Value
CL→ AP	0.35	<0,001***
CL→ MW	0.70	<0,001***
MW→AP	0.56	<0,001***
CL→ MW→ AP	0.39	<0,001***



\*Significant at level 0.1 (*2-tailed*)

Significant at level 0.05 (*2-tailed*)

Significant at level 0.01 (*2-tailed*)

Change leadership has a significant positive effect on meaningful work as indicated by the CL→ MW path coefficient value of 0.70, with a p-value of <0.001 (smaller than 0.01). Based on the test results, change leadership has a significant positive effect on meaningful work. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported. Meaningful work has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance as indicated by the MW→ AP path coefficient value of 0.56, with a p-value of <0.001 (smaller than 0.01). Based on the test results, meaningful work has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance, so hypothesis 3 was supported.

Meaningful work mediates the influence of change leadership on adaptive performance as indicated by the CL MW → AP path coefficient value of 0.39, with a p-value of <0.001 (smaller than 0.01). Based on the test results, meaningful work mediates the influence of change leadership on adaptive performance. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

## 5. Discussion

Pulakos et al. (2000) revealed that adaptive performance is employee performance regarding adaptive behavior towards changes in the workplace. The role of a change leader will direct his followers to be adaptive to change. Where, followers who already have trust are an important source in producing adaptive performance (Adams & Webster, 2022). Effective leadership for change reflects all dimensions of leadership; an integrative leadership model for successful change needs to follow the elements of effective leadership (Gill, 2003). This means that the role of a change leader has quite powerful power in playing out his role in the organization, because the figure of a change leader will be able to convince his followers to change and adapt to existing needs.

Adaptive performance is about employee performance of adaptive behavior towards changes in the workplace (May et al., 2014). Employee adaptive performance is of course based on changes that occur within the organization, whether they originate from within the organization or external to the organization. Therefore, the role of a change leader is a strong determinant that has an impact on employee adaptive performance.

Gill (2003) emphasized that change leadership is a leader's ability which lead to cognitive or rational processes (cognitive intelligence), the need for meaning in work and people's lives (spiritual intelligence), emotions or feelings (emotional intelligence) and volitional actions or behavior (behavioral skills) in order to achieve organizational goals (Gill, 2002). Change leaders not only focus on outcomes that are only oriented towards organizational performance and success, but also have the ability to pay attention to the psychological conditions of employees. One of the figures of a change leader has emotional intelligence, so that the role of a change leader can provide stimulus to employees that their work is not only limited to producing goods or services, but can be meaningful work for them.

Chalofsky & Krishna (2009) emphasize that the balance of meaningful work is a workplace condition that is able to guarantee enlightenment between individual competencies, values, and goals of work. Guaranteeing enlightenment and individual competence is one of the responsibilities of the leader. Therefore, the role of a change leader provides a certainty of their competence, value, and purpose within the organization.

Work engagement is a fairly high level of positive perception that can direct employees to improve their performance at work. Truss et al. (2011) stated that the meaningful work is a component that has the potential to continue to expand and build processes. Soane et al.

(2013) stated that positive perceptions of work are related to affective and cognitive processes that can increase the application of their own work roles. This means that employees who have a positive perception of their work in the form of achieving meaningful work will be able to make employees more adaptive to their work. Therefore, the meaningful work has an impact on two sides, both from the employees themselves and the organization.

The findings show that the role of a change leader will have an impact on the meaningful work in the organization. Employees feel that their existence can be one of the keys to the organization's success. Parker et al. (2010) argued that employee proactive motivation will be stronger when it originates from within the individual. Individuals who achieve meaningful work will have an impact on positive results for the organization (Geldenhuis, Laba, and Venter, 2014). This opinion emphasizes that employees who achieve meaningful work in the organization will also provide positive to the organization (adaptive performance). In a practical perspective, the role of a leader is at the vanguard who is responsible for his followers, so the role of a change leader must be able to provide a positive view to his followers to achieve meaningful work.

## 6. Conclusion

The novelty of this research is a conceptual framework because it uses the mediating variable meaningful work of the effect of change leadership on adaptive performance in service organizations. The research results show that change leadership has a significant positive impact on employee's adaptive performance. The next finding, the meaningful work mediates the effect of change leadership on adaptive performance. These findings proven that positive employee perceptions will make employees more adaptive to their work because they are the role of change leader.

This research has limitations, the determinants variable of employee adaptive performance only focus on external sources of individual employees. Therefore, it is hoped that further research to use other variables originating from internal employees, such as personality, self-efficacy, and self-control.

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