
Issues and Perspectives in Business and Social Sciences

Flexible leadership strengthens workplace spirituality relationship with adaptive performance

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Abstract

Using private high schools and vocational schools in nine (9) municipalities in Indonesia's East Java Province as the unit of analysis, this study was designed using a positive behavioral management approach to evaluate the effect of flexible leadership on adaptive performance and the role of flexible leadership as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. Using Smart PLS software as an analytical tool, this study employs the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) statistical approach. Flexible leadership considerably improves adaptive performance and modifies the association between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance according to the results of the hypothesis test. Organizations, including educational institutions, need to train leaders to develop flexible leadership skills, especially in the context of leadership that supports spiritual values because it plays an important role in improving adaptive performance. Flexible leadership is not only compatible with sustainability, but is also important for organizations that aim to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Improving adaptive performance is necessary so that private schools can provide the best educational services.

Keywords:

Flexible leadership;
Adaptive performance;
Private and vocational schools;
Sustainability;
Spirituality.

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1. Introduction

Education is one of the many domains in which Industry 5.0 may be implemented. Government reforms, market demand and volatility, economic constraints, and technological innovation have caused disruptions and changes in the education system (Mukerjee, 2014). The education sector faces many pressures for change and sustainability owing to global effects (Gül & Çetin, 2022). Hamu (2023) asserts that technological advancements have caused disruptions in a number of domains, including education, ranging from the creation of curricula and cost structures to shifts in culture and ideology. Sustainability is essential for every educational institution, especially private schools, because it can affect various aspects of school sustainability. Hamiza and Francis (2020) stated that school sustainability can be measured from the aspects of the sustainability of the school's existence, teacher welfare and effectiveness, stable academic achievement, and increased student enrollment. Leadership is one of the factors that influences school sustainability (Nugraha, 2023; Wibowo & Haryanto, 2023).

One of the most important issues for the long-term viability of private schools is the drop in student enrollment. Other challenges faced by private schools in general are related to the implementation of an independent curriculum, including (i) demands for dual roles for principals, namely managers, leaders, and teachers, as well as the application of an effective leadership style; and (ii) teachers' psychological readiness for demands for changing roles and fulfilling administration or unpreparedness of school human resources (Warsihna et al., 2023). According to Havermans et al. (2015), the secret to overcoming the difficulties in putting successful leadership into practice is for leaders to exhibit adaptable behavior, since this is the foundation of good leadership (Vaari, 2015).

It is a challenge for formal educational institutions to modify the school leadership system to have more effective and flexible situational capabilities in adapting to changing conditions and crises, because flexible leadership is an effective leadership approach and a recent phenomenon in leadership styles in educational institutions (Mumford, et al., 2007). Contingency theory is a form of effective leadership relevant to flexible leadership practices (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). According to Hantoosh (2021), the adaptability of educational leaders creates a foundation for their institutions' success. Flexibility in leadership practices in private schools is relatively high, which can be seen from the results of a pilot study involving 30 high school and vocational school leaders, revealing that flexible leadership from school leaders has an average value between 4.20 and 4.30 on a scale of 1-5 points (Figure 1).

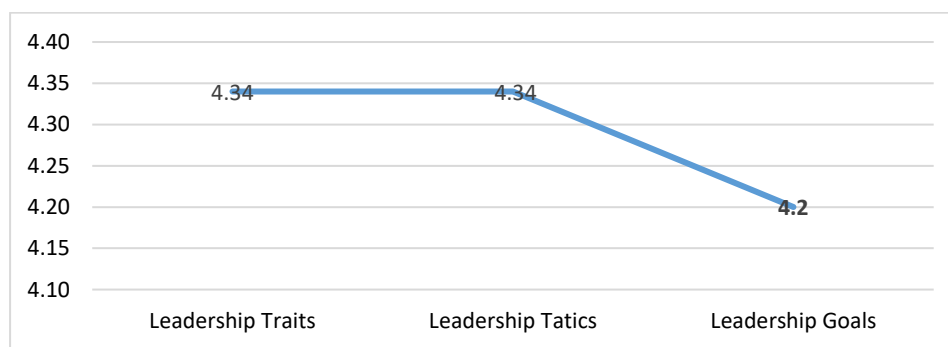


Figure 1: Average Flexible Leadership Score of Private High School and Vocational High School Leaders

According to several private high school administrators, who participated in pilot research in 2024. The administration of educational institutions can benefit from flexible leadership, which is open to contextualizing and developing current realities, while accommodating the core ideals that must be upheld. This is because flexible leadership employs a leadership approach that varies depending on the internal situation of education managers, the situation of government education policies, and the development of school output needs. In addition to being consistent with sustainability, flexible leadership is crucial for businesses looking to grow in a world that is rapidly changing. The education unit must be more agile to increase adaptive performance, which is necessary for private schools to offer the greatest educational services. According to the findings of a pilot study conducted in 2024, flexible leadership affects school leaders' adaptive performance.

The development and sustainability of schools depend on their adaptive performance. School sustainability requires leadership practices to improve the adaptive performance of school human resources. Adaptive performance is required so that private schools can provide the best educational services. Adaptive behavior is increasingly acknowledged as a critical component of performance achievement, as new demands in the workplace necessitate that individuals be more adaptable and tolerant of uncertainty in order to function effectively in dynamic and competitive environments (Burke et al., 2006; Pulakos et al., 2000). According to Pulakos et al. (2000), adaptive performance is the capacity of a person to respond to changes that arise in the workplace. According to Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), behavior in a variety of task demands, such

as new teams and coworkers, new problems, cultural differences, new technologies, and physically demanding situations, is linked to a number of variables pertinent to the work itself.

Previous empirical studies on the direct impact of leadership on adaptive performance include transformational leadership (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010; Fan, 2023; Tung & Shih, 2023); transactional leadership (AlAbri et al., 2022); self-leadership (Marques-Quinteiro, et al., 2019); shared leadership (Fu et al., 2020; Tung & Shih, 2023); innovation leadership and creative leadership (Riza, et al., 2020); servant leadership (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Zia, et al., 2023); inclusive leadership (Bataineh, et al., 2022); paradoxical leadership (Li & Ding, 2022); empowering leadership (Xu & Zhang, 2022); humble leadership (Hamid, 2023). However, existing studies have not examined the relationship between flexible leadership and adaptive performance.

The innovation cycle occurs rapidly, and continuous changes occur in the industrial era 5.0, demanding flexibility and the ability to change to create competitiveness as well as individual resilience. Workplace spirituality is an element of sustainability (Luetz et al., 2023), and is needed to meet the demands of flexibility, adaptation, and resilience. A strong workplace spirituality can form a balanced, productive, and resilient person who can recover or adapt quickly to uncertainty and continuous change. Without leadership support, workplace spirituality growth cannot proceed on its own (Sani et al., 2017). Contingency theory provides a framework for flexible leadership to adjust leadership practices according to needs and situations, and can moderate the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. Specifically, flexible leadership practices can strengthen the impact of spirituality on adaptive performance in schools by creating meaningful, supportive, and positive work environments. Flexible leadership practices can support leaders' efforts to improve adaptive performance through workplace spirituality can be supported by flexible leadership practices.

2. Flexible leadership, adaptive performance and workplace spirituality

Flexible leadership is defined as having the capacity to comprehend the situational needs of effective leadership and to be adaptable to shifting circumstances and emergencies (Mumford et al., 2007). According to Kaiser and Overfield (2010), flexible leadership is the ability to change or adapt leadership strategies, tactics, or styles in response to changing or varied contextual demands in a manner that fosters team success. One type of effective leadership is flexible leadership, which is used to adjust to the demands of the team or subordinates as well as the work environment. Flexible leadership requires a wide range of behaviors that can be tailored to different contexts, as well as knowledge of when to use each behavior and the competence to carry out the tasks required to address novel problems in complicated environments (Hoch & Bentolila, 2021). According to Zhu and Jin (2023), flexible leadership is the capacity to be adaptive, creative, and flexible when faced with shifting conditions.

The study of performance as a consequence of flexible leadership is viewed from the perspective of adaptive performance, which is a manifestation of Campbell's performance theory (Johnstone & Wilson-Prangley, 2021). Task performance, citizenship conduct, and counterproductive behavior are the three aspects of performance, which are a collection of employee behaviors that help a company achieve its objectives (Colquitt et al., 2023). Task performance consists of routine task performance, involving responses to job demands that occur in normal routines, or predictable ways, and adaptive task performance, or often known as "adjustment" involving employee responses to new, unusual, or at least unexpected task (Colquitt et al., 2023). According to (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010), adaptive performance is a part of total performance that is separate from task performance and contextual performance. Adaptive performance is an extension of conventional performance (task and contextual performance), which reflects changes in the current organizational environment (AlAbri et al., 2022). Adaptive performance

theory emphasizes the importance of adaptability in navigating a dynamic work environment, where adaptive performance is the ability to adjust effectively to environmental changes, unexpected tasks, and new situations (Rachmad, 2022).

Organizational resources determine the dynamic phenomenon of spirituality (Indrajaya & Kazeroony, 2024). According to Rezapouraghdam et al. (2019), people with high levels of spirituality and those in the workplace are more likely to prioritize sustainability and long-term progress and put others' needs ahead of their own. Workplace spirituality includes transcendental experiences, connectivity, wholeness, joy, and meaningfulness (Schutte, 2016). An organizational culture built on trust, honesty, compassion, respect, loyalty, gratitude, and creativity can represent workplace spirituality (Thakur & Singh, 2016). According to Milliman et al. (2003), workplace spirituality is the level of engagement among people, groups, and organizations. Being "aligned with the values and mission of the organization" at the organizational level, having a "sense of community" at the group level, and having a purpose or "meaningful work" at the individual level are the three primary pillars of workplace spirituality. Soliman et al. (2021) claimed that workplace spirituality combines organizational and personal traits. While workplace spirituality at the organizational level can be seen as an individual's sense of spiritual values within the organization, workplace spirituality at the individual level can be defined as how an individual brings their spiritual beliefs and values to the workplace (Adnan et al., 2020).

Contingency theory, which emphasizes that the efficacy of leadership depends on the match between leadership style and situation, provides a theoretical foundation for the link between flexible leadership and adaptive performance. Flexible leadership is an application of contingency theory in practice. Yukl and Mahsud (2010) assert that contingency theory is pertinent to flexible leadership because it offers guidance on how to assess circumstances and pinpoint behaviors that a leader can find useful. Contingency theory is a leadership approach that emphasizes that effective leadership styles vary according to the situation or context of a leader (Verawati & Hartono, 2020). Flexible leaders have a higher chance of success because they can modify their approaches to suit the needs of various circumstances. According to contingency theory, people must modify their behavior in response to changes in the workplace when it comes to adaptive performance. Adaptability may be facilitated by adaptable leaders who offer situation-appropriate resources, guidance, and support.

Numerous empirical research have demonstrated that different leadership philosophies can enhance adaptive performance, including transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Alabri et al., 2022); transformational leadership (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010; Fan, 2023; Tung & Shih, 2023); self-leadership (Marques-Quinteiro, et al., 2019); shared leadership (Fu et al., 2020; Tung & Shih, 2023); innovation leadership and creative leadership (Riza, et al., 2020); inclusive leadership (Bataineh, et al., 2022); servant leadership (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Zia, et al., 2023); paradoxical leadership (Li & Ding, 2022); empowering leadership (Xu & Zhang, 2022); humble leadership (Hamid, 2023). Studies on the impact of flexible leadership on adaptive performance are novel and seek to address the shortcomings of earlier research since, at the same time, no studies have been discovered on the subject. Flexible leadership is demonstrated through an attitude of openness to new or different ideas and the ability to adjust internal and external contexts, working with various parties, so that leaders can display adaptive performance. Hypothesis 1 (H1) was formulated as follows:

H1: Flexible leadership significantly improves adaptive performance.

Psychological demands experienced by individuals in organizations (such as innovative, agile, and flexible behavior) require organizational managers to improve workplace spirituality. Milliman et al. (2003) conceptualize workplace spirituality as the level of interaction between individuals, groups, and organizations, and the core dimensions of workplace spirituality include purpose in work or "meaningful work" (individual level), having a "sense of community" (group level), and "alignment with organizational values and mission" (organizational level). Individual and

organizational spirituality interact to create workplace spirituality (Kolodinsky, et al.,2008). An organizational culture founded on trust, honesty, compassion, respect, loyalty, gratitude, and creativity may exhibit workplace spirituality (Thakur & Singh, 2016). The scope of workplace spirituality includes integrated values, attitudes, and behaviors that intrinsically motivate followers intrinsically (Afsar et al., 2016). Strong spiritual values can help individuals cope with stress and other challenges.

Flexible leadership techniques contribute to the development of workplace spirituality by establishing a supportive atmosphere that inspires people to be truthful, kind, and attentive, which enhances their well-being, particularly in times of stress. Values, such as optimism, hope, and resilience, which are often associated with spirituality and reinforced through flexible leadership, can help individuals cope with stress and challenges. The foundation for the moderating function of flexible leadership in the link between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance is meaning in work theory. Meaning in work is seen as a way to create harmony in the busy lives of employees; provide psychological well-being to workers; and support increased productivity, performance, and dedication to the organization (Steger, 2016). Individuals who find meaning in their work tend to be more motivated and engaged, making them more likely to adapt to changes and challenges, and strengthen the emergence of adaptive performance.

In an organization where relationships between individuals and the organization are built on the exchange of material and psychological resources, Social Exchange Theory also explains how flexible leadership can act as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. Relationships develop over time into a commitment of mutual trust, loyalty, and reciprocity, which is one of the basic principles of social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Flexible leadership can create a positive social exchange environment in which individuals feel valued and supported. People in an organization are more likely to respond with improved adaptive performance when they believe that the organization is concerned about their welfare. However, the findings of the study conducted by Ekowati et al. (2022) revealed that organizational engagement may be enhanced by the beneficial effects of spiritual leadership that foster spirituality in the workplace. Hamid's (2023) study demonstrated that the association between work-from-home and adaptive performance might be reinforced by a strong sense of humble leadership.

The association between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance is theorized to be moderated by flexible leadership. By creating a supportive environment, encouraging learning and growth, and adapting leadership styles to individual needs, leaders can help each individual in the organization thrive and adapt to a dynamic work environment. Hypothesis 2 (H2) was formulated as follows:

H2: Flexible leadership moderates the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance.

This study fills the empirical gap in previous research on alternative leadership approaches and their measurements (flexible leadership), which are predicted to improve adaptive performance. The theorized relationships are shown in Figure 2.

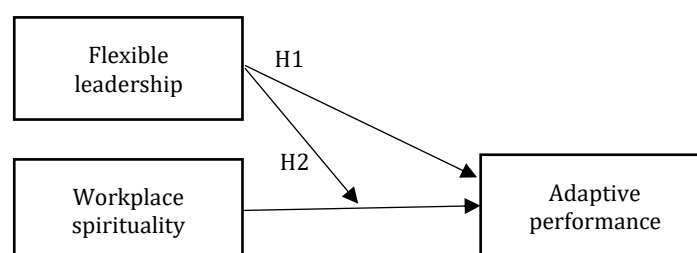


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

3. Methods

3.1 Research instrument

Flexible leadership measurement includes three (3) dimensions, namely: (i) leadership traits (measurement of how well leaders foster a culture of continuous communication: open dialogue, communication and transparency, openness to new ideas and coaching, support and feedback, recognition, and positive reinforcement); (ii) leadership tactics (measurement of how often leaders make ongoing efforts to support subordinates: support for subordinates through coaching, opportunities for learning and growth, inclusivity and diversity of thought, setting goals and expectations); and (iii) leadership goals (measurement of how often leaders provide opportunities for subordinate involvement: building relationships and networks, meaningful work, and engagement with subordinates) (Korhani, 2021).

Rego and Cunha's (2008) measurement of spirituality in the workplace was adapted in this study and incorporated the following dimensions: (i) at the individual level: sense of enjoyment in work (which includes aspects connected to pleasure and happiness at work); a sense of community contribution (which indicates that one's work aligns with personal ideals and benefits the community); (ii) at the team level: a feeling of unity inside the group (which includes aspects of camaraderie, concern for one another, and a shared goal); (iii) organizational level: opportunities for inner life (including an explanation of how the organization respects the individual's spirituality and spiritual values); and alignment between organizational and individual values (including items that represent the fit between organizational values and the individual's inner life, as well as items regarding the individual's involvement with the wider community).

Adaptive performance measurement was adapted from Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), which includes the following aspects: (i) proactive consisting of dimensions: (a) handling emergencies/crises (i.e., making quick decisions when facing emergencies); (b) solving problems creatively (i.e., thinking outside the box, and being innovative in solving a problem); (ii) reactive, which includes dimensions: (a) training and learning efforts (the tendency to initiate action to promote personal development); (b) interpersonal adaptability (i.e., the ability to adjust interpersonal style to work effectively with different people); and (iii) tolerance, which includes the following dimensions: (a) managing work stress (ability to maintain calm and channel stress); and (b) dealing with uncertainty and uncertainty (i.e., being able to remain productive even when an unknown situation occurs).

Respondents were required to respond to each statement using a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/least likely to 5, strongly agree/most likely). The research instrument was initially written in English. A linguist translated the text into Indonesian. To ensure that the original meaning was preserved, the results of the Indonesian translation were back-translated into English. The initial and back-translated versions of the instrument were compared to ensure that the meanings of the original measurement items were not lost. The questionnaire was modified, followed by the involvement of qualified parties for face validity and a pilot study of 30 respondents.

3.2 Population and sample

Private high schools and vocational schools spread over nine (9) municipalities in the province of East Java comprised the study's population. The research sample was obtained using a purposive sampling technique, where the consideration of school homogeneity is the level of school quality recognized by external parties (National School/Madrasah Accreditation Board). These factors led to the selection of 185 private high schools and vocational schools with accreditation A, comprising 100 high schools and 85 vocational schools. School leaders, including the principal

and/or vice principal, who had served as school leaders for more than a year, comprised the research participants.

Three months were dedicated to gathering data for the model testing (Figure 2). Out of 185 schools, 52 schools (28.11%) responded to the request for permission to gather data (29 high schools and 23 vocational schools). The questionnaire was completed by 100 school officials, 32 of whom were principals and 68 were vice principals (Figure 3).

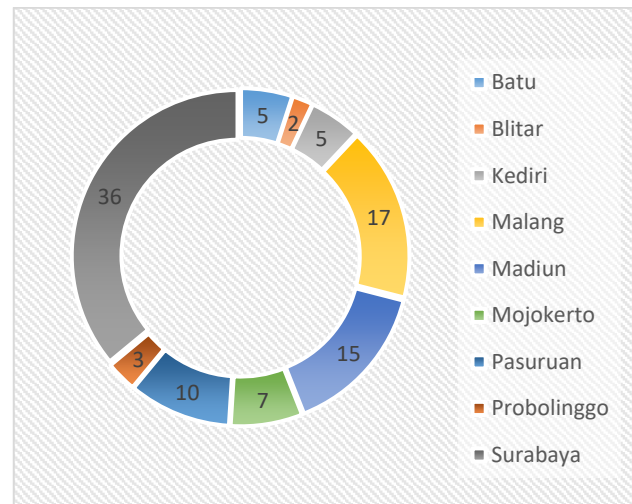


Figure 3: Respondents based on school domicile

The profile of the research participants is displayed in Table 1 by final educational level, gender, age, and years of service. The gender distribution of respondents was balanced, with 50% of respondents being men and 50% being women. Respondents with the highest education (66%) are S-1. The age of respondents with a composition of ≤ 40 years is 27 percent, and age >40 years is 66 %, and does not fill in 7 percent, while the length of service of respondents is 34 % ≤ 20 years, and 66 % have a length of service >20 years.

Table 1: Respondents' profile

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Education		
S1	66	66
S2	33	33
S3	1	1
Age		
≤ 40 years	27	27
>40 years	66	66
Not filled	7	7
Years of service		
≤ 20 years	34	34
>20 years	66	66

3.3 Data analysis

This study used PLS-SEM, a reflective second-order construct model, for analysis. The indicators in the first- and second-order factors are both reflective in this model. The two stages of data analysis are measurement model analysis (validity and reliability test) and structural model analysis (inner model). The structural model in PLS-SEM is assessed using the following primary criteria: (i) assessing the structural model for collinearity issues and (ii) determining the importance of the effect coefficients.

Although validity and reliability tests have been performed, results shown in Table 2, on constructs or instruments referenced in previous research, the validity and reliability tests of the instrument will still be carried out while accounting for the theoretical and empirical gaps that make up the uniqueness of this study. While the reliability test aimed to ascertain the degree of dependability of the measuring device in the analytical process, the validity test evaluated the accuracy of the instrument. A convergent validity test using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) comprised the validity test in PLS-SEM. Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR) scores were used to perform reliability tests. According to Hamid and Anwar (2019), these tests are the first step in assessing a measurement model.

Table 2: Testing criteria for outer and inner models

Analysis Unit	Requirements
Indicator reliability:	
Cronbach's alpha (α)	>0.700 (Hair et al., 2022)
rho_A	>0.700 (Hair et al., 2022)
CR	>0.700 (0.600-0.700 (for exploratory research is acceptable) (Hair et al., 2022)
Convergent Validity: AVE	≥ 0.500 (Hair et al., 2022; Muhson, 2022)
Structural Model Tests:	
R ²	R ² between 0.10 and 0.50 is acceptable Ozili (2023)
f ²	Realistic thresholds for small, medium, and high moderation effect sizes are 0.005, 0.01, and 0.025, respectively (Kenny, 2018 in (Hair et al., 2021)
Common method bias (CMB) Testing:	
VIF Value	Threshold value <5 (Sarstedt et al., 2017)
T-statistics	>1.96 (Hair et al., 2022); > table t
P-value	0.05 (Hair et al., 2022)

4. Results

Table 3 presents the average values of each measurement dimension of flexible leadership, workplace spirituality, and adaptive performance. Overall, the majority of respondents gave answers ranging from 4 to 5. This is indicated by the average value of flexible leadership of 4.471 on a scale of 1-5, with the highest average value (4.533) being the leadership trait dimension, measuring the characteristics of leaders who foster a culture of continuous communication with work teams or subordinates, and the lowest average value (4.387) being the leadership objective dimension, measuring the opportunities for subordinate involvement provided by the leader.

The average value of workplace spirituality is 4.444, which indicates the strength of spirituality in schools that is felt starting from the individual, group, and organizational levels, with the highest average value being the dimension of opportunities for inner life, meaning that the organization (school) respects the spirituality and spiritual values of individuals. The dimension with the lowest average value is the sense of enjoyment at work, namely the feeling of pleasure in working.

The average adaptive performance value is 4.393, which indicates that the adaptive performance of school leaders is very high, as seen from the following dimensions: 1) the proactive aspect includes the dimensions of handling emergencies/crisis situations and solving problems creatively; 2) the reactive aspect includes the dimensions of training and learning effort and interpersonal adaptability; and 3) the tolerant aspect includes the dimensions of managing work stress as well as dealing with uncertainty and unpredictability. The dimension with the highest average value (4.402) is managing work stress, which measures the performance of school leaders in managing work pressure, whereas the dimension with the lowest average (4.273) is handling

emergencies and crises, which measures the performance of school leaders in handling emergencies and crises.

Table 3: The average value of each dimension of the variable measurement

Measurement dimensions	Mean
1. Leadership Traits	4.533
2. Leadership Tactics	4.493
3. Leadership Goals	4.387
Flexible Leadership	4.471
1. Sense of enjoyment at work	4.375
2. Sense of contribution to the community	4.483
3. Team's sense of community	4.408
4. Alignment between organizational and individual values	4.390
5. Opportunities for the inner life	4.565
Workplace Spirituality	4.444
1. Handling emergencies and crisis	4.273
2. Solving problems creatively	4.226
3. Training and learning effort	4.250
4. Interpersonal adaptability	4.370
5. Managing work stress	4.402
6. Dealing with uncertain and unpredictable work situations	4.385
Adaptive Performance	4.318

Figure 4 demonstrates that the male group has a greater level of workplace spirituality than the female group, the female group has a higher average flexible leadership value than the male group, and both groups have the same average adaptive performance value.

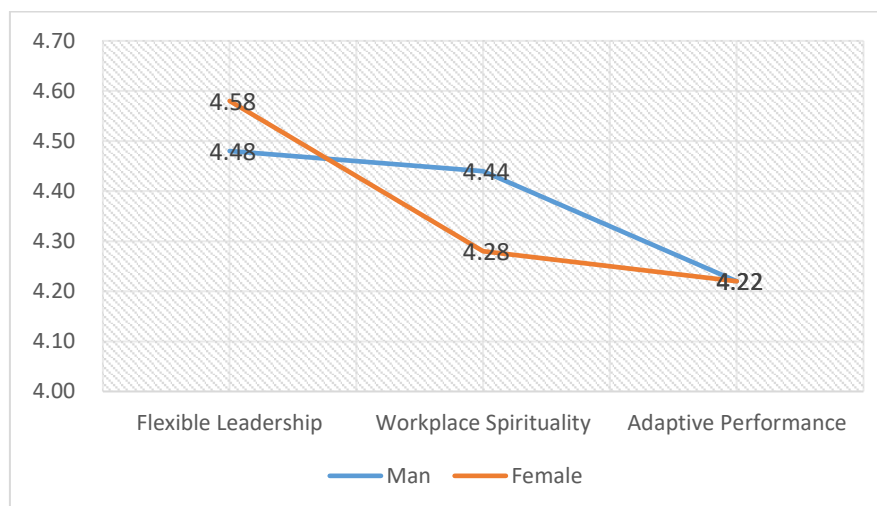


Figure 4: Average value of variables based on sex

Figure 5 illustrates that the age group over 40 had higher average values for workplace spirituality and flexible leadership for the three variables than the age group under 40. Figure 6 shows another novel discovery. The disparity in the average value of workplace spirituality is consistent with the empirical findings of Mukherjee and Joseph (2018), who found a significant relationship between age and spirituality perception. Chaubey (2024) found that workplace spirituality increases with age, with employees aged 41 and older exhibiting a higher level of workplace spirituality than those aged 40 years and younger.

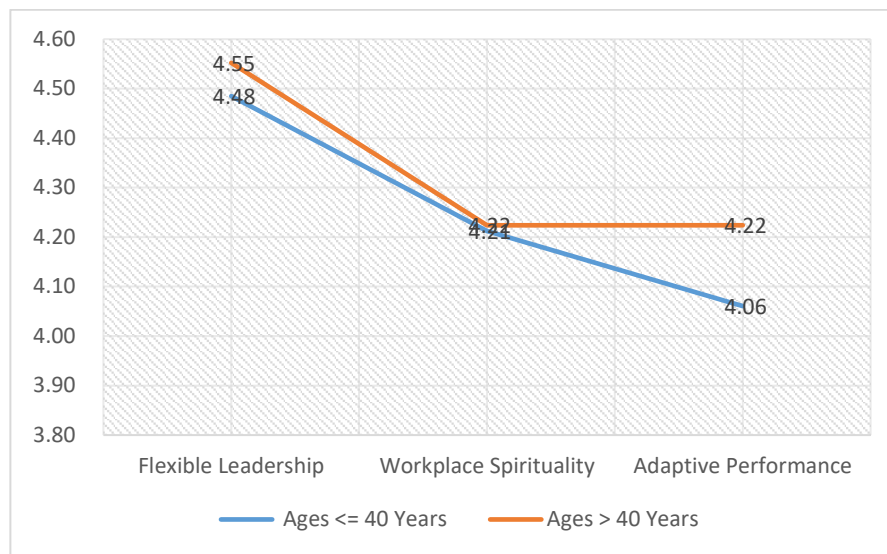


Figure 5: The average value of the variable based on age groups

Figure 6 shows that school leaders with less than 20 years of work experience exhibit more adaptable leadership and flexible performance than those with more than 20 years of work experience, even though the average value of workplace spirituality is higher in the latter group. Reduced cognitive capacity (Verhaeghen & Salthouse, 1997) and trouble forgetting established work habits (Zacks & Hasher, 1994) are two explanations for the discrepancies resulting from the association between work experience and changing task performance. The study by Niessen et al. (2010), who found that job experience makes it harder for both young and old people to adjust to changes in the workplace, supports these observations.

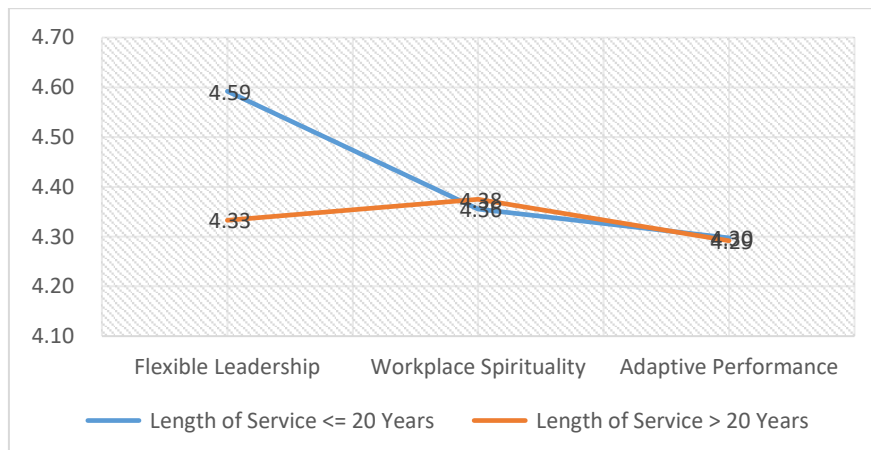


Figure 6: Average value of variables based on years of work experience

4.1 Measurement model

The results of the quality test of the variable measurement tools, such as AVE, Cronbach's alpha value (α), rho_A, and CR, are presented in Table 4. The validity and reliability of the measuring tools yielded satisfactory findings, where the AVEs are above 0.5, α values are above 0.600, rho_A values are above 0.600 and CR are well above 0.700 (Hair et al., 2022; Muhson, 2022).

Table 4: Results of the quality test of the variable measurement instruments

Variable	Code*	AVE	α	rho_A	CR
Flexible Leadership	Traits	0.634	0.806	0.813	0.874
	Tactics	0.654	0.734	0.736	0.850
	Goals	0.617	0.792	0.800	0.865
Workplace Spirituality	SEW	0.849	0.910	0.930	0.944
	SCC	0.690	0.776	0.785	0.870
	TSC	0.683	0.883	0.885	0.915
	AOI	0.698	0.856	0.860	0.902
	OFI	0.888	0.873	0.874	0.940
Adaptive Performance	HEC	0.730	0.813	0.828	0.890
	SPC	0.695	0.789	0.824	0.872
	TLE	0.672	0.832	0.843	0.890
	IA	0.722	0.868	0.877	0.911
	MWS	0.780	0.905	0.909	0.934
	DWU	0.594	0.662	0.666	0.815

*Explanation:

a) Flexible Leadership Dimensions:

1) traits (Leadership Traits), 2) tactics (Leadership Tactics), and 3) goals (Leadership Goals)

b) Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality:

1) Sense of enjoyment at work (SEW); 2) sense of contribution to the community (SCC); 3) team's sense of community (TSC); 4) alignment between organizational and individual values (AOI); and 5) opportunities for inner life (OFI).

c) Adaptive Performance Dimensions:

1) handling emergencies/crises (HEC), 2) solving problems creatively (SPC), 3) training and learning effort (TLE), 4) interpersonal adaptability (IA), 5) managing work stress (MWS), and 6) dealing with uncertainty and uncertainty (DWU)

5.3. Structural model

Figure 7 and Table 5 show the full findings of the hypothesis testing, which include the direct impact of the flexible leadership variable on adaptive performance, as well as the influence of workplace spirituality on adaptive performance with flexible leadership acting as a moderator.

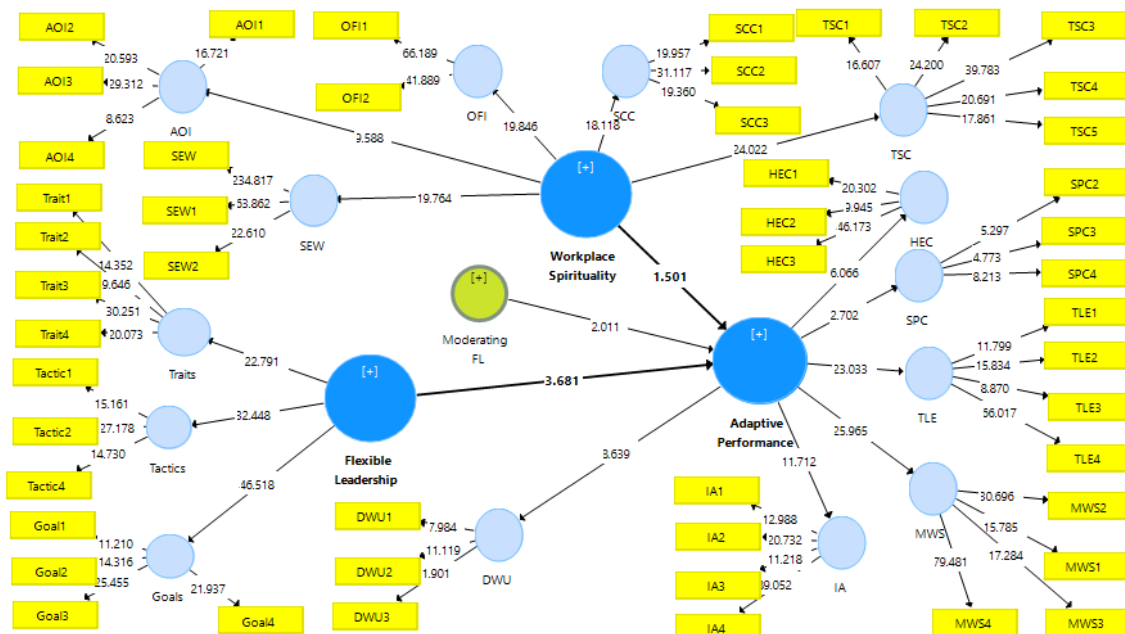


Figure 7: The structural model

The results of the second-stage loading factor (LF) test (>0.700) are shown in Figure 7. Several measurement items in the first stage of testing had $LF < 0.700$, including one measurement item

tactic3, one measurement item AOI5, one measurement item SPC1, and one measurement item MWS5; therefore, they were excluded from the second stage of testing. The overall structural model was validated using coefficient of determination (R^2), f^2 effect size, and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. The R^2 values in Table 5 indicate the variance explained in each endogenous construct, while the f^2 value was used to assess the relative impact of an influencing (exogenous) variable on the influenced (endogenous) variable.

Table 5: R^2 and f^2 values

Model	R^2	f^2
AP= α +FL β 1+ WPS*FL β 2+e2	0.188	
FL		0.155
Moderating WPS		0.029

The R^2 value in this study is considered appropriate (Table 5), in accordance with Ozili (2023), who claimed that in social science research, R^2 values between 0.10 and 0.50 can only be accepted when some or most of the explanatory factors are statistically significant. The moderating impact is fairly strong. According to Kenny (2018), and the moderating WPS f^2 value is 0.029, or 2.9% (Hair et al., 2021). VIF values of less than 5 are found in the common method bias (CMB) test or multicollinearity symptom findings (Table 6), suggesting that multicollinearity symptoms are absent from the developed model. The results of the structural model testing show that Hypotheses H1 and H2 are supported, with t -statistics of 3.681 and 2.011, respectively (p -values <0.05).

Table 6: Hypothesis testing results

	Inner VIF	β	SD*	t -statistics	p -values	Results
H1: Flexible Leadership → Adaptive Performance	1.010	0.356	0.097	3.681	0.000	Significant
H2: Workplace Spirituality → Adaptive Performance	1.020	0.132	0.088	1.501	0.134	Not Significant
Workplace Spirituality * Flexible Leadership → Adaptive Performance	1.027	0.176	0.087	2.011	0.045	Significant

5. Discussion

5.1. Improving adaptive performance through flexible leadership

The H1 test findings demonstrate that flexible leadership greatly enhances adaptable performance. The results of this study indicate that flexible leaders, as seen from their leadership traits, tactics, and goals, can improve adaptive performance. This study also empirically confirms the results of Landers Jr. 's (2020) study, which shows that the breadth and depth of a leader's experience significantly predicts the leader's adaptive performance. Broader skills are needed to increase a leader's flexibility and adaptability, such as managerial abilities (Schiuma et al., 2021), experience and technical skills (Barnes et al., 2021), and predictive abilities (Zulu & Khosrowshahi, 2021). In response to the demands for agility, adaptability, and effective managerial abilities, flexible leadership theory provides a theoretical framework for leadership practices (Zhu & Jin, 2023). Flexible leadership practices can support adaptability because the focus of leadership attention is on developing skills, intelligence, self-awareness, and alignment with organizational goals, with the goal of creating a more resilient and adaptable organization. This highly adaptive performance, in turn, strengthens the organization's dynamic capabilities. As flexible leadership has not been employed in prior empirical research on the link between

leadership practices and adaptive performance, the findings of this study provide a novel improvement.

One of the determinants of performance is flexible leadership, which is exemplified by an attitude of openness to new or different ideas and the capacity to collaborate with different parties and adapt to internal and external contexts to exhibit adaptive performance. According to the findings of this study, flexible leadership enhances adaptive performance. This means that school leaders' adaptive performance increases with their ability to foster a culture of constant communication (leadership traits), consistently support their subordinates (leadership tactics), and create opportunities for subordinate involvement (leadership goals). The results of this study represent an improvement in novelty because previous studies have not used flexible leadership in empirical studies on the relationship between leadership practices and adaptive performance, for example transactional leadership (AlAbri et al., 2022); transformational leadership (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010; Fan, 2023; Tung & Shih, 2023); self-leadership (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2019); shared leadership (Fu et al., 2020; Tung & Shih, 2023); innovation leadership and creative leadership (Riza et al., 2020); inclusive leadership (Bataineh et al., 2022); servant leadership (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Zia et al., 2023); paradoxical leadership (Li & Ding, 2022); empowering leadership (Xu & Zhang, 2022); humble leadership (Hamid, 2023).

5.2 The moderating effect of flexible leadership

The results of the H2 test demonstrated that flexible leadership strengthens the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. This finding is unusual since no previous study has examined leadership's role as a modulator of the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. The relationship between flexible leadership and adaptive performance can be strengthened by the presence of workplace spirituality as a moderator for several reasons. For example, organizations whose goals are based on spiritual values provide more opportunities for personal growth and development (Hassan et al., 2016), and organizations with strong spirituality have better performance than organizations with weak spirituality (Sulastini et al., 2023). The findings of the study on the role of workplace spirituality in strengthening the relationship between flexible leadership and adaptive performance support Gotsis and Kortezi (2008), who stated that workplace spirituality is related to positive results in organizations such as increased creativity, productivity, and performance; in this case, strong spirituality in individual leaders causes leaders to be more open to new ideas and encourages each member of the work team to innovate and seek creative solutions, so that adaptive performance increases.

The moderating effect of flexible leadership on the relationship between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance is found to be significant. Spiritual principles are intrinsic to an individual and are reflected in their work behavior and activities. Individuals who experience meaningful work may be a profound social resource for the organization (Steger, 2016), so that they are more likely to adapt to changes and challenges, and encourage the emergence of adaptive performance. This finding is novel compared to previous findings on the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between leadership practices and adaptive performance. School leaders perceived workplace spirituality to be very high. A high workplace spirituality can provide energy and a sense of hope for each individual in the organization as well as a sense of joy in work, thus enabling each individual in the organization to be ready to face ongoing changes (Rana et al., 2022). Strong spirituality in leaders can provide strong internal motivation for leaders, so that leaders feel connected to a purpose greater than themselves (for example, contributing to the common good); leaders tend to be more enthusiastic about overcoming challenges and finding creative solutions, are able to deal with failure and stress better, and bounce back quickly, which is very important in the context of adaptive performance. This is evident from the high adaptive performance scores of school leaders, especially in the dimension of managing work stress.

6. Implications

Leaders must receive training from organizations, especially educational institutions, to cultivate adaptive leadership abilities. To promote adaptable performance, organizations must foster a culture that values spirituality in the workplace. Training, leadership development initiatives, and the establishment of an inclusive workplace culture are all ways that organizations may encourage spirituality in the workplace. Leaders can strengthen their relationships with subordinates by demonstrating integrity, empathy, and respect. Individuals in an organization can develop their spirituality through reflection, restoration, and practices that increase self-awareness. Every organization should support its employees in finding meaning and purpose in their jobs as well as in developing adaptable abilities.

Flexible leadership increases the resilience of leaders and followers by assisting schools and organizations in general to proactively address issues and guide teams through change. While staying task-oriented (planning, clarifying, monitoring, and problem-solving) and mindful of aspects of relationships with work teams and subordinates (creating a culture of continuous communication, making continuous efforts to support subordinates, and providing opportunities for subordinate involvement), organizational leaders, including school leaders, can use flexible leadership to achieve goals. Leaders must prioritize sustainable practices over decisions that are mutually helpful rather than damaging to take ethical considerations into account while making judgments. By cultivating an open mindset to new concepts and methods, flexible leadership may also promote improved teamwork among team members, boost team creativity and efficacy, and assist businesses in achieving a more adaptable performance.

Some practical implications of the role of workplace spirituality in moderating the impact of flexible leadership on adaptive performance in private schools are as follows: (1) strong workplace spirituality increases the motivation and desire to be involved in every human resource so that there is a strong willingness to adapt to new work methods and technologies implemented by the school (increased adaptive performance); (2) workplace spirituality with a strong school culture can foster a sense of togetherness and mutual respect among individuals and work teams, facilitate the sharing of best practices and mutual support in adapting, so that individuals are more prepared to face change and adapt quickly to new situations; and (3) the existence of spiritual values in the workplace creates a work environment that makes individuals feel appreciated and supported, increases emotional resilience, so that it can help individuals overcome the pressures and challenges faced, and adapt more easily to changing situations and new challenges.

7. Limitations, future research and conclusion

Although the results of this study offer a new perspective on the relationship between workplace spirituality, flexible leadership, and adaptive performance, it is important to consider the following: (i) the target sample of the study was 185 A-accredited senior high schools and vocational high schools located in nine municipalities of East Java Province, and only 52 schools (28.11%) of the 185 schools contacted to participate in the data collection process agreed to participate by responding to the request for permission to become research samples, even though the sample size exceeded the minimum sample requirement, which was 10 times the number of arrows in the model structure (Hair et al., 2017); (ii) the self-assessment of flexible leadership practices and adaptive performance carried out by the school leaders themselves may contain elements of subjectivity and social desirability bias that could have affected the results.

The following recommendations are offered for further study development: increasing the population in the East Java Province region via the use of public and private high school and vocational school populations with B and C accreditation can help the generalization of research

findings and be considered for future research development. To conduct a comparative analysis and provide more thorough study findings, this offers the opportunity to collect a greater and more varied number of samples. Future studies are worthwhile as well, namely those that examine flexible leadership from the standpoint of subordinate evaluation and objective metrics to gauge academic achievement, such as a balanced scorecard combined with the National Education Standards method, and analyzing adaptive performance at the group level.

Flexible leadership positively impacts adaptive performance. Flexible leaders can quickly respond to environmental changes and emerging sustainability issues and adapt strategies in line with evolving organizational goals and challenges, thereby improving adaptive performance. Flexible leadership may moderate the association between workplace spirituality and adaptive performance. By creating a supportive environment, encouraging learning and growth, and adjusting leadership styles to individual needs, organizational leaders can help everyone thrive and adapt to a dynamic work environment.

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