

Adaptive Performance Unleashed: The Influence of Ethical Leadership and Goal Orientation through Creative Self-Efficacy

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Abstract: The present study seeks to investigate the influence of ethical leadership and goal orientation on adaptive performance, with self-efficacy serving as a mediating variable. Data were gathered from 65 women entrepreneurs and small to medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan. The subsequent study employed a descriptive technique as its research methodology. The proposed model was initially evaluated, followed by the execution of the measurement model and route analysis. The study investigates the considerable positive correlation between ethical leadership and adaptive performance, while also demonstrating the partial mediation of self-efficacy. The present study has examined the theoretical and practical implications for female entrepreneurs and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The discussion also addressed specific research constraints at the conclusion.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Adaptive Performance, Creative Self-Efficacy, SME's, Social Cognitive Theory

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1. Introduction

Rapid technological advancements, organizational reorganization, and integration have led to intense competition among businesses in several industries. Businesses are being pushed by a variety of causes to innovate and be creative in order to stay competitive. The need for leadership is, therefore, unavoidably necessary to maintain both innovation and competitiveness. The newest omitted dimension of job performance, adaptive performance, has drawn a lot of attention. Increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity essentially has a direct impact on job performance (Krischer & Witt, 2010) [1]. Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012 [2] assert that the capacity of employees to manage emergencies, acquire new skills swiftly, and address novel difficulties becomes an essential competency as the environment becomes increasingly dynamic. Given the nature of modern organizations, organizational experts recently established a new job performance called adaptive performance, which can be crucial in boosting both the efficacy and productivity of businesses and their workforces. This is due to the fact that addressing a dynamic and changing environment is a key characteristic of modern enterprises. Employees must acquire new skills and improve their adaptability and flexibility, for instance, in light of the ongoing changes in technology, organizational integration, and restructuring (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999) [3]. Under these circumstances, the function of adaptive performance as a catalyst for this process

could be emphasized. Adaptive performance, according to Johnson (2001) [4], is the capacity to modify one's behaviour to meet environmental requirements in a novel circumstance.

Dorsey, Cortina, & Luchman, 2010 [5] comprehends that organizational outcomes, including change management, organizational learning, and the fulfillment of evolving consumer expectations, can stem from employees' adaptable performance. According to Charbonnie-Voirin et al. (2010) [6], adaptive performance is made up of five areas, including the ability to deal with crises and unforeseen circumstances, manage stress at work, solve problems creatively, learn, and get along with others.

The social cognitive theory's postulates provide support for the current study. Cognitive Social Theory is a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding how people respond to and act upon their environment, which is social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) [7]. Individuals theoretically establish internal standards for their conduct, acquire knowledge about themselves and others through their social environment, and subsequently regulate their behavior in alignment with those internal standards (Bandura 2001) [8]. The three fundamental components of social cognitive theory are the social environment, the individual, and behavior. Individuals utilize information from their social surroundings to establish behavioral standards and anticipate the consequences of their actions. They subsequently utilize these outcomes to regulate and contemplate their actions by adjusting their intended behaviors within the social situation (Bandura 1991) [9].

Employee adaptive performance is a significant antecedent of leadership, particularly ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is expected to influence followers by modeling appropriate behavior, promoting two-way communication, assessing success by both results and means of achieving them, and establishing norms of trust and positive reciprocity among team members (Brown et al. 2005 [10], Lemoine et al. 2019 [11], Mayer et al. 2009) [12]. Followers copy the behavior of their leaders and internalize it in their own behavior. Ethical leadership is pervasive throughout the organization, and followers benefit from it (Mayer et al. 2009).

Job embeddedness as a macro feature of job qualities is another indicator of employee adaptable performance. Three fundamental categories of embedding describe how employees are embedded in their jobs and communities: connections, fit, and sacrifice (Dawley and Andrews, 2012) [13]. Job embeddedness is the stuff that keeps people from quitting their jobs. It refers to the mix of factors influencing decisions of people to stay or leave a company (Halbesleben and

Wheeler, 2008 [14] Bergiel et al., 2009) [15]. Relative self-efficacy” is defined as the confidence in one’s potential to develop creative results (Tierney and Farmer, 2002) [16]. This feature of the individual is called “self-evaluation of creative potential” (Beghetto et al., 2011) [17]. The degree of creativity shown in one’s work is thought to be fundamental to the concept of creative self-efficacy (Bandura 1977, 1997) [18] (Tierney and Farmer 2002) [19].

According to the past, studies of Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993 [20], P. R. Murphy & Jackson, 1999 [21] on work performance have not fully explored all the individual behaviours that influence job efficacy in complex and interconnected systems. Griffin & Hesketh, 2005 [22], Pulakos et al., 2002 [23] demonstrates Adaptive performance, as the ability of employees to adapt to rapidly changing work situations, has gained attention to better comprehend the dynamic nature of employee performance in the fast-changing business environment.

The purpose of the present study is to test the postulates of Social Cognitive Theory, which state that ethical leadership and work embeddedness (organizational support) improve an employee’s adaptive performance and that creative self-efficacy acts as a mediating variable. The following study questions were prepared based on the concepts of social cognitive theory.

2. Literature review

2.1 Underpinning Theory

Brown and Mitchell 2010 [24] and Brown et al. 2005 [25] explain social learning theories, also referred to as social cognitive theories, which underscore the significance of social influences and incentives in influencing human behavior. The elucidation of the causes and consequences of ethical leadership has predominantly depended on social learning mechanisms. These techniques are integral to the broader social cognitive theoretical framework (SCT, Bandura 1986) [26], which posits that symbolic foresight, often elicited by social interaction, is essential for perception and intentional human behavior (Bandura and Cervone 1983) [27]. Individuals must continuously monitor their surroundings for beneficial informational signals, assimilate this knowledge, and subsequently make judgments based on the established mental models that these cues activate (Stajkovic and Luthans 1998) [28]. They are utilized to shape perceptions of individuals and occurrences, as well as convictions regarding appropriate actions in each context and the expected results of those acts. Mental representations are often derived from previous experiences and prototypes (Lord and Maher 1991) [29]. People employ this socio-cognitive

process to comprehend their identity and the surrounding environment, irrespective of its accuracy (Weick 1993) [30].

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) proposes that learning is a continuous process in which an individual's cognitions impact and govern his or her behavior. One core set of cognitions is beliefs about one's ability to perform at certain levels (Bandura, 1986). Task-specific efficacy assessments govern behavior via task preferences, effort, and persistence. They are also related to performance-related self-enhancing or self-sabotaging cognitive patterns (Wood & Bandura, 1989) [31]. Self-efficacy aids learning and task performance, especially in the initial stages of acquisition (Mitchell et al., 1994) [32].

The second type of cognitions that influence learning is Achievement Goal Orientation, which is the desire to succeed, obtain, or exhibit proficiency at a particular task (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) [33]. Achievement goal orientation is divided into two types: Performance goals, which are also called ability or ego-involvement goals) are concerned with displaying one's competence to self or others, whereas mastery goals (also called learning or task-involvement goals) are concerned with developing one's task competence. Achievement goals provide a basis to analyze and respond to events occurring during task execution. In this way, they promote stable cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns that affect learning processes.

2.2 Ethical Leadership and Employee Adaptive Performance

Ethical leaders are considered decision makers that have concern for the welfare of people and the organization. (Brown and Trevino, 2006, 2005, 2003) [34], such as principled individuals and moral managers. Ethical leaders often provide their staff with moral resources such as collective trust, emotional and physical assistance (Chen and Hou 2015 [35], Maynes and Podsakoff 2014 [36], Van Dyne and LePine 1998) [37]. With these tools, staff members may better adopt innovative thoughts that may help the entire organization. Chen and Hou (2015) found that if people perceive that current work processes and procedures may be improved, they are more inclined to offer positive suggestions for the company. Previous studies on ethical leadership have mostly focused on how ethical leaders can increase the quality of the employee-leader relationship, and hence, encourage more personal adaptive performance (e.g., Zhu et al. 2015) [38]. Ethical leaders who listen actively and encourage reciprocal communication by sharing their opinions and concerns are more likely to gain trust from employees (Brown et al., 2005).

This open communication will motivate followers to apply their creativity to enhance existing work procedures and processes (Tu & Lu, 2012).

H1: Ethical leadership has a significant positive relationship with employee adaptive performance

2.3 Ethical Leadership and Employee Creative Self-Efficacy

Ethical leaders engage in two-way communication with their followers (Brown et al. 2005). This creates an environment that encourages the discussion of problems and the development of solutions (Avey et al. 2012) [39] while at the same time, encouraging the sharing of positive experiences (Burriss 2012) [40]. A key first step in learning new skills and encouraging continuous development is the willingness to suggest improvements to work processes (Garvin et al. 2008) [41]. When opportunities for learning and development are there, adverse stimuli may have less impact (Masten and Reed 2002) [42], and teams are more likely to continue to be confident if they believe they can fix what went wrong to cause poor performance (Bandura 1991) [43]. Thus, ethical leadership increases the likelihood of the team discovering the root causes of poor performance by creating a safe space in which the team members are willing to share their issues.

The process of inspiring followers to learn about the profession and acquire new abilities is related to the ethical leaders' regard for the humanity, dignity, and growth needs of the followers (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004) [44]. The respect provided by the leader enhances the self-confidence of the followers and signals more intrinsic motivation (Amabile, Conti, Coon, 1996) [45].

H2: Ethical leadership has a significant positive relationship with employee creative self-efficacy.

2.4 Goal Orientation and Creative Self-Efficacy

Previous studies have shown a link between self-regulatory learning mechanisms and creative self-efficacy (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016) [46]. Goal-setting, monitoring, controlling, and reflecting are four activities that correlate to the four areas of cognition, motivation, behavior, and situation in which employees regulate their learning (Pintrich, 2004) [47]. At Phase 1 (i.e., goal-setting), the employee cognitively endorses his or her goals. He will thus adopt a suitable goal orientation, e.g., a mastery goal orientation or an alternate one. This will determine how much time and effort are required to reach the mastery goal. Mohammadyari (2012 [48] asserts

that Creativity self-efficacy has a positive effect on the employee's willingness to learn, persistence, the nature of the learning assignments, and, eventually, success. According to the achievement goal theory, individuals with high creative self-efficacy tend to set mastery goals, engage in more difficult tasks, and perform better academically (Schnell, Ringeisen, Raufelder, & Rohrman, 2015) [49]. Increases in creative self-efficacy reduce the probability of adopting performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals.

H3: Goal orientation has a significant positive relationship with creative self-efficacy

2.5 Goal Orientation and Adaptive Performance

Earlier research has suggested that some goal orientations can be categorized as adaptive, while others are seen as maladaptive response patterns (Dweck, 1986 [50]; Kozlowski et al., 2001 [51]; Porter, Webb, & Gogus, 2010) [52]. A learning goal orientation results in more resources of attention being allocated to the task, which results in better performance (Van Yperen et al., 2015) [53]. In the case of performance goal orientation, self-comparison with others distracts the attentional resources that cannot be fully devoted to the task. In addition, anxiety about failure (APGO) might disrupt performance by stealing attention from the activity. Meta-analytic research suggests that performance avoidance goals may be deleterious to performance, while learning goals may enhance it (Payne et al., 2007) [54].

When conditions change, people need to re-evaluate their methods, a difficult task that needs flexibility. Therefore, in the context of performance adaptation, when a person must learn a new task or adapt to new colleagues, self-enhancement and the willingness to improve one's own abilities and learn from mistakes, which are related to learning goal orientation (LGO) (Davis, Dibrell, Craig, & Green, 2013) [55], can be helpful.

H4: Goal orientation has a significant positive relationship with adaptive performance.

2.6 Mediating Relationship of Creative Self-Efficacy between Ethical Leadership and Employee Adaptive Performance

Social cognitive theory was the first to highlight the significance of self-motivational efficacy in the process of creativity and invention. Previous studies have examined the relationship between employee creative self-efficacy and various leadership styles, personality traits, and job-related factors as antecedents (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009). According to Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership is defined as "promoting such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making" and demonstrating normatively suitable behavior through

one's own behaviors and interpersonal connections. Principles, sound judgment, honesty, compassion, generosity, transparency, group motivation, reliability, and a dedication to justice are all characteristics of ethical leaders. Brown and Treviño (2006) [56] and Brown et al. (2005).

H5: Creative self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee adaptive performance.

2.7 Mediating Relationship of Creative Self-Efficacy between Goal Orientation and Employee Adaptive Performance

The conviction that one can accomplish goals is known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) [57]. According to Chen et al. (2002) [58], self-efficacy is a significant predictor of various forms of work performance and a driving force behind behavioral change. Self-efficacy is the positive motivation to accomplish one's own objectives. It enhances work engagement and job satisfaction, which improves job performance and reduces the intention to leave (Steer, 1977 [59]; Mathieu, 1990) [60]. The findings demonstrated that workers with higher levels of self-efficacy had better job satisfaction, felt more a part of the company, and were more engaged at work, all of which have a positive impact on organizational productivity (Karatepe, 2007) [61].

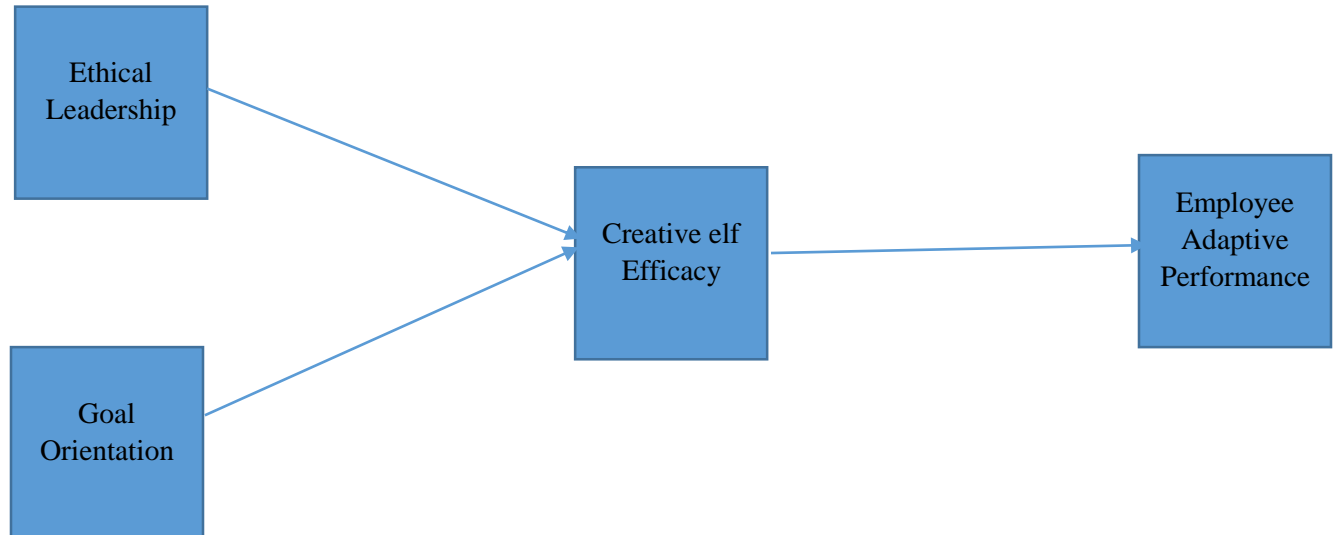
H6: Creative self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between Goal orientation and employee adaptive performance.

2.8 Self-Efficacy and Adaptive Performance

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the confidence that a person needs to achieve his or her set goals. Self-efficacy is an important attribute that impacts behavioral changes and is a strong predictor of several performance indicators in the workplace. Adaptability is the capacity to produce new and useful ideas (Runco & Jaeger, 2012) [62]. Adaptability is beneficial for the development of individuals and organizations (Liu & Li, 1991) [63]. Tamannaefar, M., & Motaghedifard, M. (2014) [64]. By studying creativity, we can learn how to promote it in schools and companies. One important precondition for creativity is creative self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can generate original ideas (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). It has been demonstrated that creative self-efficacy both predicts and moderates the effects of adaptability (Li, 2011 [65]; Tierney & Farmer, 2004) [66]. High self-efficacy has been shown to improve task-related efforts and encourage focus on current activities (e.g., Zhang & Long, 2011) [67]. Conversely, decreased self-efficacy could result in decreased confidence (Li et al., 2008), which could then result in decreased adaptive performance (Hahn & Lee, 2017) [68].

H7: Self-efficacy has a significant relationship with adaptive performance.

2.9 Conceptual Framework



3. Method

3.1 Sample and Procedure

The current study tests the given hypotheses by gathering data from female entrepreneurs and SMEs operating in Pakistan. A survey was undertaken by creating a questionnaire in English, which was delivered to 200 SMEs. Scandura and Williams (2000) indicate that the sample has encompassed various SMEs to improve external validity by generating results that are generalizable across multiple time periods and individual contexts. Contacts of employees from various SMEs were discovered for outreach purposes. The author has articulated his study aims to the personnel and solicited their assistance in data collection. The author has approached each employee individually with a questionnaire that elucidates information pertaining to the employee's demographics and creates data to mitigate frequent technique bias. The cover page outside the questionnaire was crafted to elucidate the research approach and objectives. Two hundred questionnaires were sent, yielding sixty-five viable responses, resulting in a response rate of sixty-five percent. In the final data, we obtained replies from 21% of males and 78% of females. The majority of participants were aged between 26 and 35 years. Furthermore, the majority of participants possessed 0-3 years of professional experience within their firms. Most participants possessed a Bachelor's degree.

4. Results:

For the sake of analysis, two software were used: SPSS and AMOS, the first author has performed CFA(confirmatory factor analysis to check the validity of our model. For testing the hypothesis, we have utilized process macros in SPSS by Hayes (2013). For testing the mediation hypothesis, we run Model 4.

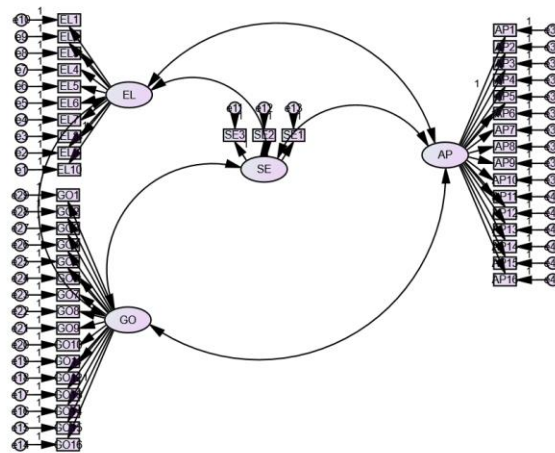


Table No. 1

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	MIN/DF	CFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA
Four-factor model	5.072	0.178	0.134	0.187	0.252
Three-factor model: Ethical leadership and self-efficacy combined	5.087	0.173	0.181	0.131	0.253
Two-factor model: Ethical leadership and adaptive performance combined, Goal orientation and self-efficacy combined	5.099	0.169	0.128	0.177	0.253
One-factor model	5.331	0.121	0.79	0.129	0.260

Correlations		MeanEL	MeanGO	MeanSE	MeanAP	AVE	CR
MeanEL	Pearson Correlation	1	.568**	.167	.345**	0.258	0.642
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.183	.005		
	N	65	65	65	65		
MeanGO	Pearson Correlation	.568**	1	.259*	.340**	0.20	0.783
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.037	.006		
	N	65	65	65	65		
MeanSE	Pearson Correlation	.167	.259*	1	.612**	0.17	0.38
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.183	.037		.000		
	N	65	65	65	65		
MeanAP	Pearson Correlation	.345**	.340**	.612**	1	0.39	0.942
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.006	.000			
	N	65	65	65	65		
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Table# 2

4.2 Descriptive Statistics:

The mean and standard deviation of the variables are presented in Table 2

Statistics		MEL	MGO	MSE	MAP
N	Valid	65	65	65	65
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.1923	3.7875	4.2667	4.1200
Std. Error of Mean		.05040	.05534	.08746	.06945
Median		4.4000	3.8125	4.3333	4.3000
Mode		4.50	4.50	4.00	4.50
Std. Deviation		.40632	.44618	.70514	.55991
Minimum		3.40	2.94	1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	4.50	5.00	5.00

4.3 Hypothesis Testing:

The comprehensive hypothesized model was evaluated in accordance with the recommendations of Hayes (2013) and Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). SPSS Process Macros were employed to evaluate the primary hypothesis. In the initial phase, hypotheses 1–3 were evaluated by utilizing Model 4 to ascertain the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator. Table 4 illustrates the outcomes of Model 4.

Table#4

4.4 Mediation and Indirect Analysis

Model	Coefficient beta	T value	P value	LLCI	ULCI	R square
Constant	3.0499	3.3594	.0013	1.2356	4.8642	
EL	.2902	1.3464	.01830	-0.1405	0.7210	
SE	.4525	5.8828	.0000	.2987	.6062	0.0280
AP						0.4345
Direct effect of x on y	.3438	2.5754	.0124	.0769	.6106	
Indirect effect	.1313			-.1085	.3019	

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95.0000 Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000

Model	Coefficient beta	T value	P value	LLCI	ULCI	R square
Constant	1.2943	2.5115	.0146	.2641	2.3245	
GO	.2442	1.9252	.0588	-.0094	.4977	
SE	.4455	5.5515	.0000	.2851	.6059	.0673
AP						.4093
Direct effect of x on y	Effect: .2442	0.1268	.0588	-.0094	.4977	
Indirect effect	Effect:0.1827			.0066	.4703	

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study seeks to examine the correlation between ethical leadership and goal orientation on adaptive performance, with self-efficacy serving as a mediating factor. The majority of our findings do not align with the proposed paradigm. Hypothesis 1 posits that ethical leadership is significantly correlated with adaptive performance; however, our findings indicate that ethical leadership does not exhibit a significant relationship with adaptive performance. The second hypothesis asserts that ethical leadership has a significant relationship with self-efficacy, and our study's findings reveal a slightly significant correlation between ethical leadership and self-efficacy. The third hypothesis posits that goal orientation has a substantial link with self-efficacy; however, the findings indicate that no significant relationship exists between the two, as evidenced by the differing signals of both its LLCI and ULCI. The fourth hypothesis posits that goal orientation is positively correlated with adaptive performance; however, the findings indicate no meaningful link. The fifth hypothesis posits that creative self-efficacy significantly

mediates the association between ethical leadership and employee adaptive performance. The data illustrate a positive association due to the significance of the p-value. The sixth hypothesis posits that creative self-efficacy significantly mediates the association between goal orientation and employee adaptive performance. The data indicate an absence of a substantial mediating link between the variables.

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