



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

Workforce Adaptability in Organizational Transformation: A Library Research Approach

Afifah Mahardika¹

¹ Universitas Gunadarma

Corresponding author-email: afifahmahardika@student.gunadarma.ac.id

Received: 12-06-2026

Revised: 23-06-2026

Accepted: 28-06-2026

Abstract

Organizational transformation has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary management due to rapid technological advancement, digitalization, globalization, and growing environmental uncertainty. In this context, workforce adaptability is recognized as a critical capability that enables organizations and employees to respond effectively to changing organizational demands and transformation initiatives. This study aims to examine and synthesize the existing literature on workforce adaptability in organizational transformation and to develop an integrated understanding of its key dimensions, determinants, and outcomes. The study employed a qualitative research design using a Library Research approach. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, review papers, and other scholarly publications retrieved from reputable academic databases. The collected literature was analyzed using Thematic Analysis to identify recurring patterns, concepts, themes, and theoretical relationships. The findings reveal that workforce adaptability is a multidimensional capability encompassing adaptive performance, organizational learning, leadership and change management, digital competence, employee resilience, and organizational outcomes. The analysis further demonstrates that adaptability functions as a strategic capability linking organizational transformation processes with innovation, resilience, performance, and long-term competitiveness. This study contributes to the literature by integrating diverse theoretical perspectives and proposing a comprehensive conceptual understanding of workforce adaptability within contemporary organizational transformation.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Human Resource Management, Dynamic Capabilities, Organizational Learning, Adaptive Performance



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

1. Introduction

Organizations today operate in an environment characterized by rapid technological advancement, digitalization, globalization, and increasing market uncertainty. These developments have accelerated organizational transformation across industries, compelling organizations to continuously modify their structures, processes, and strategic priorities. As transformation initiatives become more frequent and complex, workforce adaptability has emerged as a critical factor determining organizational success. Workforce adaptability refers to employees' ability to adjust their knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes in response to changing organizational demands and environmental conditions. Adaptable employees are better positioned to cope with uncertainty, embrace innovation, and contribute to organizational resilience. In recent years, the significance of workforce adaptability has gained greater attention due to the widespread adoption of digital technologies, remote work arrangements, and evolving business models. Studies have shown that organizational transformation often succeeds when employees demonstrate positive reactions to change and possess the capability to adapt effectively to new circumstances (Khaw et al., 2022; Vial, 2019). Moreover, organizations increasingly recognize adaptability as a strategic resource that supports long-term competitiveness and sustainability in dynamic environments (Verhoef et al., 2021).

The scholarly discussion on workforce adaptability is grounded in several complementary theoretical perspectives. Organizational Change Theory emphasizes how individuals and organizations respond to planned and unplanned changes, highlighting the importance of employee acceptance and participation in transformation processes (Burnes, 2020). Dynamic Capabilities Theory argues that organizations must continuously develop capabilities that enable them to sense opportunities, seize resources, and reconfigure competencies in response to environmental changes (Teece, 2018). Similarly, Organizational Learning Theory suggests that learning mechanisms facilitate the acquisition and application of knowledge necessary for adaptation and innovation (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Contemporary research further links workforce adaptability to digital transformation, organizational resilience, and employability, emphasizing that adaptation extends beyond individual competencies and involves organizational systems, leadership practices, and learning cultures (Mergel et al., 2021). Despite broad agreement regarding its importance, scholarly debates remain concerning the conceptualization of workforce adaptability, its antecedents, and its relationship with organizational transformation outcomes.

Recent studies have significantly advanced understanding of workforce adaptability in changing organizational contexts. Khaw et al. (2022) conducted a systematic literature review and found that employee reactions to organizational change are strongly influenced by communication quality, leadership support, and psychological empowerment. Tan et al. (2022) examined employee adaptive performance during the



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrated that organizational commitment, teleworking effectiveness, and leadership practices contribute positively to adaptability. Hubbart (2023) emphasized that change aversion and resistance remain major obstacles to successful transformation, arguing that organizations must address psychological barriers to increase employee acceptance of change. Furthermore, Gonzalez-Varona et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of organizational competence development and continuous learning in supporting adaptation during digital transformation. Complementing these findings, Kniffin et al. (2021) revealed that evolving workplace conditions require organizations to strengthen employee flexibility, resilience, and adaptive capabilities. While these studies consistently recognize adaptability as an essential determinant of transformation success, they differ in focus, theoretical orientation, and analytical scope. Some studies emphasize employee behavior and psychological responses, whereas others focus on organizational capabilities, digital transformation, or leadership processes. Consequently, the literature remains fragmented, offering valuable but isolated insights into workforce adaptability.

Although previous studies have enriched understanding of workforce adaptability, several important gaps remain. First, existing research predominantly investigates adaptability through specific dimensions such as adaptive performance, employee reactions, leadership influence, digital transformation, or resistance to change. Limited attention has been devoted to integrating these perspectives into a comprehensive conceptual framework. Second, much of the literature focuses on empirical examinations within particular organizational settings, thereby providing limited theoretical synthesis regarding how workforce adaptability operates across diverse transformation contexts. Third, the interaction between individual adaptability, organizational learning, dynamic capabilities, and transformation processes remains insufficiently explored within a unified analytical perspective. Addressing these limitations is important because organizational transformation is inherently multidimensional and requires a holistic understanding of adaptive mechanisms. Furthermore, while several previous reviews have examined specific aspects of workforce adaptability, such as employee responses to organizational change, adaptive performance, or digital transformation, they tend to concentrate on particular domains and theoretical perspectives. Few studies have attempted to systematically synthesize these diverse streams of literature into a single integrative framework that explains how workforce adaptability functions across multiple levels of organizational transformation. Therefore, this study extends existing review literature by offering a broader theoretical synthesis that connects individual, organizational, and strategic dimensions of adaptability. Accordingly, the novelty of the present study lies in its effort to synthesize fragmented literature and develop an integrated conceptual understanding of workforce adaptability within organizational transformation through a qualitative library research approach. Furthermore, while several previous reviews have examined specific aspects of workforce adaptability, such as employee responses to organizational change, adaptive performance, or digital



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

transformation, they tend to concentrate on particular domains and theoretical perspectives. Few studies have attempted to systematically synthesize these diverse streams of literature into a single integrative framework that explains how workforce adaptability functions across multiple levels of organizational transformation. Therefore, this study extends existing review literature by offering a broader theoretical synthesis that connects individual, organizational, and strategic dimensions of adaptability.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to critically examine and synthesize contemporary literature concerning workforce adaptability in organizational transformation. Specifically, the study seeks to identify major theoretical perspectives, explore key determinants and mechanisms of adaptability, and develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that explains how workforce adaptability contributes to successful organizational transformation. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by integrating insights from Organizational Change Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Organizational Learning Theory into a coherent analytical framework. Practically, the study may assist organizational leaders, managers, and policymakers in designing strategies that strengthen workforce adaptability and support sustainable transformation initiatives. Ultimately, this research contributes to the advancement of management scholarship by providing a broader and more integrated understanding of workforce adaptability as a strategic capability in contemporary organizations. To achieve these objectives, this study employs a qualitative library research approach by systematically reviewing and synthesizing relevant scholarly literature on workforce adaptability and organizational transformation. The review process involves the identification, selection, evaluation, and thematic analysis of contemporary studies drawn from reputable academic sources. Through this process, the study seeks to generate a coherent synthesis of existing knowledge and develop a conceptual framework that captures the complex relationships among adaptability, organizational learning, dynamic capabilities, and transformation outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Workforce Adaptability: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Perspectives

Workforce adaptability has emerged as a central concept in contemporary management literature due to the increasing frequency of organizational change, technological disruption, and evolving workplace demands. Generally, workforce adaptability refers to an employee's capacity to modify knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes in response to changing work environments and organizational requirements (Pulakos et al., 2000). Although originally examined as an individual competency, recent scholarship increasingly conceptualizes adaptability as a multidimensional capability influenced by both individual and organizational factors (der Heijden & De Vos, 2015).

The theoretical foundation of workforce adaptability is primarily rooted in Organizational Change Theory, Adaptive Performance Theory, Organizational Learning



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Organizational Change Theory emphasizes the processes through which organizations and employees respond to internal and external changes. Burnes (2020) argues that successful organizational transformation depends not only on structural changes but also on employees' willingness and ability to adapt to new circumstances. Consequently, adaptability becomes a critical determinant of change effectiveness.

Adaptive Performance Theory further explains workforce adaptability by focusing on employees' behavioral adjustments under changing conditions. Pulakos et al. (2000) identified multiple dimensions of adaptive performance, including handling emergencies, solving novel problems, managing uncertainty, and learning new tasks. This perspective suggests that adaptability is not merely a reaction to change but a proactive capability enabling individuals to perform effectively in dynamic environments.

Meanwhile, Organizational Learning Theory emphasizes the role of knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and utilization in supporting adaptation. According to Argote & Miron-Spektor (2011), organizational learning facilitates the development of competencies necessary for responding to environmental changes. Employees become more adaptable when organizations create opportunities for continuous learning and knowledge sharing. Similarly, Dynamic Capabilities Theory views adaptability as part of an organization's broader capacity to sense environmental changes, seize opportunities, and reconfigure resources to maintain competitiveness (Teece, 2018).

Despite broad agreement regarding the importance of adaptability, scholarly debates remain concerning its conceptual boundaries. Some researchers view adaptability primarily as an individual-level competency associated with employee performance and employability, whereas others emphasize collective and organizational dimensions shaped by culture, leadership, and strategic management practices (der Heijden & De Vos, 2015; Teece, 2018). Although these theoretical perspectives share the common assumption that adaptability is essential for organizational survival and effectiveness, they differ substantially in their analytical focus and underlying assumptions. Adaptive Performance Theory primarily conceptualizes adaptability as an individual competency reflected in behavioral responses to changing work demands. In contrast, Organizational Learning Theory emphasizes collective learning processes and knowledge development as the foundation of adaptive capacity. Dynamic Capabilities Theory extends the discussion to the organizational level by highlighting the strategic ability to reconfigure resources and competencies in response to environmental changes. Meanwhile, Organizational Change Theory focuses on the processes through which adaptation occurs during transformation initiatives. These differences reveal a degree of theoretical fragmentation, as each perspective prioritizes distinct mechanisms of adaptation. Moreover, some inconsistencies remain regarding whether adaptability should be viewed primarily as an individual attribute, an organizational capability, or an emergent outcome of interactions between both levels. Such debates indicate the need for a more integrative perspective capable of reconciling these competing viewpoints. This



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

divergence suggests that workforce adaptability should be understood as a dynamic and multilevel phenomenon rather than a purely individual characteristic.

2.2 Workforce Adaptability in Organizational Transformation

Organizational transformation refers to substantial changes in organizational structures, processes, technologies, strategies, or cultures aimed at improving organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability. In recent years, digital transformation has become one of the most significant drivers of organizational change, requiring organizations to continuously develop adaptive capabilities (Vial, 2019). As organizations increasingly operate in uncertain and rapidly changing environments, workforce adaptability has become a strategic prerequisite for transformation success.

Existing literature consistently identifies adaptability as a critical factor influencing employee responses to organizational transformation. Khaw et al. (2022), through a systematic literature review, found that employees' reactions to organizational change are significantly affected by communication quality, leadership support, trust, and psychological empowerment. Their findings suggest that adaptability is not solely determined by individual characteristics but also by organizational conditions that facilitate or hinder adaptation.

Similarly, Hubbart (2023) argues that resistance to change remains one of the most significant barriers to organizational transformation. According to this perspective, employees often experience uncertainty, fear, and psychological discomfort when confronted with organizational changes. Adaptability therefore functions as a mechanism that helps employees overcome resistance and engage more positively with transformation initiatives. This view aligns with change management literature emphasizing the importance of employee involvement, communication, and support throughout transformation processes.

Recent studies have also highlighted the relationship between adaptability and digital transformation. Verhoef et al. (2021) argue that digital transformation extends beyond technological implementation and requires substantial changes in organizational structures, employee competencies, and work processes. Likewise, Mergel et al. (2021) emphasize that successful digital transformation depends on organizations' ability to develop adaptive workforces capable of navigating technological complexity and continuous innovation.

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified scholarly interest in workforce adaptability. Tan et al. (2022) demonstrated that adaptive performance became increasingly important as employees adjusted to remote working arrangements, digital collaboration tools, and rapidly changing organizational demands. Their findings indicate that organizational commitment, leadership effectiveness, and teleworking support significantly influence employees' adaptive capacity.

Although existing studies generally agree on the importance of adaptability, differences emerge regarding the primary drivers of adaptive behavior. Some scholars



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

emphasize psychological and behavioral factors such as resilience, motivation, and self-efficacy, whereas others highlight organizational factors including leadership, communication, learning culture, and human resource management practices (Khaw et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2022). These differing perspectives suggest that workforce adaptability is influenced by complex interactions between individual and organizational determinants.

Furthermore, inconsistencies can be observed regarding the relative importance of individual and organizational determinants of adaptability. Some studies argue that personal characteristics such as resilience, self-efficacy, and learning orientation are the primary drivers of adaptive behavior, suggesting that successful adaptation largely depends on employees' internal capabilities. Conversely, other scholars emphasize organizational conditions, including leadership support, communication quality, learning culture, and human resource practices, as the dominant factors shaping adaptability. These contrasting findings suggest that adaptability cannot be adequately explained through a single perspective and instead emerges from the interaction between individual and organizational influences.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature focuses on specific contexts such as digital transformation, crisis management, or remote work environments. While these studies provide valuable insights, they often examine isolated dimensions of adaptability rather than offering an integrated understanding of how workforce adaptability operates across diverse transformation settings. Consequently, there remains a need for broader theoretical synthesis capable of connecting fragmented perspectives within a comprehensive conceptual framework.

2.3 Toward an Integrated Understanding of Workforce Adaptability

The growing body of research on workforce adaptability has generated valuable insights regarding its antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes. Nevertheless, the literature remains theoretically fragmented due to the coexistence of multiple conceptual perspectives. While Adaptive Performance Theory primarily focuses on individual competencies, Organizational Learning Theory emphasizes knowledge processes, Dynamic Capabilities Theory highlights organizational capabilities, and Organizational Change Theory examines transformation processes. Each perspective contributes important insights but captures only part of the broader phenomenon.

One area of consensus among scholars is that workforce adaptability contributes positively to organizational performance, resilience, innovation, and transformation success (Khaw et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2022; Verhoef et al., 2021). Adaptable employees are more likely to embrace change, acquire new competencies, and respond effectively to emerging challenges. Consequently, adaptability is increasingly viewed as a strategic resource that enhances organizational competitiveness.

However, disagreement persists regarding the level at which adaptability should be analyzed. Individual-centered perspectives emphasize employee competencies,



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

personality traits, and behavioral responses as the primary sources of adaptability. In contrast, organizational perspectives argue that adaptability emerges through supportive cultures, leadership practices, learning systems, and strategic capabilities (Gonzalez-Varona et al., 2024; Teece, 2018). This theoretical divergence creates an important tension within the literature. While individual-focused approaches provide valuable insights into adaptive behavior, they may underestimate the influence of organizational context. Conversely, organizational approaches may overlook differences in employees' personal capacities and motivations. As a result, neither perspective independently offers a complete explanation of workforce adaptability. A more comprehensive understanding requires recognizing adaptability as a multilevel phenomenon resulting from the continuous interaction between individual competencies and organizational conditions.

Another important debate concerns the relationship between adaptability and organizational transformation. Some scholars conceptualize adaptability as an antecedent that enables successful transformation, whereas others view it as an outcome generated through transformation processes themselves (Burnes, 2020; Vial, 2019). Rather than treating these perspectives as mutually exclusive, a growing number of researchers suggest that adaptability and transformation interact dynamically and reinforce one another over time.

From a library research perspective, these debates indicate the need for a more integrative conceptual approach. Workforce adaptability should be understood as a multidimensional capability that operates across individual, team, and organizational levels. Individual competencies such as flexibility, learning orientation, and resilience interact with organizational factors including leadership, communication, organizational learning, and dynamic capabilities. Together, these elements influence how effectively organizations navigate transformation processes.

Therefore, the present study adopts an integrative analytical perspective that synthesizes insights from Organizational Change Theory, Adaptive Performance Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Through this synthesis, workforce adaptability is conceptualized as a strategic and multidimensional capability that enables organizations and employees to respond effectively to environmental uncertainty, technological disruption, and organizational transformation. This perspective provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding the complex relationships between workforce adaptability and transformation outcomes.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the synthesis of Organizational Change Theory, Adaptive Performance Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework of workforce adaptability in organizational transformation. The framework assumes that workforce adaptability emerges through the interaction between individual-level factors and organizational-

level factors. At the individual level, adaptability is influenced by competencies such as flexibility, resilience, learning orientation, and adaptive performance. At the organizational level, adaptability is supported by leadership practices, communication quality, organizational learning mechanisms, and dynamic capabilities. These factors collectively contribute to workforce adaptability, which subsequently facilitates successful organizational transformation outcomes, including resilience, innovation, performance improvement, and sustainable competitiveness.

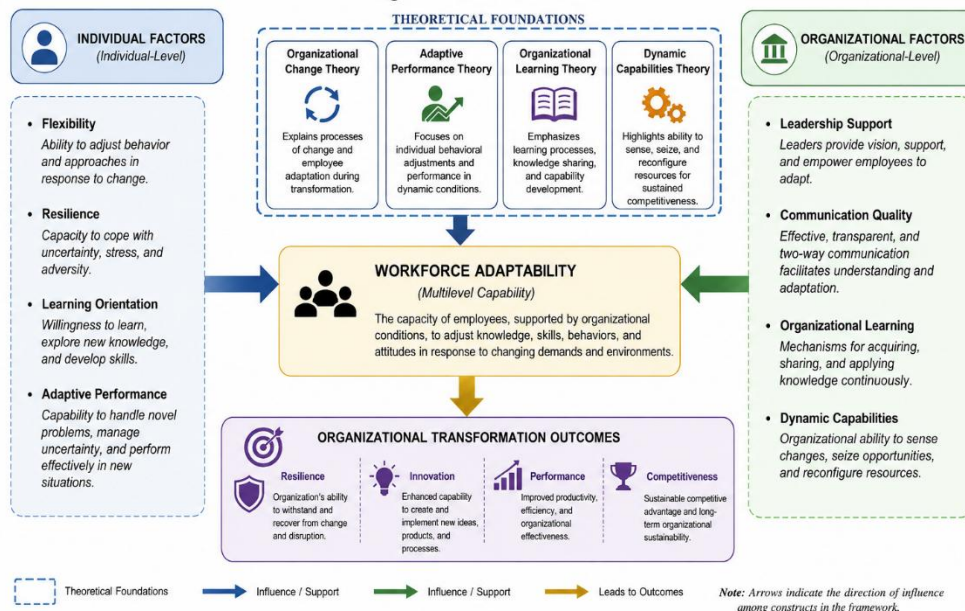


Figure 1 Integrated Conceptual Framework of Workforce Adaptability in Organizational Transformation

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a Library Research approach. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for examining complex organizational phenomena because it emphasizes the interpretation and synthesis of concepts, theories, and scholarly perspectives rather than the measurement of numerical variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within management and organizational studies, library research enables researchers to critically examine theoretical developments, conceptual debates, and accumulated scholarly knowledge concerning a particular phenomenon. Accordingly, this study focused on workforce adaptability in organizational transformation by systematically reviewing and synthesizing existing academic literature rather than collecting primary empirical data. The data sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, book chapters, conference proceedings, review papers, and research reports relevant to workforce adaptability, organizational transformation, organizational change, adaptive performance, organizational learning,



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

digital transformation, and dynamic capabilities. To ensure academic rigor and reliability, the literature was obtained from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, Sage Journals, and Google Scholar. The selection of literature was based on four criteria: relevance to the research topic, credibility of the publication source, recency of publication, and contribution to the theoretical understanding of workforce adaptability in organizational transformation. The review focused on publications published between 2015 and 2024 to ensure that the analysis reflected contemporary developments in workforce adaptability and organizational transformation. Following the screening process, a total of 42 publications were included in the final analysis.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic library research procedure. Following the recommendations of Snyder (2019), the process began with the identification of relevant keywords, including “workforce adaptability,” “employee adaptability,” “organizational transformation,” “organizational change,” “adaptive performance,” “organizational learning,” “digital transformation,” and “dynamic capabilities.” These keywords were used to retrieve publications from selected databases and digital repositories. The retrieved literature was subsequently screened through title, abstract, and keyword examination to determine its relevance to the research objectives. Publications meeting the inclusion criteria underwent full-text review to evaluate their conceptual relevance, methodological quality, theoretical contribution, and overall suitability for analysis. The selected sources were then organized according to major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and thematic issues related to workforce adaptability and organizational transformation. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) publications discussing workforce adaptability or closely related concepts, (2) studies addressing organizational transformation or change-related contexts, (3) publications written in English, and (4) scholarly sources published in reputable academic outlets. Conversely, exclusion criteria included publications unrelated to organizational adaptation, duplicate records, non-scholarly publications, studies lacking sufficient theoretical relevance, and publications published outside the specified time frame.

The collected literature was analyzed using Thematic Analysis. This analytical approach enables researchers to identify, organize, interpret, and synthesize recurring patterns across qualitative data sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis began with familiarization through repeated reading of the selected literature, followed by the coding of significant concepts, theoretical constructs, and analytical insights. The resulting codes were grouped into broader themes representing recurring patterns across the literature. These themes were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure conceptual coherence and alignment with the objectives of the study. For example, codes such as “employee flexibility,” “adaptive performance,” and “learning orientation” were grouped under the theme Individual Adaptability Factors, whereas codes such as “leadership support,” “organizational learning,” and “dynamic capabilities” were categorized under Organizational Adaptability Factors. Through iterative comparison and refinement, these



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

themes contributed to the development of broader categories concerning the determinants, mechanisms, and outcomes of workforce adaptability.

The final stage involved interpretation and synthesis, in which the identified themes were critically examined to explore conceptual relationships, similarities, differences, and scholarly debates concerning workforce adaptability and organizational transformation. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed transparent selection criteria, systematic screening procedures, and critical evaluation of multiple scholarly sources throughout the analytical process (Nowell et al., 2017). Furthermore, the literature selection process was documented using a flowchart adapted from the PRISMA framework to improve transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor.

Initial Codes	Categories	Themes
Employee flexibility, adaptive behavior, resilience	Individual competencies	Individual Adaptability Factors
Leadership support, communication quality, employee involvement	Organizational support mechanisms	Organizational Adaptability Factors
Knowledge sharing, continuous learning, skill development	Learning processes	Organizational Learning Mechanisms
Resource reconfiguration, sensing opportunities, strategic renewal	Strategic capabilities	Dynamic Capabilities
Innovation, resilience, performance improvement	Transformation outcomes	Organizational Transformation Outcomes

Table 1 Example of Coding and Theme Development

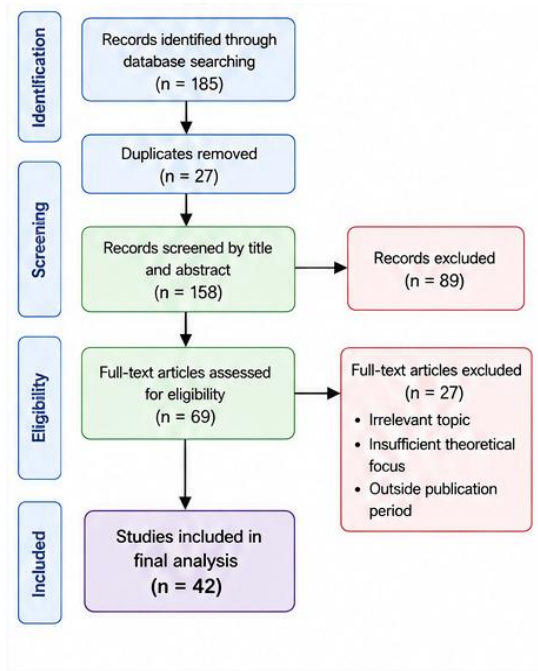


Figure 2 Literature Selection Procedure Adapted from PRISMA

4. Result

This study aimed to synthesize and critically organize the existing body of knowledge concerning workforce adaptability in organizational transformation. Through a qualitative library research approach and thematic analysis of the selected literature, several recurring concepts, patterns, and theoretical relationships were identified. The analysis revealed that workforce adaptability is not a single competency but rather a multidimensional capability influenced by individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Across the reviewed literature, adaptability consistently emerged as a critical mechanism through which organizations respond to technological disruption, organizational restructuring, digital transformation, and environmental uncertainty.

A total of 42 publications were included in the final analysis. Through the coding and thematic categorization process, six interrelated themes were identified. The frequency with which themes appeared across the reviewed literature was used as an indicator of their relative prominence within the field. While all themes contributed to the conceptual understanding of workforce adaptability, some themes were discussed more extensively than others.

The thematic analysis generated six interrelated themes: adaptive performance, organizational learning, leadership and change management, digital transformation, employee resilience, and organizational outcomes.



Theme	Number of Studies (n)	Percentage (%)	Key Concets	Synthesized Findings
Adaptive Performance	15	35.7	Flexibility, learning agility, problem-solving	Employees respond more effectively to change
Organizational Learning	12	28.6	Knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing	Learning strengthens adaptive capability
Leadership and Change Management	11	26.2	Communication, empowerment, participation	Leadership facilitates adaptation
Digital Transformation	10	23.8	Digital competence, innovation	Technology requires adaptation
Employee Resilience	8	19.0	Coping capacity, flexibility	Resilience supports adaptation
Organizational Outcomes	13	31.0	Performance, competitiveness	Adaptability improves transformation outcomes

Table 2 Synthesized Themes of Workforce Adaptability in Organizational Transformation

Source: Synthesized by the authors based on 42 reviewed publications (2026).

Table 2 presents the major themes identified through the thematic analysis. The findings indicate that workforce adaptability is consistently associated with employees' ability to adjust to changing organizational conditions while simultaneously supporting broader organizational transformation initiatives. Among the identified themes, adaptive performance emerged as the most frequently discussed dimension, emphasizing employees' capacity to learn, solve problems, and respond effectively to uncertainty. Organizational learning and leadership were also repeatedly identified as important mechanisms that facilitate adaptive behavior through knowledge development, communication, and employee support.

The analysis further revealed a strong relationship between workforce adaptability and digital transformation. The reviewed studies indicate that technological change requires employees to continuously develop new competencies and adapt their work practices. In addition, employee resilience emerged as an important factor that enables individuals to cope with transformation-related challenges and organizational uncertainty. Collectively, these themes demonstrate that workforce adaptability contributes to positive organizational outcomes, including improved performance, innovation, resilience, and long-term competitiveness. The findings therefore suggest that workforce adaptability functions not only as an individual capability but also as a broader organizational resource that supports successful transformation processes.



4.1 Distribution of Evidence Across Themes

Table 3 presents the distribution of reviewed studies across the identified themes. The results indicate that Adaptive Performance was the most frequently discussed theme, appearing in 15 studies, followed by Organizational Outcomes (13 studies) and Organizational Learning (12 studies). These findings suggest that existing research predominantly focuses on employees’ behavioral adaptation and the consequences of adaptability for organizational effectiveness.

In contrast, Employee Resilience appeared less frequently than other themes, indicating that psychological dimensions of adaptability remain comparatively underexplored in the literature. Similarly, Digital Transformation, despite receiving increasing scholarly attention, was often examined as a contextual factor rather than as a central focus of workforce adaptability research. This distribution highlights potential opportunities for future research to investigate the interaction between resilience, digital transformation, and workforce adaptability in greater depth.

Overall, the evidence distribution demonstrates that workforce adaptability is primarily conceptualized as a mechanism for enhancing employee performance and organizational outcomes, while fewer studies emphasize its psychological and contextual dimensions.

Author(s)	Adaptive Performance	Organizational Learning	Leadership	Digital Transformation	Resilience
Pulakos et al. (2000)	✓				
Argote & Miron-Spektor (2011)		✓			
Burnes (2020)			✓		
Vial (2019)				✓	
Tan et al. (2022)	✓		✓	✓	
Khaw et al. (2022)			✓		
Hubbart (2023)					✓
Kniffin et al. (2021)					✓
Gonzalez-Varona et al. (2024)		✓			
Teece (2018)					✓

Table 3 Evidence Matrix of Reviewed Literature



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

5. Discussion

5.1 Workforce Adaptability as a Strategic and Multidimensional Capability

The findings indicate that workforce adaptability is a multidimensional capability that extends beyond employees' ability to adjust to workplace changes. The thematic analysis revealed that adaptability encompasses adaptive performance, continuous learning, resilience, digital competence, and organizational support mechanisms. This finding supports the argument that adaptability should not be viewed solely as an individual characteristic but rather as a capability that emerges through interactions between employees and organizational systems. Such a perspective is consistent with Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasizes the importance of continuously reconfiguring organizational resources and competencies in response to environmental change (Teece, 2018).

The reviewed literature further demonstrates that adaptive performance remains a central component of workforce adaptability. Pulakos et al. (2000) conceptualized adaptive performance as employees' ability to respond effectively to changing job demands, uncertainty, and novel situations. Although this framework was originally developed in traditional organizational settings, contemporary studies continue to confirm its relevance. For example, Tan et al. (2022) found that adaptive performance significantly influenced employees' ability to maintain effectiveness during the rapid transition to remote work arrangements. These findings suggest that adaptability has evolved from a desirable employee attribute into a strategic organizational requirement.

Moreover, the results indicate that workforce adaptability operates at multiple organizational levels. At the individual level, adaptability involves behavioral flexibility, learning agility, and psychological resilience. At the organizational level, adaptability is reflected in leadership practices, learning systems, and organizational culture. This multilevel perspective extends previous studies that often examined adaptability either from an employee perspective or from an organizational perspective. The present findings suggest that adaptability is best understood as a dynamic capability emerging through the interaction of both dimensions. Consequently, organizations seeking successful transformation should focus not only on employee competencies but also on creating organizational conditions that facilitate adaptation.

However, the reviewed literature reveals an ongoing debate regarding the primary source of workforce adaptability. While Adaptive Performance Theory emphasizes individual competencies such as flexibility, learning agility, and resilience, Organizational Learning Theory and Dynamic Capabilities Theory suggest that adaptability is largely shaped by organizational systems and strategic resources. This divergence indicates that adaptability cannot be fully explained by either perspective alone. Organizations may invest heavily in employee development, yet adaptive behavior may remain limited if organizational structures discourage learning and experimentation. Conversely, supportive organizational systems may fail to generate



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

adaptability when employees lack the motivation or competencies required to respond to change. Therefore, workforce adaptability should be viewed as a co-created capability emerging from the interaction between individual agency and organizational context rather than as a purely individual or organizational phenomenon.

5.2 Organizational Drivers of Workforce Adaptation

A second important finding concerns the organizational factors that facilitate workforce adaptation. The thematic analysis identified leadership, organizational learning, communication quality, and employee empowerment as critical drivers of adaptive behavior. These findings align with the conclusions of Khaw et al. (2022), who found that employee reactions to organizational change are significantly influenced by leadership support, communication effectiveness, and psychological empowerment. Employees are more likely to embrace change when organizational leaders provide clear guidance, reduce uncertainty, and actively involve employees in transformation initiatives.

The findings also highlight the importance of Organizational Learning Theory in explaining workforce adaptability. According to Argote & Miron-Spektor (2011), organizational learning enables individuals and organizations to acquire, share, and apply knowledge necessary for responding to changing environments. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that learning-oriented organizations possess stronger adaptive capabilities than organizations that rely on static knowledge structures. Gonzalez-Varona et al. (2024), for instance, emphasize that continuous learning and competency development are essential for organizations undergoing digital transformation. This suggests that workforce adaptability is not an inherent characteristic but a capability that can be cultivated through systematic learning processes.

Nevertheless, the literature does not fully agree on the effectiveness of organizational interventions in developing adaptability. Some studies argue that training programs, learning opportunities, and leadership support significantly enhance adaptive capabilities. In contrast, other scholars suggest that personal characteristics such as openness to experience, resilience, and self-efficacy may exert a stronger influence than organizational initiatives. These contradictory findings indicate that adaptability development is unlikely to result from a single intervention. Instead, successful adaptation appears to require a combination of individual readiness and supportive organizational conditions. This unresolved debate remains an important area for future research and theory development.

Furthermore, communication emerged as a recurring determinant of adaptation across the reviewed literature. Organizational transformation often generates uncertainty regarding employee roles, responsibilities, and future organizational directions. Effective communication reduces ambiguity and strengthens employee commitment to transformation goals. Burnes (2020) argues that successful change



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

initiatives require active employee participation and transparent communication throughout the transformation process. The present findings support this argument by demonstrating that communication functions as a mechanism through which leaders influence adaptive behavior.

Another notable finding concerns employee resilience. The literature indicates that resilient employees are more capable of coping with uncertainty, technological disruption, and organizational restructuring. Kniffin et al. (2021) highlight that rapidly changing workplace conditions require employees to demonstrate flexibility and resilience in managing work-related challenges. Similarly, Hubbart (2023) argues that resistance to change frequently originates from psychological discomfort and uncertainty. Consequently, resilience serves as an important psychological resource that supports adaptation during transformation processes.

5.3 Workforce Adaptability and Organizational Transformation Outcomes

The findings further demonstrate a strong relationship between workforce adaptability and organizational transformation outcomes. Across the reviewed literature, adaptability is consistently associated with improved organizational performance, innovation, resilience, and long-term competitiveness. This finding supports the argument that adaptability functions as a strategic capability rather than merely an employee-level competency. Organizations characterized by adaptable workforces appear better positioned to respond to environmental uncertainty and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

The relationship between adaptability and digital transformation is particularly evident. Digital transformation requires organizations to adopt new technologies, redesign work processes, and develop new competencies. According to Vial (2019), digital transformation involves profound changes that affect organizational structures, business models, and employee roles. Similarly, Verhoef et al. (2021) argue that successful digital transformation depends on the ability of organizations to develop capabilities that support continuous adaptation and innovation. The findings of the present study reinforce these perspectives by demonstrating that workforce adaptability serves as a critical mechanism through which organizations navigate technological change.

An important contribution of this study lies in its identification of workforce adaptability as a mediating capability linking organizational transformation initiatives with positive organizational outcomes. Previous studies frequently examined adaptability either as an antecedent of organizational performance or as an outcome of transformation processes. In contrast, the present findings suggest that adaptability simultaneously functions as both a process and an outcome. Organizational learning, leadership support, communication quality, and resilience contribute to the development of adaptive capabilities, which subsequently facilitate transformation success. This



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

perspective provides a more integrated understanding of the role of adaptability within organizational transformation.

The study also contributes to the ongoing scholarly debate regarding the conceptualization of workforce adaptability. While some researchers emphasize individual competencies and behavioral flexibility, others focus on organizational capabilities and strategic adaptation. The present findings indicate that these perspectives are complementary rather than contradictory. Workforce adaptability emerges through the interaction of employee competencies, organizational learning mechanisms, leadership practices, and broader organizational capabilities. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of adaptability requires consideration of both individual and organizational dimensions.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings integrate insights from Organizational Change Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Organizational Change Theory explains why adaptation is necessary during transformation processes, Organizational Learning Theory clarifies how adaptive capabilities are developed, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains how organizations leverage adaptability to maintain competitiveness. By synthesizing these perspectives, the study provides a more comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding workforce adaptability in contemporary organizations.

Overall, the findings suggest that workforce adaptability should be regarded as a strategic organizational capability that operates across individual and organizational levels. Beyond confirming its importance for transformation success, the study highlights several unresolved theoretical debates concerning the relative influence of individual competencies and organizational conditions in shaping adaptability. By integrating these perspectives, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of workforce adaptability and provides a foundation for future research examining adaptation in increasingly complex organizational environments.

5.4 Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and policymakers. First, organizational leaders should recognize workforce adaptability as a strategic capability rather than merely an employee attribute. Developing adaptability requires creating environments that encourage learning, experimentation, and knowledge sharing. Leaders should therefore prioritize transparent communication, employee involvement, and continuous support during transformation initiatives.

Second, human resource practitioners should design integrated talent development strategies that combine technical skill enhancement with the development of resilience, flexibility, and learning agility. Recruitment, training, performance management, and career development systems should be aligned to strengthen employees' adaptive capacity in rapidly changing environments.



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

Third, policymakers and educational institutions should support workforce adaptability by promoting lifelong learning initiatives, digital literacy programs, and reskilling opportunities. As technological disruption and digital transformation continue to reshape labor markets, adaptability will become increasingly important for maintaining employability and organizational competitiveness. Collaborative efforts among governments, educational institutions, and organizations are therefore essential to prepare workers for future workplace challenges.

6. Conclusion

This study examined workforce adaptability in organizational transformation through a qualitative library research approach and thematic analysis of relevant scholarly literature. The findings demonstrate that workforce adaptability is a multidimensional capability encompassing adaptive performance, organizational learning, leadership and change management, digital competence, employee resilience, and organizational outcomes. Rather than functioning solely as an individual employee attribute, adaptability emerges through the interaction of individual competencies and organizational conditions that facilitate continuous learning, effective communication, and capability development. The analysis further reveals that workforce adaptability plays a central role in enabling organizations to navigate technological disruption, digital transformation, and environmental uncertainty. By synthesizing insights from Organizational Change Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, Adaptive Performance Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, this study contributes to the literature by providing an integrated conceptual perspective that positions workforce adaptability as a strategic capability operating across individual and organizational levels. Consequently, the study advances current knowledge by clarifying the relationships among adaptability drivers, adaptation processes, and transformation outcomes within contemporary organizations.

The findings have important implications for theory, research, and organizational practice. Theoretically, the study highlights the value of integrating multiple perspectives to better understand workforce adaptability as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. For practitioners, the findings suggest that organizations should strengthen learning systems, leadership effectiveness, employee empowerment, and digital capability development to enhance workforce readiness for transformation.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies exclusively on secondary data and published literature, which may introduce potential selection bias because the findings depend on the availability and accessibility of existing scholarly sources. Second, although the literature was collected from reputable academic databases, database restrictions may have limited the inclusion of relevant studies published in other sources or languages. Third, the proposed conceptual framework is derived from theoretical synthesis and has not been empirically validated.



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

Therefore, the relationships among workforce adaptability, organizational factors, and transformation outcomes remain conceptual and require further empirical examination.

Future research should focus on empirically testing the proposed conceptual framework across different organizational contexts, industries, and cultural settings. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies could be conducted to examine the relationships among adaptive performance, organizational learning, leadership, resilience, and transformation outcomes. Comparative studies involving public and private organizations, small and large enterprises, as well as organizations operating in different countries, would provide deeper insights into the contextual factors influencing workforce adaptability. Furthermore, future research may investigate how emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, automation, and digital ecosystems, shape adaptive capability development and organizational transformation processes. Such efforts would contribute to the refinement of existing theories and strengthen the practical applicability of workforce adaptability research in contemporary organizational environments.

References

- Argote, L., & Miron-Spektor, E. (2011). Organizational learning: From experience to knowledge. *Organization Science*, 22(5), 1123–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0621>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burnes, B. (2020). The origins of Lewin’s three-step model of change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 56(1), 32–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886319892685>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & De Vos, A. (2015). Sustainable Careers: Introductory Chapter. In *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Careers* (pp. 1–19). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Gonzalez-Varona, J. M., Lopez-Paredes, A., Poza, D., & Acebes, F. (2024). Building and development of an organizational competence for digital transformation in SMEs. *Systems*, 12(6), 215. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems12060215>
- Hubbart, J. A. (2023). Organizational change: The challenge of change aversion. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(7), 162. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13070162>
- Khaw, K. W., Alnoor, A., Al-Abrow, H., Tiberius, V., Ganesan, Y., & Atshan, N. A. (2022). Reactions towards organizational change: A systematic literature review. *Current Psychology*, 42(22), 19137–19160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03070-6>
- Kniffin, K. M., Narayanan, J., Anseel, F., Antonakis, J., Ashford, S. P., Bakker, A. B., Bamberger, P., & others. (2021). COVID-19 and the workplace: Implications, issues, and insights for future research and action. *American Psychologist*, 76(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000716>



IJMA

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academia

ISSN: xxx-xxx <https://ojs.sentracendekia.com/index.php/ijma>

Vol. 1 Issue 2, June 2026, pp. 118-138

- Mergel, I., Edelman, N., & Haug, N. (2021). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38(4), 101628. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2021.101628>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M. A., & Plamondon, K. E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: Development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(4), 612–624. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.4.612>
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Tan, R., Cham, T. H., Norezam, O., Ting, H., & Ramayah, T. (2022). New insights on employee adaptive performance during the COVID-19 pandemic: Empirical evidence from Indonesia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 18(2), 49–77. <https://doi.org/10.7341/20221822>
- Teece, D. J. (2018). Business models and dynamic capabilities. *Long Range Planning*, 51(1), 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2017.06.007>
- Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., Dong, J. Q., Fabian, N., & Haenlein, M. (2021). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 122, 889–901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022>
- Vial, G. (2019). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 28(2), 118–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2019.01.003>