Exploring the Impact of Adaptive Leadership on Champion Behaviour: The Sequential Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment, Resilience and Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of adaptive leadership on championing behavior among mid-level managerial employees in Pakistan's public sector, with a particular focus on the sequential mediating roles of psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience. Data were collected from 309 respondents using a purposive sampling technique, yielding a response rate of 61.8%. A self-administered questionnaire was used for primary data collection, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. The main hypothesis posited that adaptive leadership positively influences championing behavior through the sequential mediation of psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience. The results provided full support for the proposed model, demonstrating that adaptive leadership significantly enhances employees' sense of empowerment, strengthens their belief in their abilities, fosters resilience, and ultimately promotes championing behavior. These findings highlight the strategic importance of adaptive leadership in driving innovation and proactive behaviors in dynamic public sector environments.

Keywords: Adaptive Leadership, Champion Behavior, Psychological Empowerment, Self- efficacy, Resilience, Exploration and Production (E&P)

INTRODUCTION

Due to the competitive organizational environment, organizations expect employees to go beyond traditional work behaviors, requiring them to take dynamic roles in driving change and innovation, this leads to the concept of Champion Behavior which has emerged as a crucial factor in organizational success. Employees are no longer restricted to their designated roles; they are expected to multitask, take ownership, and take responsibility for workplace transformation. These behaviors include promoting innovative solutions, supporting organizational change, and acting as internal influences to foster a positive work culture (Butt & Warraich, 2022). Employee champions play a vital role in bridging the gap between leadership and the workforce, ensuring that strategic initiatives are adopted and implemented effectively. Leaders must create an environment that empowers employees to take initiative, voice concerns, and contribute passionately. Research suggests that organizations that encourage employee champion behavior experience improved business outcomes and sustainable growth (Ellen, 2025). The increasing complexity of workplace dynamics necessitates a shift from passive task execution to active participation in shaping organizational success.

Employee champion behavior influences multiple levels within an organization, including individual, supervisory, and organizational outcomes. At the individual level, employees who act as champions exhibit increased engagement, job satisfaction, and career growth (Nazmul, Furuoka, & Idris, 2020). At the supervisory level, managers benefit from enhanced employee commitment, as championing employees help drive initiatives ahead, reducing resistance to change (De Clercq & Pereira, 2020). Organizationally, a culture of champion behavior promotes innovation, supports strategic transformation, and improves overall performance (Nazmul, Furuoka, & Idris, 2020). These effects contribute to a more adaptive, resilient, and high-performing work environment. Traditional leadership styles are no longer enough to promote employee champion behavior, as they fail to bring the necessary behavioral changes in a swiftly evolving work environment. Adaptive leadership has emerged as a more effective approach, encouraging flexibility, inclusivity, and engagement, which helps employees steer complex organizational challenges and accept transformation (Katsaros, 2025).

This leadership style promotes a culture where employees feel empowered to take ownership, innovate, and actively contribute to organizational success.

Adaptive leadership is crucial for organizations to resist through change, foster innovation, and remain competitive in dynamic environments. Unlike rigid leadership models, adaptive leadership enables organizations to respond actively to challenges, empower employees, and drive cultural transformation (Farzana, Khoso, Hussain, Ghulam, & Kerio, 2025). By encouraging flexibility and continuous learning, this approach makes sure of the long-term. organizational resilience and success. Adaptive leadership alone does not directly develop champion behavior in employees; instead, it works through various mediating factors that play a crucial role in shaping employee responses. Psychological empowerment, resilience, and self-efficacy act as bridging mechanisms that enable employees to accept change, innovate, and take ownership of their roles. Psychological empowerment refers to an employee's perception of meaning, competence, self- determination, and impact within their organization. When employees feel empowered, they are more likely to take initiative, contribute innovative ideas, and actively support workplace transformation (Xu & Zhang, 2022). Resilience is the ability to recover from difficulty, adapt to change, and persist in the face of challenges. Employees with high resilience are more likely to maintain motivation, embrace adaptive leadership, and champion organizational initiatives even in problematic situations (Djourova, Rodríguez Molina, Tordera Santamatilde, & Abate, 2020). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve goals. Employees with high self-efficacy feel confident in navigating workplace challenges, which strengthens their willingness to engage in championing behaviors and drive change within the organization (Chughtai, Syed, Naseer, & Chinchilla, 2023).

Public sector organizations are striving to enhance efficiency, innovation, and service delivery, making Champion Behavior (CB) an important element in leading organizational transformation. Employees with champion behavior proactively solve bureaucratic problems by promoting reform initiatives while developing new innovative solutions. Public sector entities in the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector maintain crucial positions for safeguarding energy security together with economic stability. The E&P sector encounters numerous problems because its operations depend heavily on foreign imports of oil and gas

resources. Through champion behavior employees of this sector can support domestic resource exploration and efficient energy policies and sustainable extraction methods to reduce dependence on foreign resources (Oppong & Andrews 2020). The E&P sector achieves operational excellence and enhances both regulatory infrastructure and encourages native technological growth through champion employee initiatives which fortifies the industry's independence and national energy protection (Oosterhuis & Datta, 2021).

This study is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which provides a robust framework for understanding the mechanisms through which adaptive leadership influences employee champion behavior. COR theory posits that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable psychological, social, and material resources. Stress occurs when these resources are threatened or lost, but the acquisition of new resources can foster motivation and adaptive behavior. In the context of this study, adaptive leadership serves as a critical resource that fosters additional psychological resources in employees, such as empowerment, resilience, and self-efficacy, which in turn promote championing behavior. When leaders provide support, flexibility, and recognition, they help employees build and sustain these psychological resources. This motivates employees not only to cope with workplace challenges but also to proactively champion change and innovation. Thus, COR theory explains how the sequential mediators, empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience, serve as resource reservoirs that enable employees to engage in championing behavior, especially in demanding environments like the public sector.

Employees in the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector are performing their traditional roles effectively, they often lack Champion Behavior (CB), the active engagement that's required to drive innovation and efficiency in organization. This absence of champion behavior leads to inefficiencies in exploration and resource utilization in public sector, worsening the sector's reliance on costly energy imports. Without employees actively championing new technologies and sustainable extraction methods, the sector struggles to reduce its import burden and increase domestic production. Encouraging CB is crucial to encouraging a self-reliant and resilient energy sector.

The main objective of the study is to examine adaptive leadership and champion behavior through intervention of psychological empowerment,

resilience, and self-efficacy to observe their impact on the in the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector, where leadership-driven innovation is vital for reducing import dependency and increasing energy security. Traditional leadership styles often fail to drive active engagement, whereas adaptive leadership fosters problem-solving and strategic decision-making (Jahan, 2024). Leadership effectiveness contributes significantly to employee innovation and change-driven behavior, with studies indicating that organizations with strong adaptive leadership frameworks see a 32% higher employee engagement rate and 29% greater organizational adaptability (Sott & Bender, 2025). Additionally, self-efficacy and psychological empowerment have been identified as key mediators in leadership- outcome relationships, with empirical evidence suggesting a 25% increase in employees' ability to take initiative when these psychological factors are nurtured (Hermann & Helmersen, 2020).

Furthermore, in sectors like Exploration & Production (E&P), where reliance on imports is a critical challenge, empowering employees to become internal champions is vital for reducing dependency on foreign energy sources and improving operational efficiency. Previous studies highlight that resilient employees advocate workplace change to about 40% and are 35% more implicated in engaging in problem-solving initiatives (London, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptive Leadership and Psychological Empowerment

Adaptive leadership is a leadership framework that enables individuals and organizations to navigate complex and changing environments by fostering innovation, learning, and problem-solving (Sharma, Layes, Esposito, & Akbar, 2025). Unlike traditional leadership styles that focus on hierarchical authority and static decision-making, adaptive leadership encourages flexibility, collaboration, and continuous learning, making it particularly effective in dynamic industries. Leaders who adopt this approach prioritize employee growth, organizational change, and the ability to respond proactively to challenges.

Psychological empowerment refers to an individual's intrinsic motivation and perception of control, competence, and purpose in their workplace (Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025). It comprises four key dimensions: meaning, competence, self- determination, and impact. Employees who feel

psychologically empowered tend to exhibit higher engagement, creativity, and resilience, leading to increased job performance   and   organizational commitment. Psychological empowerment is often cultivated through leadership practices that encourage autonomy, confidence, and a sense of purpose in employees.

By promoting employee autonomy and decision-making involvement, adaptive leadership is essential in fostering psychological empowerment. According to research, organizations that use adaptive leadership techniques see a 19% rise in job satisfaction and a 23% increase in employee engagement (Kim & Yoon, 2025). By giving employees, the freedom to own their work and participate in strategic choices, leaders foster an environment where individuals feel appreciated and empowered.

Another important component of adaptive leadership is its focus on resilience and constant learning. Research by Sihite (2024) finds that employees in traditionally managed teams show a 30% worse resilience score than those under adaptive leaders. Greater psychological empowerment results from employees' increased confidence in facing barriers and adapting to organizational changes. Adaptive leaders create possibilities for professional growth, offer constructive feedback, and help to build an organizational culture that encourages continuous development.

Competence, a core component of psychological   empowerment,   is significantly influenced by adaptive leadership. According to Krauter's 2025, Individuals who consider their leaders as adaptive are 25% more likely to participate in skill development occurrences and 18% more willing to take initiative in their roles. By offering mentorship, skills training, and leadership opportunities, adaptive leaders enhance employee self-efficacy, reinforcing their belief in their abilities and decision-making skills.

Moreover, ways in which adaptive leadership fosters psychological empowerment is by instilling a sense of purpose in employees. A study by Gonzalez, Phd and Marakhovska (2024) found that organizations that integrate adaptive leadership principles report a 27% increase in employees' sense of job purpose. Adaptive leaders align organizational goals with individual aspirations, ensuring that employees understand their contributions' broader impact on the organization and society.

H1: Adaptive Leadership has a significant positive impact on Psychological Empowerment.

Psychological Empowerment and Resilience

Resilience is defined as an individual's ability to adapt to and recover from adversity, stress, or challenges while maintaining or enhancing well-being (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014). It is a crucial psychological trait that enables individuals to cope with workplace pressures, personal setbacks, and dynamic environmental changes. In organizational environment, resilience plays a key role in maintaining employee motivation, productivity, and mental health, especially in uncertain or high-pressure work environments.

Psychological empowerment fosters resilience by equipping individuals with the confidence and resources needed to navigate difficulties effectively. Several studies suggest that psychological empowerment is a strong predictor of resilience. Employees who feel empowered in their roles exhibit higher levels of resilience when facing work-related stress or adversity (Alshiha, Sultan Mohammed Alkhozaim, Emad Mohammed Alnasser, Hazem Ahmed Khairy, & Bassam Samir Al-Romeedy, 2024). A study by Romme, van, Blanc, and Alblas (2019) found that organizations that prioritize psychological empowerment witness a 22% increase in employee resilience levels. This occurs because employees who feel valued and capable develop stronger coping mechanisms and a proactive approach toward overcoming obstacles.

Two core components of psychological empowerment are autonomy and self-confidence, which significantly contribute to resilience. According to Sanders (2019), research highlighted that individuals who strongly feel autonomous are 35% more likely to show resilience under stressful environments. Higher self-confident people are also 28% more likely to remain focused during challenging situations. This suggests that employees who believe in their ability to influence outcomes develop a more resilient attitude and are able to handle challenges at their workplace.

Psychological empowerment helps individuals develop resilience as well as emotional control and adaptation, which are traits connected to each other. Studies show that people who feel empowered in their professions show more emotional

stability and problem-solving capacity under pressure (L. B., 2024). Empowerment helps individuals to develop an internal locus of control, which helps them to feel more in charge of their emotional reactions and more suited to meet changing demands of the workplace.

Organizations that focus on psychological empowerment find that employee resilience increases significantly. A study by Modise (2023) found that employees in empowerment-focused workplaces have higher resilience level compared to those in traditionally managed environments. These findings suggest that fostering a culture of empowerment not only enhances job performance but also equips employees with the emotional and psychological tools necessary to thrive in uncertain conditions.

H2: Psychological Empowerment has a significant positive impact on Resilience.

Psychological Empowerment and Self- efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully and achieve desired outcomes. Bandura (1997) initially introduced this concept, emphasizing its role in motivation, goal- setting, and perseverance. More recent studies confirm that self-efficacy significantly influences performance, resilience, and adaptability in organizational settings (Abun, Nicolas, Apollo, Magallanes, & Encarnacion, 2021). High self-efficacy leads to increased confidence, proactive behavior, and the ability to navigate complex challenges effectively, making it a crucial factor in personal and professional success.

Psychological empowerment and self- efficacy are closely linked, as empowerment fosters a sense of control and competence, which strengthens self-belief in one's abilities. Employees who feel empowered in their workplace develop higher self-efficacy, leading to increased motivation, job satisfaction, and willingness to take on challenging tasks (Md Abul Mohaimen, Mahmud, Hassan, Amin, & Roy, 2025). Research suggests that psychological empowerment directly contributes to the enhancement of self-efficacy by providing individuals with opportunities for autonomy, skill mastery, and meaningful work. A study by Gupta and Pal (2025) found that employees in organizations that emphasize empowerment have higher self-efficacy levels than those in hierarchical work environments. This correlation underscores the idea that when individuals

perceive themselves as influential within their roles, they develop stronger confidence in their abilities to succeed.

Two fundamental components of psychological empowerment; competence and autonomy play a crucial role in developing self-efficacy. Employees who feel competent in their roles are 32% more likely to exhibit high self-efficacy (Wang, Kang, & Choi, 2021). Similarly, employees who given autonomy in decision-making develop more self-efficacy since they feel more control over their professional development. These findings show that empowering workplaces significantly increase self-belief and inspire employees to be leaders by themselves.

In leadership roles especially, where confidence in decision-making and problem-solving is vital, self-efficacy is particularly crucial. Leaders who feel psychologically empowered show more self-efficacy than those in constrained workplace (Kim & Beehr, 2021). Psychological empowerment creates an environment in which leaders motivate people to follow them, trust their own abilities, and make difficult choices. This positive feedback loop improves general organizational performance, innovation, and adaptability.

In many different professional environments, psychological empowerment also acts as a mediator in the development of self-efficacy. According to Kujtim Hameli, Lekë Ukaj and Lum çollaku (2023), psychological empowerment influenced 40% of the variance in self-efficacy levels among employees. This result emphasizes how employees who feel more empowered often tend to have better self-efficacy, which drives and commits them more in their working environment.

H3: Psychological Empowerment has a significant positive impact on Self-Efficacy.

Impact of Resilience and Self efficacy on Champion Behaviour

Champion behavior among employees depends much on resilience. Individuals with high resilience are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors, advocate for positive change, and drive innovation within their organizations. Research indicates that resilient employees are more likely to take initiative in problem-solving and more likely to support organizational change efforts (Long, Cooke, & Mavondo, 2025).

In competitive and high-pressure work environments, resilience enables employees to sustain motivation and navigate workplace challenges effectively. Resilient individuals are less likely to be discouraged by obstacles, making them more willing to take ownership of projects, introduce innovative solutions, and champion organizational initiatives. According to Rao, Koneru, Naresh Nebhineni, & Mishra (2024), resilience also correlates with emotional intelligence, which further strengthens employees' ability to manage stress and sustain a forward-thinking mindset—both essential qualities of a champion employee.

Moreover, resilience is closely linked to adaptability. Employees with higher resilience can adjust to rapidly changing organizational structures and technological advancements. This adaptability allows them to act as change agents, influencing team members and advocating for progress. A study on workplace resilience found that organizations with highly resilient employees experienced a significant increase in transformational leadership practices and a also got rise in internal innovation proposals (Karimi, Malek, Farani, & Liobikienė, 2023). These findings imply that resilience is not only a personal characteristic but also a force behind collective organizational development.

A major psychological factor of Champion Behavior is self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their capacity to complete activities and reach goals. High self-efficacy employees are more confident in taking leadership roles, making strategic decisions, and overcoming challanges. Strong self-efficacy individuals are more likely to solve problems and more willing to support creative ideas in the workplace (Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022).

Self-efficacy also makes employees more likely to be willing to take calculated risks, which is an important part of being a champion. Research by Klasmeier et al. (2025) found that high self-efficacy employees were particularly more likely to recommend and carry out organizational reforms since they trusted their ability to carry out these projects successfully. This is consistent with research showing that self-efficacy not only promotes individual success but also motivates others in the organization to have a similar attitude (Long, Cooke, & Mavondo 2025).

Moreover, self-efficacy influences how individuals manage pressure and stress at their workplace. High-efficacy employees are more suited to handling

difficult tasks without burning out or disengagement. Organizations who aggressively foster self-efficacy among employees noticed greater levels of engagement and lower turnover rates. This implies that maintaining long-term champion behavior depends critically on self-efficacy since it helps employees to keep high performance without giving in to workplace exhaustion.

Although self-efficacy and resilience each help to foster champion behavior, when combined their influence is far stronger. Individuals with both characteristics not only can overcome challenges but also feel confidence in their ability to bring about significant transformation. Research by Khahan, Vrabcová, Prompong and Nattapong, (2024) shows that organizations that encourage resilience and self-efficacy among employees see an increase in proactive workplace activities and improvement in leadership development programs. Furthermore, the interaction of resilience with self-efficacy improves employees' ability to influence their colleagues. High self-efficacy employees set an example while resilience allows them stand hard in the face of adversity or criticism. This dynamic makes them successful champions for change, able to motivate others and maintain long-term progress.

H4: Resilience has a significant positive impact on Champion Behavior.

H5: Self-Efficacy has a significant positive impact on Champion Behavior.

Sequential Mediation

One significant mechanism by which adaptive leadership encourages champion behavior among employees is psychological empowerment. Leaders who exhibit adaptive leadership traits encourage autonomy, foster employee competence, and provide meaningful work, leading to an increase in employees' psychological empowerment (Hermann & Helmersen, 2020). Employees who feel psychologically empowered exhibit a greater sense of purpose and commitment, which translates into championing behaviors such as advocating for organizational change and promoting innovative solutions (Kranthi, Rai, & Showry, 2024).

Research indicates that psychological empowerment significantly enhances employees' intrinsic motivation, making them more likely to take ownership of organizational initiatives (Rasheed, Rashid, & Tunio, 2025). Employees in organizations with high levels of psychological empowerment exhibit more champion behavior compared to those in traditional

work environments. This suggests that psychological empowerment not only fosters workplace engagement but also strengthens employees' confidence in influencing organizational decisions.

Moreover, leaders who promote psychological empowerment create an environment where employees feel valued and recognized, increasing their willingness to challenge the status quo and advocate for positive change. This empowerment-driven commitment to transformation is a defining characteristic of champion behavior. (Negru, 2024)

Empowered employees are more likely to develop resilience, as they feel a greater sense of control over their professional circumstances and are better prepared to manage workplace challenges (Monje Amor, Xanthopoulou, Calvo, & Abeal Vázquez, 2021). Increased levels of psychological empowerment also result in an increase in resilience, which helps employees to persist despite resistance or failure (Taha- yacine NAQACH & Farid CHAOUki, 2023). Employees who are resilient are more likely to take the risks associated with being a champion, like coming up with new ideas, leading workplace initiatives, and questioning the norms of the organization (Caniëls, Marjolein C. J. & Simone, 2019).

Moreover, maintaining champion behavior across time depends much on resilience. Employees who have both psychological empowerment and resilience continue to advocate for change despite setbacks or organizational inertia (Goksoy, 2017). This implies that resilience serves as a stabilizing factor, strengthening the relationship between empowerment and champion behavior, so ensuring long-term employee engagement and leadership.

High levels of psychological empowerment help employees to gain confidence and motivation, which promotes resilience and ultimately drives champion behavior. Furthermore, according to Zhou and Chenorganizations (2021), organizations focused on psychological empowerment and resilience-building initiatives witnessed a rise in innovation-driven employee initiatives. This finding supports the argument that psychological empowerment by itself cannot inspire champion behavior unless it is accompanied by resilience, which helps employees to be committed during difficult circumstances.

H6: Psychological Empowerment and Resilience sequentially mediate the relationship between Adaptive Leadership and Champion Behavior.

Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks, is another critical factor mediating the relationship between adaptive leadership and champion behavior (Stanescu, Zbuchea, & Pinzaru, 2020). Employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of challenges, take calculated risks, and champion new ideas.

Employees with high self-efficacy exhibitd a 39% increase in their ability to propose and implement innovative changes (Aruoren Emmanuel Ejiroghene, Odiri Vincent Ivwighrevero, & President, 2023). Adaptive leaders enhance self-efficacy by creating an environment that encourages experimentation, learning, and professional growth. When leaders provide continuous feedback and opportunities for skill development, employees gain the confidence needed to engage in champion behavior.

Additionally, self-efficacy influences employees' ability to inspire and influence their colleagues. Employees with strong self-efficacy are 46% more likely to take leadership roles in organizational change initiatives (Musaigwa, 2023). This suggests that self-efficacy does not only drives personal achievement but also motivates employees to become internal change agents.

Employees who feel psychologically empowered tend to develop higher self- efficacy, which further reinforces their willingness to engage in champion behavior. Employees who experience high psychological empowerment are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities, which in turn strengthens their commitment to driving change. This dynamic interplay suggests that leadership interventions aimed at increasing both empowerment and self- efficacy will yield the most significant impact on champion behavior. Organizations that actively enhance both psychological empowerment and self- efficacy experience an increase in innovation-driven employee initiatives. This supports the notion that empowerment alone may not be sufficient, self-efficacy is necessary to translate empowerment into actionable champion behavior.

H7: Psychological Empowerment and Self- Efficacy sequentially mediate the relationship between Adaptive Leadership and Champion Behavior.

Figure 1. Research Framework
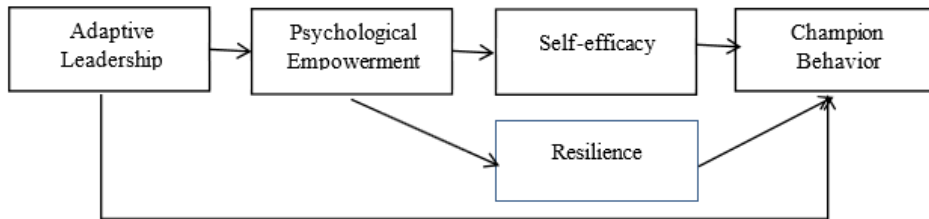
METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Procedure

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between adaptive leadership and champion behavior through the mediating roles of psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience. A positivist research philosophy was adopted, emphasizing objectivity, empirical measurement, and statistical validation of hypotheses. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used, targeting employees in public sector organizations who were in positions that allowed them to experience and evaluate leadership influences directly. This sampling approach ensured the inclusion of respondents who possessed relevant knowledge and exposure to the study constructs. Data were collected using a time-lagged survey design to reduce common method bias and enhance the reliability of responses. Participants were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire across four phases: each one week apart. Specifically, Time 1 measured Adaptive Leadership, Time 2 measured Psychological Empowerment, Time 3 measured Self-Efficacy and Resilience, and Time 4 measured Champion Behavior. This phased approach reduced social desirability and recall biases, helping to isolate the measurement of each construct. The final sample included 309 respondents from multiple departments within public sector organizations. The survey instrument consisted of standardized scales adapted from previous literature. All items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. This scale facilitated consistent responses and enabled effective statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Instrumentation

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. The survey employed a five-point Likert scale, where (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire consisted of multiple sections, each designed to measure one of the study's variables. The survey instrument included validated scales adopted from previous well-established studies to ensure the reliability and credibility of the measures.

The breakdown of the survey's instrument is as follows:

- Adaptive Leadership: This variable was measured using the Adaptive leadership baheviour scale (ALBS) developed by Nöthel, Nübold, Uitdewilligen, Schepers, and Hülsheger (2023), which captures leaders' ability to adjust their behaviors to changing work environments. The said scale consists of 7 items.
- Psychological Empowerment: The Spreitzer (1995) Psychological Empowerment Scale was used, which consisted of upon 4 items since the article used only self- determination related items because of the context of the study.
- Self-Efficacy: Measured using Schwarzer and Jerusalems's (1995) General Self-Efficacy Scale, which evaluates individuals' confidence in handling difficult situations. It consists of 10-items.
- Resilience: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Connor & Davidson (2003) was used to measure employees' ability to recover from stress and adversity. The said scale consists upon 6- items.
- Champion Behavior: This construct was assessed using the scale developed by Howell and Shea (2005), which examines proactive advocacy, initiative, and persistence in promoting innovative ideas within the organization. It was assessed by using 4 items.

The use of previously validated measurement scales enhances the validity of the study, ensuring that the constructs measured align with the theoretical framework.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) software was used to test the proposed relationships between variables. AMOS is widely utilized for structural equation modeling (SEM), which allows researchers to analyze complex relationships between multiple variables simultaneously. The software provides confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) capabilities to test the measurement model and ensure that all constructs exhibit adequate validity and reliability. This comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis strengthens the study's ability to generate credible and generalizable results, contributing valuable insights into study.

Results and Analysis of Demographic profile

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 309 respondents in the study. The sample consists of 75.7% (n=234) males and 24.3% (n=75) females, indicating a male-dominated respondent pool. In terms of age distribution, 44.7% (n=138) of participants fell within the 25-30 age group, followed by 39.8% (n=123) in the 31-35 range, and 15.5% (n=48) in the 36-40 category. Regarding work experience, 51.5% (n=159) of respondents have 0-5 years of experience, while 40.8% (n=126) have 6-10 years, and only 7.8% (n=24) possess more than 11 years of experience. The educational qualifications show that 69.3% (n=214) of the respondents hold a master's degree, while 30.7% (n=95) have a bachelor's degree. These statistics indicate that the majority of the participants are young professionals with relatively low work experience but higher educational qualifications.

Table 1. Demographics (n=309)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender				
Male	234	75.7	75.7	75.7
Female	75	24.3	24.3	100.0
Age				
25-30	138	44.7	44.7	44.7
31-35	123	39.8	39.8	84.5

36-40	48	15.5	15.5	100.0
Experience				
0-5	159	51.5	51.5	51.5
6-10	126	40.8	40.8	92.2
11 and Above	24	7.8	7.8	100.0
Education				
Bachelor	95	30.7	30.7	30.7
Master	214	69.3	69.3	100.0

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the study variables based on 309 respondents. The mean values indicate the average responses for each variable, with Adaptive Leadership (M = 4.0233, SD = 0.60649) showing the highest mean, suggesting a generally positive perception of leadership adaptability. Resilience (M = 2.2794, SD = 0.76268) has the lowest mean, indicating a lower level of resilience among respondents. Self-Efficacy (M = 3.7553, SD = 0.64668) and Champion Behavior (M = 3.6465, SD = 0.72931) have moderate mean values, reflecting balanced responses. Psychological Empowerment (M = 3.3552, SD = 0.94869) has the highest standard Table 2. Descriptives (n=309) deviation, implying a wider variation in responses compared to other variables.

The skewness values show that Adaptive Leadership (-0.627), Self-Efficacy (-0.767), and Psychological Empowerment (-0.352) are negatively skewed, indicating that responses are slightly skewed toward higher values. Meanwhile, Resilience (0.890) and Champion Behavior (-0.934) show a more varied distribution. Kurtosis values indicate data distribution characteristics, with Self- Efficacy (1.846) and Champion Behavior (1.482) having the highest kurtosis, suggesting a more peaked distribution. The descriptive analysis confirms that all values fall within an acceptable range, ensuring normal data distribution.

Table 2. Descriptives (n=309)

Mean		Std.	Skewness Kurtosis			
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Adaptive Leadership	4.0233	.60649	-.627	.139	1.217	.276
Resilience	2.2794	.76268	.890	.139	.987	.276
Self-Efficacy	3.7553	.64668	-.767	.139	1.846	.276
Champion Behavior	3.6456	.72931	-.934	.139	1.482	.276
Psychological Empowerment	3.3552	.94869	-.352	.139	-.930	.276

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between independent, dependent, and mediating variables in the study. The results indicate that Adaptive Leadership has a positive and significant correlation with Psychological Empowerment (r = .201, p < .01), Resilience (r = .218, p < .01), Self- Efficacy (r = .513, p < .01), and Champion Behavior (r = .408, p < .01), suggesting that adaptive leadership positively influences these variables.

Psychological Empowerment is positively correlated with Self-Efficacy (r = .282, p < .01) and Champion Behavior (r = .523, p < .01), indicating that employees who feel psychologically empowered tend to have higher self-efficacy and are more likely to 'exhibit champion behavior. Similarly, Resilience shows a weak but significant correlation with Self-Efficacy (r = .206, p < .05) and Champion Behavior (r = .138, p < .05). Self-Efficacy is strongly correlated with Champion Behavior (r = .383, p < .01), supporting the notion that employees with greater self-confidence are more inclined to champion organizational initiatives.

The correlation values fell below the .80 threshold, confirming the absence of multicollinearity concerns. These findings provide initial support for the hypothesized relationships, suggesting that Adaptive Leadership, through

Psychological Empowerment, Resilience, and Self- Efficacy, plays a critical role in fostering Champion Behavior among employees.

Table 3. Correlation (n=309)

	1	2	4	4	5
1. Adaptive Leadership	1				
2. Psychological Empowerment	.201**	1			
3. Resilience	.218**	.113*	1		
4. Self- Efficacy	.513**	.282**	.206**	1	
5. Champion Behavior	.408**	.523**	.138*	.383**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents the regression and mediation analysis results, assessing the indirect effects of Adaptive Leadership on Champion Behavior through Psychological Empowerment, Resilience, and Self- Efficacy. The results show that Adaptive Leadership has a significant positive impact on Psychological Empowerment (β = .314, p < .001), indicating that leaders who adapt to changing environments foster empowerment among employees. Additionally, Psychological Empowerment significantly influences Resilience (β = .113, p = .025) and Self-Efficacy (β = .192, p < .001), suggesting that empowered employees develop resilience and confidence in their abilities. Furthermore, Resilience positively impacts Champion Behavior (β = .134, p = .002), and Self-Efficacy also shows a strong effect on Champion Behavior (β = .277, p < .001), confirming that resilient and confident employees are more likely to exhibit champion behavior.

The direct effect of Adaptive Leadership on Champion Behavior remains significant (β = .310, p < .001), indicating partial mediation. The indirect effects further support the sequential mediation of Psychological Empowerment and Resilience (β =.464, .004, .468, p < .01) and Psychological Empowerment and Self- Efficacy (β = .364, .016, .362, p < .01). These findings confirm that Adaptive

Leadership fosters Champion Behavior by first empowering employees and enhancing their resilience and self-efficacy, leading them to take initiative and drive change.

Table 4. Regression and Mediation Analysis (n=309)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Psychological Empowerment	☐	Adaptive Leadership	.314	.087	3.593	***
Resilience	☐	Psychological Empowerment	.113	.050	2.244	.025
Self- Efficacy	☐	Psychological Empowerment	.192	.037	5.165	***
Champion Behavior	☐	Resilience	.134	.043	3.101	.002
Champion Behavior	☐	Self- Efficacy	.277	.056	4.907	***
Champion Behavior	☐	Adaptive Leadership	.310	.060	5.150	***

*Note: ***P<0.000, Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of IV on DV with Mediation of Psychological Empowerment, and Resilience (.464, .004, .468) respectively. Similarly, Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of IV on DV with Mediation of Psychological Empowerment, and Self-Efficacy (.364, .016, .362) respectively.*

Figure 2. Path Model
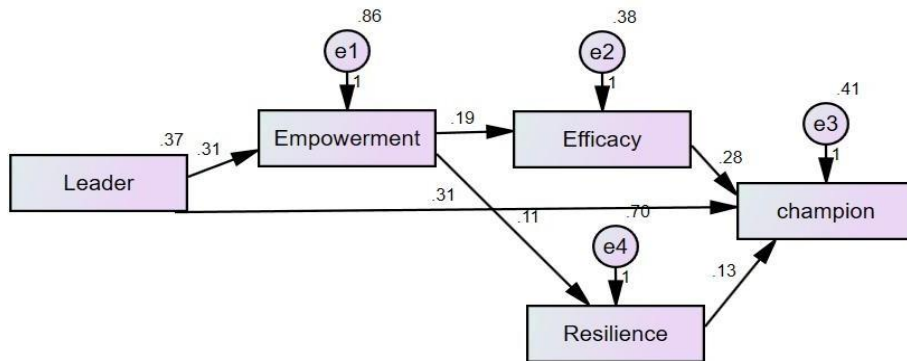
DISCUSSION

Employees who are Psychologically empowered enhance organizational success by promoting innovation, proactive decision-making, and sustained engagement in workplace improvements (Malik & Khan, 2019). An individual's psychological capital, including resilience, self-efficacy, hope, and empowerment, is influenced by various factors such as workplace environment, organizational culture, and leadership. Among all various factors, leadership style is one of the crucial factors that can motivate employees to lead workplace transformations and take initiatives for organizational success (Malik & Khan, 2019). Research by Sharma, Layes, Esposito, & Akbar (2025) stated that among all leadership styles, adaptive leadership promotes a culture of flexibility, learning, and problem-solving, which enhances employees' ability to take initiative and lead workplace transformations. The positive correlation between adaptive leadership and psychological empowerment found in the study by Chompukum and Vanichbuncha (2025), (β = .314, p < .001) supports the argument that leaders who provide autonomy and opportunities for participation increase employees' sense of competence and control, motivating them to engage in proactive behaviors. Additionally, a study highlighted that employees who feel empowered develop confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy) and a stronger capacity to recover from challenges (resilience), enabling them to champion organizational initiatives even in uncertain environments (Md Abul Mohaimen, Mahmud, Hassan, Amin, & Roy, 2025). A study by Gonzalez & Marakhovska (2024), highlighted that psychological empowerment improves employees' sense of purpose, improving

resilience and determination in implementing workplace transformation. Moreover, resilience and self-efficacy help champion behavior, supporting employees with more psychological empowerment and belief in their ability to take ownership, advocate for good change, and inspire innovation (Rao, Koneru, Nebhineni, & Mishra, 2024). Long, Cooke, & Mavondo (2025) found that employees with Higher resilience and self- efficacy engage in champion behavior at a 40% higher rate than less confident employees. Another research emphasizes the direct effect of adaptive leadership on champion behavior, focusing that while leadership shapes workplace behaviors, it is the psychological mechanisms of empowerment, resilience, and self-efficacy that sustain long-term engagement and innovation (Sott & Bender, 2025).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers play a vital role in promoting an environment that increases psychological empowerment, resilience, and self-efficacy, ultimately leading to champion behavior among employees. Organizations should implement leadership development programs that promote adaptive leadership styles, as leaders who support autonomy and employee development create a more engaged and active workforce. Furthermore, managers should provide skill-building opportunities and give regular feedback to strengthen employees' confidence and decision-making abilities. To maximize organizational outcomes, it is important to develop strategies that increase resilience by promoting a organizational culture that supports adaptability and stress management. Organizations should also encourage open communication, participatory decision-making, and a transparent work environment to improve employees' psychological capital. By incorporating these managerial practices, organizations can increase innovation, employee advocacy, and long-term organizational success.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to academic literature by extending the application of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory to the context of adaptive leadership and champion behavior within public sector organizations. By integrating psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and resilience as sequential mediators, the research advances theoretical understanding of how internal psychological

resources are developed through leadership behaviors. The findings provide empirical evidence supporting the idea that adaptive leadership acts as a resource generator, which in turn fosters other vital psychological capacities leading to proactive and innovative behaviors among employees. Additionally, the study offers a nuanced perspective on leadership effectiveness in complex and bureaucratic organizational settings, specifically within the public sector. This contributes to leadership literature by shifting the focus from traditional to adaptive leadership models and highlights the mechanisms through which champion behavior is cultivated in resource-constrained environments.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study offers insightful analysis with all the hypotheses that have been accepted, there are certain limitations that needs to be acknowledged. The study made use of self-reported data, which can cause common method bias even with time-lagged data collecting efforts aimed at reducing it. Future research could incorporate multi- source data collection methods, such as supervisor or peer evaluations, to enhance objectivity. Additionally, the study was conducted in public sector organizations, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries. Future research should explore private sector organizations or conduct cross-industry comparisons to validate the model's applicability in different contexts. Furthermore, while the study established sequential mediation effects, it did not examine potential moderating variables, such as organizational culture, job complexity, or leadership tenure, which could influence the strength of these relationships. Future research should explore these factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership's impact on champion behavior.

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