

Well-Being as a Bridge: Linking Self-Esteem and Adaptability to Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability in the context of organisational change, with a focus on employees in the IT sector. Given the rapid technological advancements, the shift to remote working, and the frequent restructuring of teams in the IT industry, the ability to adapt to change is critical for both individual and organisational success. Six hypotheses were tested, examining direct associations, group differences, and the mediating role of well-being. Data was collected from a sample of 98 employees in the IT sector during March and April 2025. The findings revealed significant positive correlations between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to organisational change. Contrary to expectations, women reported higher self-esteem levels than men, and no significant gender differences were found in terms of well-being. Employees in managerial positions demonstrated significantly higher levels of both self-esteem and well-being compared to their non-managerial counterparts. Additionally, well-being was identified as a mediator in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability, underscoring its crucial role in supporting employees' ability to adjust to change in dynamic work environments. These findings have important implications for organisations, particularly in the IT sector, where change is constant. Interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and well-being could play a significant role in fostering employees' adaptability, ultimately leading to more effective responses to organisational change. Furthermore, these insights may inform the development of support systems that help employees manage the psychological challenges associated with constant change, thereby improving both individual and organisational performance.

KEYWORDS: *well-being, organisational change, adaptability, self-esteem, management.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *D91, I31, M12, M15.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, employee well-being has emerged as a central focus in organisational research, not only as an outcome of favourable workplace conditions but also as a key psychological resource aimed at improving performance, motivation, and organisational adaptability. In this context, understanding how well-being interacts with other internal resources such as self-esteem and adaptability to change becomes essential for fostering healthy and effective work environments.

In an increasingly unstable and unpredictable work environment, psychological resources play a crucial role in maintaining emotional balance and employee performance. One of these fundamental resources is self-esteem, which reflects a person's overall assessment of their own qualities and competencies. It includes both a cognitive component, related to self-evaluation,

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and an emotional dimension, which expresses how the individual feels about themselves. High self-esteem is associated with confidence in one's abilities, personal satisfaction, and the capacity to cope with challenges. Another key resource is adaptability, which refers to a person's ability to respond effectively to change, uncertainty, and new situations. In a professional context marked by accelerated digitalisation, global crises, and ongoing organisational transformations, adaptability has become crucial to individual and collective success.

Recent research shows that self-esteem and adaptability are interdependent and contribute significantly to employees' psychological health, job satisfaction, and career development. Understanding these concepts and how they interact provides a valuable framework for promoting well-being and effectiveness in organisations. However, employee well-being may not only result from self-esteem and influence adaptability, but also function as a psychological bridge between the two. This mediating role positions well-being as a central mechanism that helps explain how internal self-evaluations translate into real behavioural outcomes in times of change. This study explores these interrelationships and proposes a model in which well-being mediates the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability to organisational change, offering new insights into employee development and support strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Self-Esteem, Well-Being, and Adaptability in the Organisational Context

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing work environment, adaptability is increasingly recognised as a key determinant of both individual and organisational success. The ability to adapt is deeply influenced by internal psychological resources such as self-esteem and well-being. Self-esteem, reflecting an individual's self-perception and confidence, plays a crucial role in how employees approach change, while well-being supports resilience and openness to new opportunities. These psychological resources can synergistically empower individuals to engage effectively with change, manage stress, and maintain performance, making them critical in fostering adaptability in organisational settings.

Self-esteem refers to the general way in which a person evaluates his or her own qualities and competences. It is a mental image that everyone constructs about themselves and maintains over time (Rosenberg, 1965). According to Korman (1970), self-esteem reflects the extent to which a person perceives him/herself as being able to fulfill their own needs and as being effective in what they do. People with high self-esteem see themselves as good enough and feel that they have been able to fulfil their needs in the past (Korman, 1966; Korman, 1970).

In addition to the cognitive, self-evaluative part, self-esteem also has an emotional dimension – the way a person feels about themselves. People with high self-esteem feel a genuine appreciation of themselves (Pelham & Swann, 1989).

Most of the research in the field has focused on general self-esteem, but lately, more attention has been paid to its specific form in organisational contexts (Brockner, 1988). Positive peer relationships and team support play a crucial role in maintaining employees' psychological health and contribute significantly to their overall well-being (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024).

Adaptability is essential in unstable work contexts; in a work environment marked by rapid change, such as pandemics, technology, or digitisation, employees' ability to adapt is crucial for organisational as well as individual success (Hoang & Le, 2024). Adaptability to uncertainty is

a valuable psychological resource because it involves the ability to manage unforeseen situations efficiently, to change direction in the face of the unknown, and to operate with confidence in the absence of complete information.

Research has shown that adaptability mediates the effects of individual traits on performance. It functions as an intermediary link between proactive personality and ambidextrous behaviours that lead to high service performance (Hoang & Le, 2024). Moreover, playful work design can strengthen adaptability to change in organisations. Employees who make their tasks more enjoyable and challenging through elements of play or self-competition manage to develop increased psychological flexibility and better adaptability to change.

Career adaptability, a broader psychological component, refers to the set of resources used to cope with career-related challenges, transitions, and tasks (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It is not a stable trait, but develops through dynamic interactions between the individual and the professional environment. Studies have shown that high levels of adaptability are associated with career satisfaction and subjective well-being (McKenna et al., 2016; Konstam et al., 2015), as well as with success in managing occupational uncertainty (Guan et al., 2013).

Proactive personality favours the development of adaptability, as employees with proactive traits are more likely to anticipate change, embrace uncertainty, and seek innovative solutions, which increases their adaptability (Hoang & Le, 2024). Proactive personality is found to be an important predictor of ambidextrous behaviour at work, as proactive employees are more likely to seek opportunities for learning improvement, take initiative, and adapt quickly to change. Thus, employees manage to effectively combine the actions of exploitation (utilising existing knowledge) and exploration (searching for new solutions), which increases their performance in service-type activities.

The ability of employees to adapt to changes in the work environment, emphasised in the post-COVID period, directly influences their level of satisfaction and well-being, and perceptions of job security play a key role in this process (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024). Well-being is no longer seen merely as the absence of distress, but as a dynamic state that supports resilience, engagement, and openness to change. According to Radu et al. (2020), well-being is not just a result of favourable workplace conditions, but a psychological resource that enhances performance, motivation, and organisational adaptability. This concept emphasises that an employee's well-being plays a crucial role in maintaining emotional balance and maintaining long-term job performance.

In terms of problems, previous studies show a gradual decline in both forms of self-esteem – cognitive and emotional – during the first three years in an organisation, influenced by the transition from initial enthusiasm to realistic adaptation to the work routine (Filosa & Alessandri, 2023). Moreover, Radu (2023) explores how internal saboteurs, such as negative self-perceptions and emotional barriers, can significantly affect employees' well-being and their work performance. The interaction between self-esteem and well-being can buffer these barriers, facilitating higher adaptability in dynamic work environments.

This multi-faceted understanding of self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability highlights the interconnectedness between these variables. Higher self-esteem leads to better psychological well-being, which in turn fosters greater adaptability to change. The findings from Radu et al. (2020) reinforce this perspective by showing that employee investment in their psychological health directly influences both their performance and their adaptability to change.

2.2. Hypotheses Development

Hypothesis 1

The positive interrelationship between the three variables of our study – employee self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change – is complex, with each variable influencing and enhancing the others (three positive correlations). First, high levels of self-esteem have been consistently linked to improved psychological outcomes, such as reduced counterproductive behaviours in the workplace (Lo Presti et al., 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2018) and higher optimism (Agarwal & Majumdar, 2024), thus contributing to enhanced psychological well-being and greater employee engagement.

Second, employees with higher psychological well-being are more likely to respond positively to change, showing lower resistance and higher adaptability (García-Cabrera et al., 2011). Third, self-esteem directly influences adaptability to change by shaping how employees perceive and interact with change initiatives. Those with higher self-esteem tend to approach change with greater confidence and involvement, which helps reduce fear and resistance (García-Cabrera et al., 2011). Therefore, we developed our first hypothesis:

H1. The variables employee self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change are all positively interrelated, so that higher values in one are associated with higher values in the others.

Hypothesis 2

A lot of previous studies indicate significant gender differences in self-esteem levels, with men generally exhibiting higher self-esteem than women across various domains and age groups (Bleidorn et al., 2016), as a result of various factors, such as societal norms, cultural expectations, and individual psychological processes. Interestingly, Gentile et al. (2009) introduced a nuance, showing that there are also specific domains in which the opposite is true, with women scoring higher – for instance, in behavioural conduct and moral-ethical self-esteem. Also, even if we accept as a general trend the fact that men have higher self-esteem, the magnitude of these differences varies significantly across cultures (Bleidorn et al., 2016).

The most commonly identified influencing factors are social and cultural norms, as well as psychological factors. For instance, societal expectations often place more emphasis on physical appearance for women, which can negatively impact their self-esteem (Jannah et al., 2025). Moreover, women tend to ruminate more than men – idea supported by neurological studies showing different brain activity patterns related to self-esteem between genders (Miyamoto & Kikuchi, 2012). Based on these findings from previous literature, we developed the second hypothesis:

H2. There are significant gender differences in self-esteem levels, with men reporting higher self-esteem than women

Hypothesis 3

Research on gender differences in well-being is very interesting, and we generally find a kind of paradox: women report higher life satisfaction despite experiencing more negative emotions (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2023). This paradox highlights that women may feel happier and more satisfied with their lives, even though they report being less cheerful and lonelier. Although some studies indicate that men may report higher levels of well-being, especially in areas such as autonomy and self-acceptance (Yudiani et al., 2024), women generally excel in personal growth and positive relationships. Across 166 countries, women were found to have higher life satisfaction than men in most demographic groups, although

this trend reversed in sub-Saharan Africa and among older age groups (Joshani & Jovanović, 2020). Our third hypothesis in this study is:

H3. There are significant gender differences in well-being levels, with women reporting higher well-being than men.

Hypothesis 4

Managerial roles often require higher levels of self-esteem due to the responsibilities and decision-making involved. Therefore, managers are typically expected to demonstrate confidence and leadership, which are closely linked to self-esteem (Gierczak & Żylicz, 2017). Managers with high self-esteem are more open to challenges and less risk-averse. In addition, they are more likely to engage in self-management, a key component of emotional intelligence, which positively influences their self-esteem. Another important factor is the impact of professional success, since a higher level of self-esteem is more likely to lead to advancement into managerial positions due to employees' demonstrated capabilities. Previous studies also show that managers often prefer intrinsic motivators, which are associated with higher self-esteem, whereas non-managers tend to favour extrinsic motivators. This preference for intrinsic motivators aligns with the higher self-esteem observed in managerial roles (Savery, 1988). The commitment of employees, influenced by self-esteem, plays a significant role in organisational effectiveness. High self-esteem enhances affective and normative commitment, both of which are crucial for organisational success (Johar et al., 2018). Based on all the above, we formulated our fourth hypothesis:

H4. Employees in managerial positions have significantly higher self-esteem levels than those in non-managerial positions.

Hypothesis 5

Previous research indicates that managerial roles often correlate with higher well-being due to factors such as status, income, increased autonomy, purpose, and organisational support. Managerial positions typically come with greater organisational support for advancement, promotion, and compensation, which are strongly associated with higher work well-being. This support improves positive affect and personal fulfilment while reducing negative affect, contributing to overall well-being in managerial roles (Sant'anna et al., 2012).

Managers, along with business owners and professionals, generally report higher levels of well-being compared to individuals in non-managerial roles, in some cases even after controlling for income and demographic factors (Stiehl et al., 2019). Managers also play a crucial role in fostering a positive work environment, which is linked to higher job satisfaction and well-being (Aliyari, 2024; Grant et al., 2007).

While managerial positions are generally associated with higher well-being, it is also important to consider potential downsides. For instance, while such roles may enhance certain aspects of well-being, such as purpose and financial security, they may also increase stress or reduce work-life balance, which highlights the complexity of well-being in managerial contexts (Grant et al., 2007). However, based on the general trends, our fifth hypothesis in this study is:

H5. Employees in managerial positions have significantly higher well-being levels than those in non-managerial positions.

Hypothesis 6

Taken together, previous research highlights a consistent pattern: self-esteem contributes to well-being, which in turn facilitates adaptability to change – emphasising the mutual

reinforcement among these variables (Lo Presti et al., 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2018; García-Cabrera et al., 2011). While we believe that self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to organisational change are correlated – and we also agree that these relationships are complex and not only unidirectional – we propose that well-being serves as a mediator in the relationship between the other two variables.

For instance, it does so by reducing resistance to change, which is often a barrier to successful adaptability. Resistance to change often stems from discomfort, fear, or a lack of confidence in the ability to cope with new circumstances. When managed effectively, reduced resistance to change reflects psychological well-being, thus facilitating greater adaptability (Zehra & Siddiqui, 2019).

Additionally, prior research has shown that career adaptability – which in some models is a component of well-being – is crucial in helping employees navigate changes in their work environment. It functions as a preventive resource that partially mediates the relationship between self-esteem and the presence of meaning in life, which is essential for adapting to organisational changes (Gori et al., 2022). Based on the above, we developed our sixth hypothesis, which is also the central one in our study:

H6. Employee well-being serves as a mediator in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability to organisational change.

3. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

3.1. Instruments

We used three measurement scales, one for each of the analysed variables. Descriptive information and internal consistency coefficients for each scale are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of scales and internal consistency

	Variable	Scale used	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Well-being	Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2014)	23	0.859
2	Self-esteem	Organisation-Based Self Esteem – OBSE (Pierce & Gardner, 2004; Pierce et al., 1989)	10	0.956
3	Adaptability to organisational change	The nine items measuring adaptivity from Griffin's Performance Scale (Griffin et al., 2007)	9	0.950

Source: Author's compilation

All three scales demonstrated very good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.85.

3.2. Participants

The present research focused on employees' self-esteem and adaptability to organisational change within the Information Technology (IT) sector. This field was chosen due to its critical role in the modern economy, being one of the most innovative and fast-evolving industries. IT professionals frequently encounter demands such as continuous learning, process updates, system upgrades, and organisational restructuring.

The final sample consisted of 98 valid responses, collected through an online questionnaire. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 52 years. Of the total respondents, 67 were women (68.4%) and 31 were men (31.6%). In terms of organisational roles, 27 respondents (27.6%) held managerial positions, while 71 (72.4%) were non-managerial employees. Only these 98 completed and validated questionnaires were included in the analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, aiming to investigate the relationships between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change among employees in the Information Technology (IT) sector. The data was collected through an online questionnaire, distributed via a Google Forms link. The questionnaire was shared with individuals working in the Information Technology (IT) sector, targeting both managerial and non-managerial employees. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their informed consent before proceeding.

Data collection took place over the period March-April 2025, and a total of 98 valid responses were included in the final dataset. For the data analysis, we used a series of quantitative methods. We started with descriptive statistics, especially in order to understand the normality of the data and to further use the proper tests for the hypotheses. The analyses were performed using JASP 0.19.3.0, a reliable statistical software, ensuring statistical accuracy and interpretability of results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

To better understand the distribution of the key variables in the study—self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change—descriptive statistics were calculated, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values. These are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis

	Indicator	Well-being	Self-esteem	Adaptability
1	Mean	8.135	36.306	35.816
2	Standard Deviation	1.421	7.505	7.946
3	Skewness	-1.396	-0.774	-0.607
4	Kurtosis	2.591	-0.309	-0.510
5	P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	< .001	< .001
6	Minimum	1.810	18.000	18.000
7	Maximum	10.000	45.000	45.000

Source: authors' compilation

Following the descriptive analysis, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of distribution for each variable. The results indicated that the p-values were all below the .001, suggesting that the distributions deviate significantly from normality.

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

To investigate the relationships between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change, a series of statistical analyses were conducted corresponding to the proposed hypotheses. Given

the non-normal distribution of the variables (as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test), we applied non-parametric methods where appropriate.

H1. The variables employee self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to change are all positively interrelated, so that higher values in one are associated with higher values in the others.

To test the first hypothesis, rho Spearman's rank-order correlation was used. The correlation analysis assessed the relationships between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to organisational change. Results indicate statistically significant positive correlations between all three variables:

- between self-esteem and well-being: $\rho = 0.676$, $p < .001$
- between self-esteem and adaptability: $\rho = 0.500$, $p < .001$
- between well-being and adaptability: $\rho = 0.515$, $p < .001$

These findings strongly support H1, confirming that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem tend to report greater well-being and enhanced adaptability to change. Similarly, employees who experience higher well-being also demonstrate greater adaptability in the organisational context, highlighting the interconnected nature of these variables.

H2. There are significant gender differences in self-esteem levels, with men reporting higher self-esteem than women.

To test this hypothesis, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted, as the data did not meet the assumption of normality, and the gender groups were unequal in size (women = 67; men = 31). The results revealed a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores between men and women, $U = 1504.000$, $p < .001$.

However, contrary to the hypothesis, women reported higher self-esteem (mean rank = 37.91) compared to men (mean rank = 32.84). The effect size, calculated using rank-biserial correlation, was $r = 0.448$, indicating a moderate to strong effect. Therefore, H2 was not supported, as men did not report higher self-esteem than women. On the contrary, the results indicated that women had significantly higher self-esteem scores than men.

H3. There are significant gender differences in well-being levels, with women reporting higher well-being than men.

Mann-Whitney U test was again conducted to assess this difference. The results indicated no statistically significant difference in well-being scores between women and men ($U = 1159.000$, $p = .359$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

H4. Employees in managerial positions have significantly higher self-esteem levels than those in non-managerial positions.

Since data did not meet the assumption of normality, and the gender groups were unequal in size (managers = 27; non-managers = 71), we used the Mann-Whitney U test. The test revealed a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores between the two groups ($U = 1275.500$, $p = .012$). Managers had significantly higher average self-esteem score ($M = 39.370$) than non-managers ($M = 35.141$). The rank biserial correlation was $r = .331$, indicating a moderate effect size. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

H5. Employees in managerial positions have significantly higher well-being levels than those in non-managerial positions.

Mann–Whitney U test indicated a statistically significant difference in well-being scores between the two groups ($U = 1269.500$, $p = .013$). Managers reported higher well-being ($M = 8.821$) than non-managers ($M = 7.874$). The rank biserial correlation was $r = .324$, suggesting a moderate effect size. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

H6. Employee well-being serves as a mediator in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability to organisational change.

We conducted a mediation analysis using path analysis in JASP. Given the non-normal distribution of the variables, a bootstrapping procedure was applied to assess the robustness of the effects. The analysis showed that self-esteem significantly predicted well-being ($\beta = 2.130$), and well-being significantly predicted adaptability ($\beta = 0.139$). However, the direct effect of self-esteem on adaptability ($\beta = 0.204$, $p = .119$) was not statistically significant, suggesting that well-being fully mediates the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability. The indirect effect of self-esteem on adaptability through well-being was significant ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < .001$).

These findings indicate that the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability is fully mediated by employee well-being. In other words, self-esteem contributes to greater adaptability only through its positive impact on well-being. The details of the path coefficients are presented in Table 3, and the breakdown of direct, indirect, and total effects can be found in Table 4.

Table 3. Mediation analysis – path coefficients

	Path	Estimate	Standard Error	z-value	p	95% Lower	95% Upper
1	Well-being → Adaptability	0.139	0.045	3.115	0.002	0.052	0.226
2	Self-esteem → Adaptability	0.204	0.131	1.561	0.119	-0.052	0.461
3	Self-esteem → Well-being	2.130	0.204	10.468	< .001	1.731	2.529

Source: Author's compilation

Table 4. Mediation analysis – direct, indirect, and total effects

	Effects	Estimate	Standard Error	z-value	p	95% Lower	95% Upper
1	<i>Direct effects</i> Self-esteem → Adaptability	0.204	0.131	1.561	0.119	-0.052	0.461
2	<i>Indirect effects</i> Self-esteem → Well-being → Adaptability	0.296	0.099	2.985	0.003	0.102	0.491
3	<i>Total effects</i> Self-esteem → Adaptability	0.500	0.094	5.308	< .001	0.316	0.685

Source: Author's compilation

Hypothesis 6 was supported, confirming the mediating role of well-being in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability.

4.2. Discussions of Results

Our findings supported the majority of the hypotheses, underlining the importance of psychological resources such as self-esteem and well-being in fostering adaptability within organisational settings.

First, the results supported Hypothesis 1, confirming significant positive correlations among self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to organisational change. This aligns with previous literature emphasising the role of internal psychological resources in managing change (Agarwal & Majumdar, 2024; García-Cabrera et al., 2011; Kim & Beehr, 2018; Lo Presti et al., 2020; Radu et al., 2020). Higher self-esteem and well-being were associated with better adaptability, highlighting the importance of these constructs in dynamic organisational environments.

Contrary to Hypothesis 2, men did not report higher self-esteem than women; in fact, the results revealed that women reported significantly higher self-esteem levels. While this finding diverges from some traditional views, it may reflect evolving gender roles and increased confidence among women in the IT field, where resilience and competence are critical. This would rather confirm the idea of Gentile et al. (2009), that showed that for specific domains women score higher.

Hypothesis 3, which predicted higher well-being among women, was not supported, suggesting that well-being levels did not differ significantly between genders in our sample. This might be partially explained by the paradox described by Blanchflower and Bryson (2023), in the sense that more negative emotions do not necessarily associate with a lower level of life and job satisfaction. For sure, subjective well-being is a complex construct that may not always align with objective measures of health and happiness.

Hypothesis 4 was supported: indeed, employees in managerial roles reported significantly higher self-esteem than non-managers. This is consistent with the idea that individuals in leadership positions often develop a stronger sense of personal efficacy, confidence, and leadership, which contributes to higher self-regard (Gierczak & Zylicz, 2017; Korman, 1970). Of course, even if the evidence suggests that managers generally have higher self-esteem, it is important to consider that self-esteem is not actually a result of one's position within an organisation. Thus, we consider it is actually more likely for a higher self-esteem to be a cause of promotion than an effect of it.

Similarly, Hypothesis 5 was confirmed, with managers reporting significantly higher well-being levels, in line with previous literature (Aliyari, 2024; Grant et al., 2007; Sant'anna et al., 2012; Stiehl et al., 2019). The pressures and responsibilities of leadership may be offset by increased autonomy, status, and perceived purpose, factors often associated with improved psychological well-being.

The most central result relates to Hypothesis 6, which proposed a mediating role of well-being in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability. The mediation analysis revealed that well-being fully mediated this relationship, as the direct path from self-esteem to adaptability was not statistically significant, while the indirect effect through well-being was strong and significant. This suggests that self-esteem influences adaptability primarily by enhancing well-being, which in turn promotes openness and resilience to change. These findings extend previous research (Lo Presti et al., 2020; Kim & Beehr, 2018; García-Cabrera et al., 2011), by offering empirical evidence for this psychological mechanism in the context of organisational change.

Our study supports a model in which psychological well-being acts as a bridge between self-esteem and adaptive behaviour in the workplace. This reinforces the notion that fostering

well-being should be a strategic priority for organisations aiming to enhance employee adaptability and performance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Our study aimed to explore the relationship between self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability in the context of organisational change, with a focus on employees in the IT sector. In IT, change is a constant and can manifest in various forms, such as the introduction of new technologies, the transition to remote working, or the restructuring of teams. These types of changes underscore the importance of adaptability, as they require employees to quickly adjust to new ways of working and collaborating. We tested six hypotheses, examining both direct associations and group differences, as well as a mediating mechanism involving well-being. The findings provide valuable insights into the psychological dynamics that influence adaptability at work:

- there are significant positive correlations among self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability to organisational change;
- in the IT sector, women reported higher self-esteem levels than men, while in terms of well-being, there were no differences between genders;
- employees in managerial positions demonstrated higher levels of both self-esteem and well-being compared to non-managers;
- well-being acts as a mediator in the relationship between self-esteem and adaptability.

We consider that our findings are promising, yet we need to acknowledge a series of limitations. First, we used a cross-sectional design, which actually restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between variables. Also, we had quite a modest sample size ($N = 98$), which limits generalisability of the findings, particularly in representing the broader IT workforce. Data were collected during a specific period (March-April 2025), and responses may have varied if the survey had been conducted during other times with significant organisational changes, potentially influencing employees' perceptions of self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability. Furthermore, as with any self-report measure, the data may be influenced by biases such as social desirability or subjective interpretation. Lastly, when comparing groups, gender and managerial status were unevenly distributed, which may have influenced the comparisons.

This research made us reflect on a series of future studies that could build upon the present findings. The first and easiest to implement would be to expand the sample to include a broader and more diverse range of industries and organisational levels. It would be valuable to investigate in more detail the variations across different branches within the IT sector, as there may be significant differences in how employees experience and adapt to organisational change. For example, employees working in IT support may have different perspectives and challenges compared to those in software development or system administration, which could influence their levels of self-esteem, well-being, and adaptability. Then, we would like to explore additional psychological or contextual variables (e.g., organisational culture, perceived support, emotional intelligence) that may influence adaptability. We would also like to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to assess causal pathways and changes over time, yet we recognise the challenges in doing so. Last but not least, in order to come closer to organisational practices, we would like to investigate potential interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and well-being as strategies for improving adaptability in the workplace.

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