

How does hotel employees' psychological capital promote adaptive performance? The role of change readiness

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the links between psychological capital, adaptive performance, and change readiness in China's hotel industry, based on the theory of planned behavior and the conservation of resources theory. Recent studies have discovered that employees' attitudes to changes caused by uncertain factors could predict and explain their adaptive performance. This study raises the possibility of change readiness mediating the relationship between psychological capital and adaptive performance. Data were collected from 304 hotel employees in China, and the results revealed that 1) psychological capital can promote adaptive performance, and 2) change readiness completely mediates the association between psychological capital and adaptive performance. These findings contribute to developing a theoretical framework for psychological capital to encourage adaptive performance in the hotel industry and provide a new perspective on human resource management.

1. Introduction

Rapid technological innovation, a fiercely hypercompetitive environment, and complex uncertainties force enterprises into a cycle of continuous innovation and change (Baptista et al., 2020). Coupled with the unforeseen coronavirus pandemic, the lodging operating environment's dynamics, complexity, and uncertainty have been exacerbated. Hotel employees regularly face unexpected events, heavier workloads, and the need to develop technological capabilities in an environment characterized by uncertainty, variability, complexity, and ambiguity (UVCA) (Chan et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2020). How hotel employees respond to change and learn to adapt to their environment has become a major concern (Luo et al., 2021) because employees who can adapt can alleviate the uncertainty caused by the work environment (Darvishmotevali et al., 2020), thereby extending the organization's vitality and enhancing hotel competitiveness (Melián-Alzola et al., 2020).

Employees' ability to form interpersonal connections, acquire the knowledge and abilities to adjust to changes and assignments, calmly

manage crises, and solve problems creatively is termed adaptive performance (Pulakos et al., 2000, 2002). Adaptive performance is a supplement to and extension of classical task and contextual performance management and can resolve issues associated with static performance management in a dynamic environment (Shoss et al., 2012). In studying which factors could influence employees' adaptive performance, numerous studies have been conducted and determined the association between individual characteristics and adaptive performance, such as the big five personality traits (Huang et al., 2014), self-efficacy (Pedro et al., 2019), cognitive capacity (Good, 2014), and experience and knowledge (Morgan et al., 2003). However, the related scholarly works reported in existing literature overemphasize the effects of personality traits (Choi, 2011) or static variables (Karrane et al., 2016) and fail to address what factors might affect employees' adaptive performance in a dynamic workplace.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a positive development state of an individual that emphasizes state-like psychological resources that can be assessed and managed over stable traits, as characterized by having high

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levels of 1) hope, 2) self-efficacy, 3) resilience, and 4) optimism (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Kirrane et al., 2016). According to Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007), when the four elements of PsyCap are incorporated into a multidimensional concept, powerful psychological resources can be produced from the four elements' interaction. In other words, PsyCap is frequently the product of a greater level of fabrication. State-like variables with dynamic features are more malleable; variable malleability can help employees improve their actual intervention competencies that could allow them to alter their physical activity self-efficacy and behavior to better comprehend the organizational goal and boost their confidence in their capacity to achieve the responsibilities. Through training and shared experiences with colleagues and team members, the state-like variable can enhance employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities to improve their PsyCap and transform it into an affirmative psychological resource that can guide employees toward their full potential (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Moreover, according to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Shin et al., 2012), employees with sufficient personal resources can ease pressure on themselves in a changing environment, assist them in promptly raising their status, and prevent resource loss. It is deduced that employees with an abundance of PsyCap rely on the benefits of strong psychological resources to maximize their potential and solve problems, thereby improving their adaptive performance.

Jundt et al. (2014) believed that it was critical to fully grasp the variables affecting employee performance in an uncertain and ambiguous environment. Dynamic changes in the external environment can upend the organization's status quo, challenge workers' knowledge and abilities, and compel employees to respond or adjust to those changes quickly. When hotels enhance their dynamic capabilities through self-reinforcing measures such as structural adjustment, technological innovation, they frequently disrupt their original competitive foundation and organizational environment, resulting in employees who are resistant to change and who cannot adapt quickly to a new environment (Li et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2020). For instance, rapid technological advancements have fundamentally altered the structure of hotel operations and customer relationship management. While the deployment of technology can increase employee productivity, the question is if people are willing to accept technology as a new source of stress in the workplace (Li et al., 2019). As a consequence, hotel managers must realign their organizations based on elements of the internal and external environment (Melián-Alzola et al., 2020) and consider their employees' attitudes to change.

An organization's preparedness for change is a critical determinant of whether that change will succeed or fail (Krügel & Traub, 2018). Change readiness begins with an individual's psychology and focuses on their perceptions, emotional attitudes, behavioral intentions, and how they interpret and respond to changes in their internal and external environments (Bouckenoghe & Van den Broeck, 2009). Individual behaviors, according to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, are inextricably linked to behavioral intentions. Employees who are receptive to organizational change will participate willingly in the process and exhibit appropriate adaptive behaviors for the dynamic environment. Thus, forecasting, explaining, and regulating employees' adaptive behaviors all become possible only when their cognition, emotional attitudes, and receptiveness to internal and external environmental changes are known. There is, however, less evidence to suggest that an employee's preparation for change affects their ability to adapt to it.

Employees' attitudes to change are influenced by their psychological resources and perceptions of their work environment; the implication is that strengthening employees' PsyCap can increase their readiness for change (Kirrane et al., 2016). Employees with much PsyCap often find that emotional attitude affects their behavior, making them more inclined to view environmental changes from a positive perspective and to confront the problems caused by organizational changes (Shin et al., 2012) to adapt to those changes and show high adaptive performance. Therefore, this study uses change readiness as a mediating variable to

explore the intrinsic motivation of PsyCap affecting employees' adaptive performance.

This study makes a threefold contribution. The primary contribution of this study is to develop a model of adaptive performance intervention to examine how hotel employees adapt to obstacles in their internal and external environments. Rapid development, technological advancements, and intense competition have complicated the hotel industry's operating environment. Although the competitiveness and even the existence of hotels are depend on research into their adaptive capabilities (Melián-Alzola et al., 2020), little research on adaptive performance in the hotel industry has been conducted (Kim et al., 2017). In addition, self-reinforcing measures like changes in organizational structure, technical and institutional advancements frequently undermine the organization's competitive basis and environment (Jing & Benner, 2016). In light of such changes, employees' readiness for change should be considered, and it is worthwhile to investigate whether that readiness for change influences employees' adaptability. Finally, this study broadens the range of factors affecting adaptive performance and posits that PsyCap is more malleable and can intervene more effectively in employees' adaptive performance.

In summary, this study merges the theory of planned behavior and the conservation of resources theory to investigate the effect of PsyCap on adaptive performance and its internal mechanism model, using hotel employees as subjects. The research findings will provide theoretical recommendations for hotels and other service-oriented businesses to maximize their staff's potential productivity and adaptability.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Psychological capital

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a concept developed in the context of promoting positive organizational behavior, and it refers to the positive psychological state in which members of an organization find themselves (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). The inclusion criteria for a capacity to be considered as a positive organizational behavior dimension, thus a variable has to be: 1) positive, promoting individual or organizational performance; 2) based on theoretical and research support; 3) capacity for assessment and documentation; and 4) state-like variable that can be changed and developed (Luthans, 2002). Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) concluded that hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism met these conditions and possessed the traits of theoretical foundation, unique characteristics (e.g., they have discriminant validity), measurability, and malleability that contributed to an increase in employees' job performance and resulted in a competitive advantage for the organization.

Some scholars debated the conceptual and empirical commonalities among the four elements of PsyCap (hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism). The psychological construct of self-efficacy has been defined as is expressed as confidence in successfully performing tough activities; hope is to stick to the goal and re-select the tactics and ways to reach the objective when necessary; optimism is a positive attribution to success, expecting favorable things to come; resilience is the ability to continue and try to get rid of challenges and recover fast while experiencing difficulties and failures. Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) suggested that rather than assessing each element's contribution to motivating employees and contributing to organizational objectives, the aggregate effect of four elements can better account for behavioral inequalities. Several academics also conducted additional empirical studies to demonstrate that, as a result of the interaction of four components, PsyCap contributes more to work attitudes and personal outcomes when considered holistically than each single-dimensional element (Kirrane et al., 2016; Paek et al., 2015; Tsaor et al., 2019). Hence, in this study, PsyCap is evaluated holistically in terms of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism.

2.2. Adaptive performance

Employee evaluations conducted in the traditional manner assess an employee's job task performance and effort in a static work environment, with an emphasis on individual role play and efficiency of fixed task performance (Park & Park, 2019). Adaptive performance is people's ability to respond to environmental changes that may be nurtured (Jundt et al., 2014; Park & Park, 2019). Pulakos et al. (2000) developed an eight-dimensional taxonomy of adaptive performance based on industry attributes, namely 1) learning work tasks, technologies, and procedures, 2) dealing with uncertain and unpredictable work situations, 3) demonstrating physically oriented adaptability, 4) solving problems creatively, 5) handling emergencies or crises situations, 6) handling work stress, 7) demonstrating interpersonal adaptability, and 8) demonstrating cultural adaptability. Tao and Wang (2006) divided adaptive performance into four categories based on China's cultural context: 1) interpersonal and cultural adaptation; 2) creative problem solving; 3) stress and crisis management, and 4) acquisition of new knowledge.

Interpersonal and cultural adaptability is employees' ability to form collaborative relationships with new teams, colleagues, and customers in a dynamic environment; to adapt their interpersonal relationships to changing work demands; to adapt to different organizational cultures; to integrate into the collective; to be inclusive of diverse cultural values; and to learn new languages, values, and technologies. The term "creative problem solving" refers to the ability to innovatively address unconventional and ill-defined problems in a dynamic setting and solve problems in a complicated environment. Stress and crisis management is the practice of making sound judgments under pressure at work and when times are difficult. The acquisition of new knowledge entails upgrading one's skills in anticipation of future career changes (Jundt et al., 2014; Park & Park, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2000; Tao & Wang, 2006).

2.3. Change readiness

Transformation and dynamics have become the hallmarks of today's business management. When external factors erode the early underpinnings of competitiveness, businesses face great pressure to adjust their organizational structure and strategic direction. For example, an organization can respond to dynamic environmental changes by implementing deliberate managerial behaviors such as organizational transformation (technology innovation, institutional innovation, and organizational structure adaptation) (Chung et al., 2014). Employees' attitudes are a key factor in the success of the organizational change.

Change readiness consists of employees' cognition of emotional attitudes and behavioral intentions when internal and external environmental changes and the organization's ability to respond to those changes (Choi & Ruona, 2010). The scope of the research can be divided into organizational- and individual-level readiness. Organizational readiness is based on the optimization of organizational structure, focusing on whether the organization can respond to environmental changes and resource readiness. In contrast, individual readiness is based on employees' responses to, perceptions of, and emotions concerning environmental changes.

Bouckennooghe and Van den Broeck's (2009) attitude theory model identified three dimensions of the individual level of change readiness: cognition, emotion, and behavioral intention. Cognitive readiness is an individual's cognitive attitude, view of and beliefs about change. Emotional readiness is an individual's emotional attitude to and feelings about change, especially whether the change is positive or negative. Intentional readiness is the behavioral intention of an individual's attitude toward change and whether or not there is an intention to participate in the change.

This study draws on the research of Bouckennooghe and Van den Broeck (2009) and pays attention to individual-level change readiness. It defines change readiness in terms of employees' perceptions, attitudes,

and behavioral intentions.

2.4. Hypothesis development

2.4.1. PsyCap and adaptive performance

Individuals with PsyCap can be positive in the face of difficulties, overcome hurdles, and demonstrate a good attitude and behavior (Boniwell & Zimbardo, 2012). PsyCap is a source of motivational stimulation and energy supplementation (Wu et al., 2012). Motivational stimulation is the process by which a large amount of PsyCap aids in the enhancement of employees' autonomous motivation (Paek et al., 2015), the stimulation of employees' creativity and innovative behavior (Schuckert et al., 2018), and the transformation of personal potential into practical ability. Energy supplementation enables individuals with an abundance of PsyCap to use their resources and abilities to reduce their reliance on work energy and adapt to their organizational environment (Homayoun & Mona, 2019).

The conservation of resources theory asserts that humans possess a range of resources to conserve, maintain, and develop new resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). PsyCap functions as a psychological resource and as a positive personal resource that helps employees become more engaged at work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2008). Employees with large amounts of PsyCap can maximize their potential and discover solutions to overcome uncertainty, crisis, pressure, or problems posed by a dynamic environment, thereby improving their adaptive performance (Rabenu et al., 2016).

The positive psychological state of the development comprises four positive psychological resources: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Individuals with high levels of hope are more motivated to use diverse resources to solve problems creatively, demonstrating greater resilience and achieving work goals (Newman et al., 2014). Employees with high self-efficacy are more confident in their ability to complete various difficult tasks, have a high level of self-motivation, stimulate potential, overcome crises, and actively demonstrate positive, innovative behavior (Gupta & Singh, 2014). Optimistic employees have high hopes for the future and believe that things will improve, so they can calmly deal with different crises and pressures (Griffin et al., 2007). Employees with high resilience can quickly recover from adversity or failure, continue to learn new skills, expand their positive emotions and optimistic thinking, and then demonstrate good adaptive behavior (Shin et al., 2012).

Additionally, employees with a strong sense of self-efficacy and hope are more likely to develop trust and acquire additional social resources as a result of positive engagement and peer contact (Wu et al., 2012), to believe in continuous learning, to constantly update their knowledge and skills (Luthans & Youssef, 2007), and to seek solutions to problems (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Employees gain a sense of accomplishment and significantly improve their self-efficacy after overcoming difficulties and completing challenges, allowing them to be full of hope for the future of the organization and individuals, generate more optimistic emotions, and improve their PsyCap. Together, these resources (hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism) can assist employees in developing an internalized sense of control and intentionality as they pursue and accomplish goals (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

The hotel industry is a dynamic, fast-paced industry with constant mobility since there are always new advancements in how employees may provide service to people. Employees face not only emergencies and overwork (Kim et al., 2017) but also job insecurity as a result of upgrades to technology, employment restructuring, and organizational flattening (Li et al., 2019). As a result, cultivating employee initiative and flexibility, as well as improving employees' adaptive performance, are pressing issues. As an intrinsic positive psychological resource, PsyCap can enable people to reach their full potential, empower and motivate them to respond to environmental changes in real-time, and improve their adaptive performance. Thus, the following hypotheses emerge:

- H1.** PsyCap can promote adaptive performance.
- H1a.** PsyCap can promote stress and crisis management.
- H1b.** PsyCap can promote creative problem solving.
- H1c.** PsyCap can promote interpersonal and multicultural adaptation.
- H1d.** PsyCap can promote new knowledge acquisition.

2.5. Change readiness and adaptive performance

Organizational changes undergo three stages: unfreezing, transition, and refreezing (Lewin, 1947). Unfreezing happens when the power to maintain the organizational state is weakened, and the original knowledge, behavior, and beliefs begin to change. Lewin (1958) believed that only by comprehending the unfreezing state can we understand whether change is possible. Armenakis and Harris (2002) put forward a new perspective based on change theory. According to them, there are three stages of change: readiness, adoption, and institutionalization. Adoption is the stage in which changes have occurred and employees accept the change. Therefore, change readiness should be examined before the change takes place.

In the fields of psychology and organizational behavior, “attitude” is usually seen as an explanatory variable that predicts a “behavior.” Therefore, only by grasping the readiness for individual change, is it possible to predict, explain, and modify employees’ adaptive performance. According to the planned behavior theory (Ajzen, 1991), employees’ attitudes to (or readiness for) change can be used to forecast their behavioral intentions (Oreg et al., 2018). Wanberg and Banas (2000) concluded that before an organization changes, information about change readiness helps make employees more enthusiastic about and prepared for impending changes. Receiving information about organizational changes helps reduce employees’ anxiety and uncertainty. Oreg et al. (2018) noted that employees’ change readiness can predict much of their behavior, and employees who welcome change tend to participate in the change process, make the extra effort, and form adaptive behavior that can respond well to the dynamic environment (Shin et al., 2012).

Hotel employees frequently face unforeseen challenges and impediments as a result of the dynamic nature of the hotel industry, which evolves rapidly with the times. Employees that have a favorable attitude about change are more likely to participate actively in the process and exhibit more cooperative conduct (Weiner et al., 2009). Employees with a positive change attitude tend to actively participate in the change process, show additional efforts and form adaptive behavior that will effectively respond to the dynamic environment (Shin et al., 2012). Hon and Lui (2016) stated that in the uncertain environment of the hotel industry, employees’ readiness for change has an effect on their personal innovation behavior and interpersonal conflicts. Chang et al. (2018) conducted a study on frontline hotel employees and concluded that employees’ perceived readiness for change and absorptive capacity are the most important proximal determinants of their creative behaviors. When organizational readiness for change is high, its members are more inclined to initiate change, seek new knowledge (Rusly et al., 2012), and make a greater effort to adapt to the new environment (Rafferty et al., 2013). Augustsson et al. (2017) noted that employees with a positive attitude to change would participate in the learning process. Oreg et al. (2018) pointed out that employees’ change readiness can predict their behavior to a large extent. Therefore, the relationship between change readiness and adaptive performance can be hypothesized as follows:

- H2.** Change readiness can promote adaptive performance.
- H2a.** Change readiness can promote stress and crisis management.
- H2b.** Change readiness can promote creative problem solving.
- H2c.** Change readiness can promote interpersonal and multicultural adaptation.

- H2d.** Change readiness can promote new knowledge acquisition.

2.6. PsyCap and change readiness

PsyCap can broaden the range of individual attention and motivate employees to think and act more creatively and exploratively (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). In an uncertain environment, employees with ample PsyCap can evaluate change from a positive perspective; encourage, accept, and adapt quickly to change; and respond calmly to pressure and crises (Kerrane et al., 2016). According to the conservation of resources theory, resources play a key role in an employee’s ability to cope with the crisis. By mobilizing the additional psychological resources to cope with change-induced crises, employees demonstrate a positive attitude and behavior. PsyCap is therefore a key resource to promote change-supporting behavior (Hobfoll, 2002; Shin et al., 2012). Choi (2011) summarized the personal characteristics that affect change readiness. Individuals with self-efficacy, self-respect, and optimism are more likely to accept change, thereby enhancing change readiness (Clark, 2003; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Oreg et al., 2011; Kerrane et al., 2016).

- H3.** PsyCap can promote change readiness.

2.7. The mediating effect of change readiness

Change readiness is an employee’s cognition, attitude, and behavioral intention in response to environmental changes, and a critical explanatory variable for predicting future behavior (Bouckennooghe & Van den Broeck, 2009). According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), individual behavior intention is the precondition of actual behavior, and an employee’s change preparation can predict change behavior (Oreg et al., 2018). Information about change readiness can help to reduce employees’ anxiety (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and prepare them for change, by establishing interpersonal relationships and acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills to adapt to the new environment. In addition, employees’ emotional commitment to change will motivate them to contribute innovative ideas (Shin et al., 2012). Through the innovation-decision process model, Chang et al. (2018) demonstrated how employees’ readiness for change affects their decision-making and abilities to be innovative.

PsyCap affects employees’ attitudes and behavioral performance (Homayoun & Mona, 2019; Tsaour et al., 2019). A positive attitude makes employees resilient in crises, expands their cognitive horizons, and enables them to find solutions to problems. Thus, employees with the most PsyCap are optimistic and confident, possess psychological resources, and are capable of evaluating changes, stimulating their intrinsic motivation, improving their personal cognition, and then preparing for change, all of which enable them to participate in change, adapt to the new environment, and improve their adaptive performance. Planned behavior theory posits that behavior is determined by behavior intention and that behavior intention is determined by psychological and cognitive factors. Therefore, to promote employees’ change readiness, their cognition and psychological state must be improved first.

- H4.** Change readiness can mediate the relationship between PsyCap and adaptive performance.
- H4a.** Change readiness can mediate the relationship between PsyCap and crisis management.
- H4b.** Change readiness can mediate the relationship between PsyCap and creative problem solving.
- H4c.** Change readiness can mediate the relationship between PsyCap and interpersonal relationships and multicultural adaptability.
- H4d.** Change readiness can mediate the relationship between PsyCap and acquisition of new knowledge.

Based on the above analysis, this research puts forward 13

hypotheses. Fig. 1 presents the research model:

3. Methodology

3.1. Research instrument

The questionnaire consists of participant demographics and 66 items, all of which were assessed using a 5-point forward subscale of the Likert scale, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 5 indicating *strongly agree*. Before it was formally administered, the questionnaire was pre-tested on human resources directors and on more than 50 frontline personnel from four hotels in China to ensure its validity. The pre-test results and suggestions were used to modify the phrasing to verify that employees comprehended the instructions and terminology. Each scale was separately assessed for Cronbach's alpha value (α) to assess the reliability of the accepted scales; a value of 0.70 or higher was acceptable for this study (Cronbach, 1951).

The finalized instrument consisted of four sections related to psychological capital, change readiness, adaptive performance, and participant demographics. The 24-item PsyCap scale is based on the PsyCap questionnaire developed by Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) and Paek et al. (2015), which divides PsyCap into four sub-dimensions: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Each dimension contains six scale items. Cronbach alpha coefficients for each dimension of PsyCap are 0.77, 0.74, 0.70, and 0.72. Change readiness (13 items) was separated into three subsections, which drew from the scale items that Bouckennooghe and Van den Broeck (2009) developed: cognitive readiness (five items, $\alpha = 0.78$), emotional readiness (five items, $\alpha = 0.72$), and intentional readiness (three items, $\alpha = 0.80$).

The 21-item adaptive performance scale was developed in conjunction with the research of Pulakos et al. (2000) and Tao and Wang (2006), and the scale items were classified into four sub-dimensions in this study, taking into account the unique characteristics of the hotel industry and Chinese culture context: stress and crisis management (SCM) (five items, $\alpha = 0.71$), creative problem solving (CPS) (four items, $\alpha = 0.71$), interpersonal and multicultural adaptability (IMA) (six items, $\alpha = 0.72$), and new knowledge acquisition (NKA) (six items, $\alpha = 0.76$).

3.2. Data collection

The survey subjects for this sample poll are frontline personnel

working in four- and five-star hotels in 12 Chinese cities. We used purposive sampling and nonrandom sampling. The 12 sampling locations are Beijing, Ji'nan, Qingdao, Yantai, Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou, Changzhou, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou. These cities are all located on the east coast and are well-represented in the sample as they are economically advanced cities with higher per capita incomes and attractive locations.

Six hundred questionnaires were distributed. All respondents had worked in a hotel for at least six months. Between June and July 2018, data were collected both online (WeChat survey) and offline (on-site survey). Offline data was collected mostly through the hotels' human resources departments. The human resources department of each hotel granted permission for the survey and assisted in collecting data from the participants. All hard copies of on-site surveys were sealed in envelopes. Additionally, to establish the causal association between psychological capital, change readiness, and adaptive performance of hotel frontline employees and to minimize common technique deviations, data were collected twice every two weeks. The first-round survey examined PsyCap and demographic characteristics; the second-round assessed change readiness and adaptive performance. Employee identification numbers were used to reconcile the results of the two polls.

To prevent online respondents from submitting duplicate responses, we used a two-step SMS verification process. When respondents first opened the survey, they were asked to provide their cell phone number to receive a verification code. As soon as they received the verification code, they could access and complete the survey. If the WeChat system detects a signal during the questionnaire completion process indicating that the respondent has already completed the questionnaire using the same registered mobile number, the respondent will be unable to complete the survey a second time.

To increase engagement and lead to more completed surveys, respondents received a comprehensive set of instructions in advance and were rewarded with a gift to boost response rates upon completion. Of the 600 questionnaires we distributed, 429 were returned. After incomplete questions were removed, data analysis was conducted on 304 of the 429 questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 70.86%. Additionally, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted on both the offline and online surveys to ensure no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$) between the two data collection methods. The demographic results (Table 1) indicated that 62.5% of the employees were female; 50.7% of the respondents were between the ages of 20–29 and

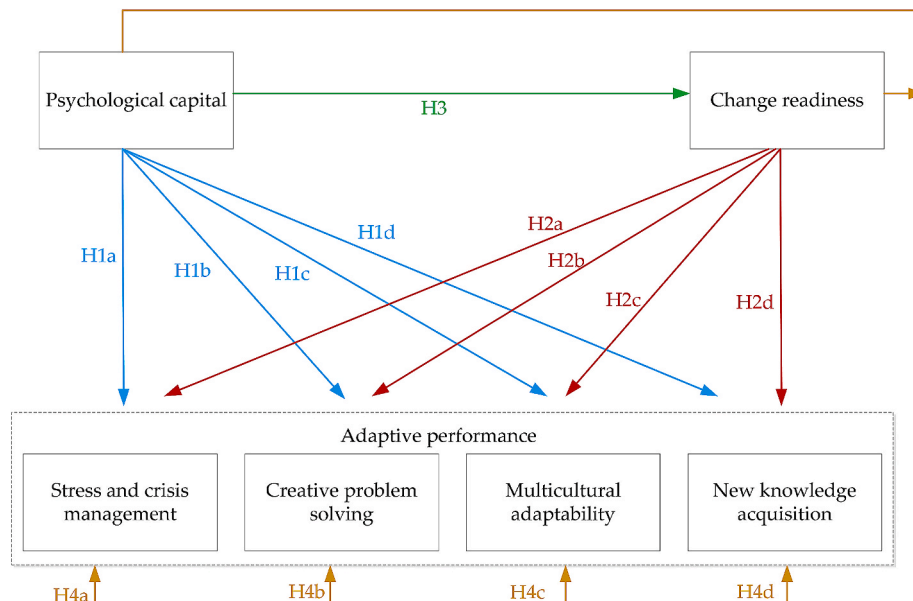


Fig. 1. Research model.

Table 1
Sample demographic information (N = 304).

Variable	Category	Frequency(N)	%
Gender	Male	114	37.5
	Female	190	62.5
Age	20–29	154	50.7
	30–39	110	36.2
	40–49	37	12.2
	≥50	3	0.9
Education	High school	9	2.9
	College degree	58	19.2
	Bachelor's degree	226	74.3
	Master's degree	11	3.6
Hotel rating	four stars	144	47.4
	five stars	160	52.6
Working years	<3 years	76	25
	3–5 years	127	41.8
	>5 years	101	33.2
Hotel location	Beijing	55	18.1
	Guangdong	80	26.3
	Jiangsu	32	10.5
	Shandong	51	16.8
	Shanghai	54	17.8
	Zhejiang	32	10.5

36.2% were aged 30–39. Most of the respondents (74.3%) held a university degree (74.3%), or a junior college degree (19.2%). The largest percentage of respondents (41.8%) had worked in a hotel between three and five years (41.8%), and more than one-third (33.2%) for more than five years.

4. Results of analyses

4.1. Analysis of reliability and validity

The scale's dependability was determined using Cronbach's coefficient value. It is found through verification that the α coefficient value of the second-order factor of all factors was between 0.70 and 0.90, indicating that the scale had good credibility. To reduce common method deviation, Harman's single-factor test was used to determine whether or not there was a problem. Therefore, all items of psychological capital, cognitive readiness, emotional readiness, intentional readiness, SCM, CPS, IMA, and NKA were loaded on a single factor. The single factor explained only 40% of the variance. As a result of the finding, standard method variance was not a major concern.

After doing a confirmatory factor analysis on each component using AMOS17.0, it was determined that the GFI value was less than the judgment standard value, so several items were eliminated using modification indices. Six items were removed from PsyCap (one from hope, one from self-efficacy, two from resilience, and two from optimism), five from change readiness (three from emotions, two from

cognition), and two from adaptive performance (both from interpersonal relations). All of the remaining 45 items had an excellent confirmatory factor fitting index. The overall confirmatory factor analysis results are displayed in Table 2. The $\chi^2 = 67.387$, $df = 38$, $p = .002$. GFI = 0.962, AGFI = 0.933, RMSEA = 0.051 values were within the standard range, indicating the measurement model was adequate.

As demonstrated in Table 2, the Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficient values were greater than the standard value (CR: 0.7 or more, AVE: 0.5 or more). This indicates that the measurement components have a higher degree of aggregation validity. The discriminant validity of the factors was calculated by determining whether the value of $[\sqrt{2} \times S.E.]$ contains the number 1. (Woo, 2012). We calculated the correlation index “±” (plus and minus signs) between the two latent variables by multiplying it by the standard error, then comparing the plus and minus values. If the difference index between the two is not equal to 1, it has discriminative validity. If the difference index is equal to 1, each factor lacks discriminative validity. As illustrated in Table 3, each factor possesses a degree of differential validity. Furthermore, confirmatory component analysis of the six variables revealed that the six-factor model is superior to the alternatives (see Table 4). The findings indicated that the six factors were independent of one another and possessed a high degree of discriminative validity.

4.2. Main effect analysis of psychological capital

The association between psychological capital, adaptive

Table 3
Discriminant validity analysis result.

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Std. Error	$\sqrt{2} \times S.E$
PC <=> SCM	.803	.017	0.068
PC <=> CPS	.665	.017	0.068
PC <=> IMA	.766	.016	0.064
PC <=> NKA	.815	.017	0.068
PC <=> CR	.634	.016	0.064
SCM <=> CPS	.631	.020	0.080
SCM <=> IMA	.719	.017	0.068
SCM <=> NKA	.752	.019	0.076
SCM <=> CR	.589	.018	0.072
CPS <=> IMA	.570	.018	0.072
CPS <=> NKA	.616	.019	0.076
CPS <=> CR	.531	.020	0.080
IMA <=> NKA	.779	.018	0.072
IMA <=> CR	.645	.017	0.068
IMA <=> CR	.639	.018	0.072

Notes: PC=Psychological capital; CR=Change readiness; SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

Table 2
Results of the composite reliability validity analysis.

Concept	Factor	Factor loading	Std. Error	t	α	CR	AVE
Psychologicalcapital	Hope	0.813	0.009	10.592	0.736	0.894	0.679
	Self-efficacy	0.834	0.007	10.015	0.765		
	Resilience	0.819	0.007	10.433	0.716		
	Optimism	0.830	0.008	10.468	0.704		
Change readiness	Cognitive	0.810	0.018	7.746	0.775	0.798	0.569
	Emotional	0.735	0.021	10.327	0.716		
	Intentional	0.715	0.017	9.844	0.794		
Adaptive performance	SCM	0.843	0.007	10.292	0.708	0.891	0.675
	CPS	0.721	0.013	11.581	0.705		
	IMA	0.841	0.006	10.397	0.715		
	NKA	0.872	0.006	9.453	0.756		
Fitting index		X ² = 67.387 df = 38 p-value = .002. GFI = .962 AGFI = .933 CFI = .988 IFI = .988. RMSEA = .051.					

Notes: SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

Table 4
Confirmatory factor analysis.

Models Factor	X ² /df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
Six-factor model: PC, CR, SCM, CPS, IMA, NKA	1.773	0.051	0.962	0.988	0.988
Three-factor model: PC, CR, SCM + CPS + IMA + NKA	3.552	0.096	0.942	0.881	0.882
Two-factor model: PC + CR, SCM + CPS + IMA + NKA	3.683	0.125	0.568	0.562	0.556
One-factor model: PC + CR + SCM + CPS + IMA + NKA	4.592	0.147	0.398	0.393	0.382

Notes: PC=Psychological capital; CR=Change readiness; SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

performance, and change preparedness was investigated using SPSS 22.0. Gender, age, education, and work experience are all included as control variables in the model (M₁, M₃, M₅, M₇, and M₉). After fitting the model with predictive variables, we investigated the effects of PsyCap on adaptive performance and change readiness. PsyCap was found to have a significant positive effect on stress and management (M₄, $\beta = .902$, $p < .001$), creative problem solving (M₆, $\beta = .789$, $p < .001$), interpersonal and multicultural adaptability (M₈, $\beta = .796$, $p < .001$), new knowledge acquisition (M₁₀, $\beta = .926$, $p < .001$), and change (M₂, $\beta = .685$, $p < .001$), thereby supporting H1 and H3 (see Table 5).

4.3. Path analysis

The model structure was analyzed using AMOS 17.0 covariance structure to determine the effect of psychological capital, change readiness, SCM, CPS, IMA, and NKA. The results of the analysis are displayed in Fig. 2, $X^2 = 67.387$, $df = 38$, $p = .002$, $GFI = 0.962$, $AGFI = 0.933$, $RMSEA = 0.051$ all exceeded the standard values ($GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI > 0.9$, $RMSEA = 0.05–0.08$), indicating that the model structure was adequate and reasonable.

Table 6 summarizes the results of the path analysis. PsyCap has a significant impact on SCM ($\beta = 0.679$, $p < .001$), CPS ($\beta = 0.509$, $p < .001$), and NKA ($\beta = 0.458$, $p < .01$). Relationship and PsyCap have the greatest influence on SCM. However, the effect of PsyCap on IMA is not significant ($\beta = 0.239$, $p = .278 > 0.05$). Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1d are thus supported; whereas, hypothesis 1c is not. Moreover, change readiness has a substantial impact on IMA ($\beta = 0.647$, $p < .01$) and NKA ($\beta = 0.457$, $p < .01$) but not on SCM ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = .140 > 0.05$) or CPS ($\beta = 0.218$, $p = .154 > 0.05$). Hypotheses 2c and 2d are therefore supported, with the exception of hypotheses 2a and 2b. We also found PsyCap has a positive and significant impact on change readiness ($\beta = 0.881$, $p < .001$). In terms of whether PsyCap and adaptive performance are mediated by change readiness, we know from bootstrapping that, aside

from SCM, CPS (which are directly related), PsyCap is indirectly related to IMA through change readiness ($\beta = 0.610$, $p < .05$), as well as NKA ($\beta = 0.462$, $p < .05$). As a result, Hypotheses 3c and 3d are supported, but Hypotheses 3a and 3b are not.

The mediating effect was divided into two categories: full and partial. To find out which intermediary the change readiness belonged to, we had to identify the link between PsyCap and adaptive performance measures. If the direct effect of PsyCap on aspects of adaptive performance is not considerable, but the indirect relationship is, then change readiness serves as a complete intermediate. However, if PsyCap has a considerable effect on the dimensions of adaptive performance, and the effect of indirect relations is similarly significant, change readiness may play a mediating role. Table 7 shows the results after bootstrapping verification.

There is a significant positive correlation between PsyCap and adaptive performance. However, PsyCap only has significant direct effects on SCM and CPS; the indirect effects are not significant. PsyCap has significant indirect effects on IMA and NKA, but the direct effects are not significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that PsyCap both directly affects the dimensions of adaptive performance and indirectly affects NKA, IMA through change readiness. Change readiness has full mediating effects on psychological capital, NKA, and IMA.

5. Discussion, implications, and conclusions

Employees' dynamic adaptability will become more vital than ever as the hotel industry's internal and external environments become more complicated and uncertain, and as adaptable performance becomes an important aspect of performance appraisal. The past literature's over-emphasis on personality-trait characteristics over state-like variables limits employees' actual possibilities of intervention (Choi, 2011). The goal of this study was to explore the effect of malleable and intervention abilities on adaptive performance characteristics to acquire a better understanding of the elements affecting a hotel employee's ability to adjust swiftly to a new workplace and respond to change.

The data indicates that hotel employees with a high level of PsyCap are more engaged in their jobs. Suppose a hotel purposefully cultivates psychological capital; its employees will be more equipped to handle emergencies and stress, solve problems, stimulate their potential, acquire new knowledge and abilities, and improve individual adaptive performance. The more PsyCap and positive sensations a hotel employee possesses, the easier it is to increase their vitality and concentration, and hence their adaptive performance.

Additionally, the results suggested that external and internal organizational preparedness improves hotel employees' readiness to change, interpersonal relationships, intercultural adaptation, and acquisition of new information and abilities. The findings indicate that hotels could prevent organizational changes from inflicting psychological pain on their employees by anticipating their employees' change readiness. The

Table 5
Results of main effect analysis.

Variable	CR		SCM		CPS		IMA		NKA	
	M ₁	M ₂	M ₃	M ₄	M ₅	M ₆	M ₇	M ₈	M ₉	M ₁₀
	β	β	β	β	B	β	β	B	β	β
Gender	.044	.029	.018	-.003	-.010	-.027	.058	.040	.043	.022
Age	-.122**	-.027	-.118**	.008	-.102*	.008	-.167**	-.056*	-.134**	-.005
Education	.068	.020	.130*	.068*	.191***	.137**	.071	.016	.081	.017
Working years	.047***	.018*	.048***	.009*	.042***	.008*	.033***	-.001	.034**	-.006
PC		.685***		.902***		.789***		.796***		.926***
R ²	.084	.072	.102	.090	.096	.084	.081	.068	.061	.048
ΔR^2		.403***		.648***		.456***		.590***		.661***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Notes: PC=Psychological capital; CR=Change readiness; SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

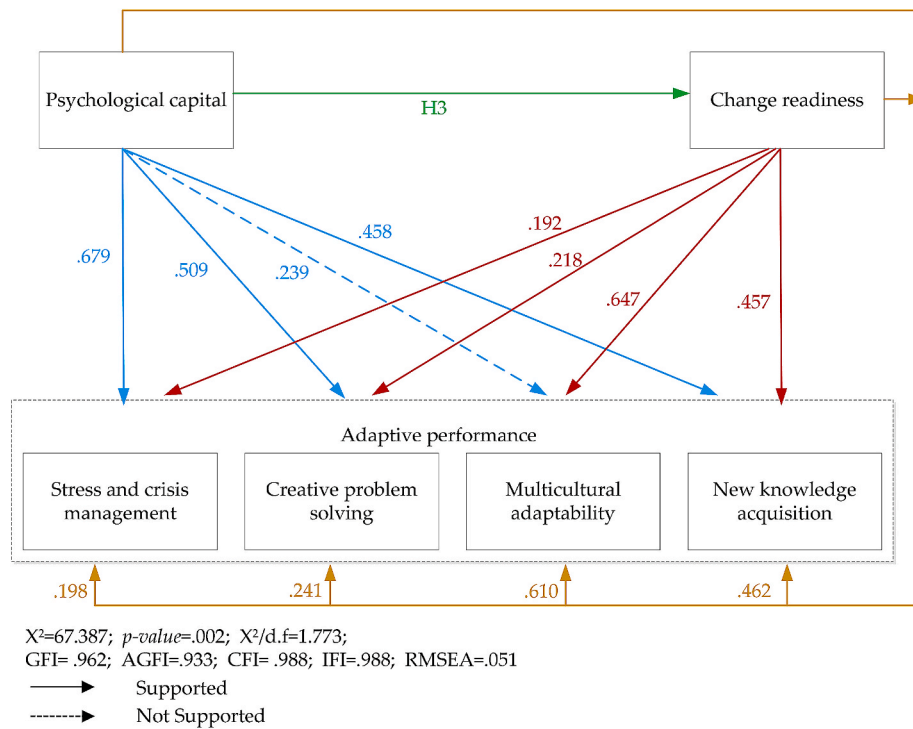


Fig. 2. Test results.

Table 6

Results of the path analysis.

Path	Estimate	Std. Error	CR	p-value	Conclusion
PC => SCM	0.679	0.151	5.277	***	Supported
PC => CPS	0.509	0.187	3.419	***	Supported
PC => IMA	0.239	0.236	1.085	0.278	Unsupported
PC => NKA	0.458	0.181	2.900	0.004	Supported
PC => CR	0.881	0.074	11.621	***	Supported
CR => SCM	0.192	0.157	1.476	0.140	Unsupported
CR => CPS	0.218	0.197	1.427	0.154	Unsupported
CR => IMA	0.647	0.258	2.763	0.006	Supported
CR => NKA	0.457	0.197	2.747	0.006	Supported
PC => CR => SCM	–	–	–	–	Unsupported
PC => CR => CPS	–	–	–	–	Unsupported
PC => CR => IMA	–	–	–	–	Supported
PC => CR => NKA	–	–	–	–	Supported

Notes: PC=Psychological capital; CR=Change readiness; SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

Table 7

The mediating effect analysis results.

	PC	CR
CR	.856*	
SCM	.795* (.198)	.231
CPS	.639* (.241)	.281
IMA	.256 (.610*)	.712*
NKA	.526 (.462*)	.540*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The number in parentheses is an indirect effect.

Notes: PC=Psychological capital; CR=Change readiness; SCM=Stress and crisis management; CPS=Creative problem solving; IMA=Interpersonal and multicultural adaptability; NKA=New knowledge acquisition.

findings corroborate Oreg's (2006) assertion that by communicating informal information, employees become accustomed to and prepared for change, enabling them to acquire new knowledge and skills and manage interpersonal relationships to prevent problems from occurring.

Furthermore, we verified that change readiness is a vital mediator in how PsyCap influences adaptive performance. Hotel employees with a high level of PsyCap are better equipped to adapt to change, constructively respond to the external environment or organizational change, of managing their interpersonal interactions in a new context, and gain new information and skills.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

This study presents a paradigm for adaptive performance intervention. Unlike earlier research, we established that PsyCap is malleable. The findings contribute to our understanding of how psychological resources should be organized and utilized. The research results confirm Tsaour et al.'s (2019) positive correlation between PsyCap and work performance, and the positive correlation between PsyCap and professional adaptability (Homayoun & Mona, 2019). Service contexts, such as the hotel business, are famous for their dynamic and predictability. Hotel frontline employees are required significant PsyCap due to the fast-changing working environment and intense emotional labor (Lv et al., 2022). Strong PsyCap can support people to reach their full potential, increase initiative, and activate the ability to respond to changes in the internal and external environment, coordinate internal and external resources, learn new knowledge and skills on a continuous basis, and respond to a variety of dynamic changes. This study established a framework for studying PsyCap and adaptive performance. Our findings fill a gap in the literature by focusing less on the relationship between PsyCap and adaptive performance and instead by expanding the study of PsyCap and work performance.

Additionally, our findings link employee readiness for change to adaptive performance, demonstrate that change preparation affects adaptive performance, and expand the concept of adaptable performance in a dynamic workplace. These findings corroborate Oreg et al.'s (2018) and Chang et al.'s (2018) findings of the relationship between

employee's readiness for change and their change behavior; our findings also supplemented and validated the theory of planned behavior, which states that an individual's attitude determines their behavior intention. The hotel industry must adapt frequently to technological advancements, industry competitiveness, and sudden disasters. Only hotels that readily adapt to change can succeed in today's competitive climate. Employees' readiness for change can affect their adaptive performance, particularly in changing environments such as hotel organizational structure adjustments, technology, and system innovation, where employees' readiness for change can have a big impact. Before changes take place, organizations need to conduct a preliminary investigation and research their employees' change readiness and conduct standardized management of the employees' process of responding to change.

There is still an insufficient amount of research on the promotion and impact of change readiness. This study contributes to our understanding of its antecedents and consequences. Employees' responses to change are influenced by both their personal psychological resources and their perception of the organizational environment (Kerrane et al., 2016). PsyCap is a positive psychological resource, a state variable of the characteristic of being malleable. Unlike the trait theory paradigm, PsyCap makes up for the non-intervention problem of adaptive performance's influencing factors as discussed in previous studies. Employees are often unwilling to commit to organizational change because they need to break their routines and adapt to new working relationships (Shin et al., 2012). How to improve employees' change readiness is an important point for organizations to consider. Augustsson et al. (2017) suggested that when confronted with changes, employees will seek out new knowledge and abilities; thus, hotels can educate their employees through an information exchange plan, motivating them to constantly adapt, consider and analyze change, and gradually embrace that reality.

5.2. Managerial implications

The present study's findings revealed that positive sources, such as those represented by PsyCap state-like variables, are amenable to development and human resource management. Human resources (HR) leaders in the hotel industry should understand that positive PsyCap is a significant individual difference that may be cultivated. To nurture PsyCap, hotel HR could construct PsyCap training programs that include activities that build hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, as well as overall PsyCap. For instance, in the hope component of the PsyCap training module, hotel HR could ask employees to begin outlining essential goals for stress management during the COVID-19 downturn. Another technique hotel HR may consider is what Snyder (2002) refers to as a 'stepping' strategy of creating subgoals in order to reap the benefits and create a window on the future that enables employees to imagine possibilities and craft plans for achieving those possibilities. These PsyCap-related training programs may assist hotel employees in assuming ownership of a personally meaningful and realistically challenging objective, anticipating barriers, and being prepared to implement numerous contingency plans – that is, other paths to accomplishing their goals.

In addition, individuals are resistant to change, and organizations must continuously contend with this fact (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Organizational reform initiatives performed in response to environmental changes may result in psychological changes in employees. To prevent organizational changes from failing and to reduce resistance to change, it is advisable to adjust the pace of change and improve employees' readiness for change by monitoring them ahead of time, thereby enhancing employees' adaptive performance. The hotel human resources department should use a new human resource development strategy in order to assist employees in developing the vital resources required in today's stressful workplace. Hotel HR may develop a communication strategy and change road map to increase employees' comprehension of change and foster trust between management and employees. Additionally, the management team should enhance

employee skills and proficiency through change-related training initiatives. For example, while implementing a new technological system (e.g., contactless service robots), hotel HR may adopt the 'people-first approach' (Laping, 2016), taking steps to influence employees' ability to absorb change and informing them of the reason for the change.

Finally, strategic human resource management considers employees' adaptive performance when unknown factors and dynamic changes rise in the hotel operational environment. Hotel managers should not only judge employees' success by results but also on the basis of their attitude to work, emergency management methods, and behaviors, especially their capacity for creative problem-solving. The ability to adapt human resources is the most important factor in fostering competitiveness and creativity (Way et al., 2015). Our findings allow hotel managers to use PsyCap and change readiness to cultivate human resource flexibility and improve the performance of their employees and the organization.

6. Limitations and future research

This study is not without limitations. To begin, data on psychological capital, change readiness, and adaptive performance were self-reported by employees, which may result in homologous errors in cross-sectional studies. Even if we had used specific measures like "lowering situational stress," follow-up studies should apply the standard approach of measuring social desirability. Furthermore, employees' readiness to adjust may differ when confronted with abrupt versus continuous organizational change. Personnel at the managerial level should be included in future research to strengthen the link between PsyCap and change readiness and adaptive performance.

Second, future research should examine a variety of hotel kinds to see if the results can be applied across the board. This study's findings are based on 12 five-star hotels in a single region of China. This limits generalizability and demands additional research across a variety of hotel classifications (e.g., boutique, three and four-star hotels). In order to conduct studies across more lodging sectors, such as boutique hotels, conference hotels, resort properties, full-service restaurants, and condominium hotels, a new study framework with specific research questions should be devised.

Third, experimental studies and intervention strategies to improve an individual's adaptability are required as research on adaptive performance advances. The influence of predictors on adaptive performance can be compared using meta-analysis, for example. Future studies can use event system theory to examine employees' adaptive behavior (Morgeson et al., 2015). Lastly, because second-order confirmatory factor analysis may contain linear consistency errors, additional methods of analysis should be applied in future studies for comparison.

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Declaration of competing interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research.

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