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THE EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON
ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN
E-COMMERCE ENTERPRISES IN SHAANXI
PROVINCE WITH THE MEDIATION OF
INNOVATIVE WORK
BEHAVIOUR



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ZHOU YUZI

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY
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THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the direct effect of psychological capital, specifically self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, on employee adaptive performance within e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi Province, China, and the mediating effect of innovative work behaviour. The formulation of the research framework was guided by Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources theory. To conduct the research, a quantitative research design with a deductive approach was adopted. Data were collected using an online questionnaire from a sample of 500 employees, who were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). At the significance level of 0.05, the findings demonstrated that psychological capital, specifically the dimensions of optimism ($\beta=0.189$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$), hope ($\beta=0.197$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$), and resilience ($\beta=0.173$, $p\text{-value}=0.002$), have a significant positive effect on adaptive performance, but not self-efficacy ($\beta=0.087$, $p\text{-value}=0.112$). Furthermore, psychological capital was found to significantly enhance innovative work behaviour, with self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.217$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), optimism ($\beta = 0.132$, $p\text{-value} = 0.013$), hope ($\beta = 0.218$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), and resilience ($\beta = 0.118$, $p\text{-value} = 0.043$) exhibiting significant positive effects at 0.05 significance level. The findings also confirmed that innovative work behaviour serves as a mediator in the effect of psychological capital on adaptive performance ($p<0.05$). In conclusion, psychological capital directly enhances adaptive performance, while also exerting an indirect effect through innovative work behaviour. In implication, the findings emphasize the importance of fostering psychological capital, particularly optimism, hope, and resilience, in e-commerce settings, and suggest that the management of the e-commerce enterprises should prioritize initiatives that build psychological capital and cultivate a culture of innovation in the workplace to enhance employees' adaptive performance. Furthermore, future studies could replicate this research in different contexts or extend it by considering the influence of additional variables or employing longitudinal studies.





PENGARUH MODAL PSIKOLOGI TERHADAP PRESTASI ADAPTIF DALAM KALANGAN PEKERJA DI PERUSAHAAN E-DAGANG DI WILAYAH SHAANXI DENGAN PENGANTARAAN PERILAKU KERJA INOVATIF

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh langsung modal psikologi, khususnya efikasi sendiri, optimis, harapan, dan ketahanan, terhadap prestasi adaptif pekerja di perusahaan e-dagang di Wilayah Shaanxi, China, serta pengaruh pengantara perilaku kerja inovatif. Pembentukan kerangka kajian ini dibimbing Teori Pemuliharaan Sumber oleh Hobfoll. Bagi menjalankan kajian ini, reka bentuk kajian kuantitatif dengan pendekatan deduktif telah digunakan. Data dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik dalam talian daripada 500 orang pekerja yang dipilih menggunakan pensampelan rawak berstrata. Data dianalisis menggunakan Pemodelan Persamaan Berstruktur (SEM). Pada aras keertian 0.05, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa modal psikologi, khususnya dimensi optimis ($\beta=0.189$, nilai $p=0.000$), harapan ($\beta=0.197$, nilai $p=0.000$), dan ketahanan ($\beta=0.173$, nilai $p=0.002$), mempunyai pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap prestasi adaptif, tetapi tidak bagi efikasi sendiri ($\beta=0.087$, nilai $p=0.112$). Selain itu, modal psikologi didapati dapat meningkatkan perilaku kerja inovatif secara signifikan, di mana efikasi sendiri ($\beta=0.217$, nilai $p=0.000$), optimis ($\beta=0.132$, nilai $p=0.013$), harapan ($\beta=0.218$, nilai $p=0.000$), dan ketahanan ($\beta=0.118$, nilai $p=0.043$) menunjukkan pengaruh positif yang signifikan pada aras keertian 0.05. Dapatan kajian turut mengesahkan bahawa perilaku kerja inovatif berfungsi sebagai pengantara dalam pengaruh modal psikologi ke atas prestasi adaptif (nilai $p<0.05$). Kesimpulannya, modal psikologi secara langsung meningkatkan prestasi adaptif pekerja, selain turut memberikan pengaruh tidak langsung melalui perilaku kerja inovatif. Implikasinya, dapatan kajian ini menekankan kepentingan untuk memupuk modal psikologi, terutamanya optimis, harapan, dan ketahanan, dalam persekitaran e-dagang dan mencadangkan agar pihak pengurusan perusahaan e-dagang memberi keutamaan kepada inisiatif yang berupaya membina modal psikologi dan membudayakan inovasi di tempat kerja bagi meningkatkan prestasi adaptif pekerja. Selain itu, kajian-kajian akan datang boleh mereplikasi kajian ini dalam konteks yang berbeza atau mengembangkannya dengan mempertimbangkan pengaruh pemboleh ubah tambahan atau melaksanakan kajian longitudinal.





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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
AP	Adaptive Performance
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
C2C	Consumer to Consumer
CB-SEM	Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
COR	Conservation of Resources Theory
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CR	Construct Reliability
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
HO	Hope
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
IWB	Innovative Work Behavior
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure
MSA	Measurement System Analysis
O2O	Online to Offline





OP	Optimism
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
PMS	Performance Measurement Systems
PsyCap	Psychological Capital
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SE	Self-Efficacy
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index





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- A RESPONDENTS' PROFILE (PILOT STUDY)
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is briefly illustrated in this chapter. Following the introduction, section 1.2 presents the background of the study, while section 1.3 specifies the research statement. In addition, Section 1.4 outlines the study objectives, while Sections 1.5 and 1.6 describe the research question and the research framework, respectively. Finally, research hypotheses are listed in section 1.7, section 1.8 provides the research contributions of this study, while section 1.9 gives the interpretation of the terminology of this study, introduces the scope and structure of the study in 1.10 and 1.11, and concludes this chapter in 1.12.



1.2 Research Background

Digital transformation has engendered a profound reconfiguration of industries globally, with the retail sector serving as a prominent case study of this transformative process (Subhash, 2025). According to the latest data, global online retail sales are projected to reach approximately \$6.09 trillion in 2024, with an expected growth to \$8.09 trillion by 2028 (Statista, 2024). As e-commerce continues to surge, digital transformation is reshaping industries across the globe, compelling businesses to innovate and quickly adapt in order to maintain their competitive edge and meet the ever-evolving demands of stakeholders (Taherdoost, 2024).

This transformation presents a challenge to traditional performance measurement systems (PMS), as traditional performance evaluations are unable to effectively assess employee performance in the context of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things (Alnoor et al., 2024; Cosa & Torelli, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). In this context, adaptive performance defined as employees' ability to adapt to rapidly changing work conditions, has become a critical capability for individual success in modern workplaces (Cristine, 2025). Therefore, the ability to adapt has become the ultimate currency for employees in digital commerce (Ramos et al., 2025).

As the CEO of LinkedIn pointed out, "Even if you aren't changing your job, your job is most likely changing on you" (LinkedIn, 2023). This vividly illustrates the rapid evolution of job roles in the technology-driven era. Adaptive performance, therefore, becomes crucial for employees to effectively handle changing roles. In fact,





a global analysis by McKinsey reveals that, in the context of automation and AI adoption, the demand for "adaptability" is expected to outpace other skills, showing double-digit growth rates alongside digital skills and entrepreneurial spirit (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In other words, the deeper technological transformation penetrates a field, the more organizations need employees to possess strong adaptability to cope with new tools, processes, and challenges.

According to data from the 2025 Future of Jobs Report, 44% of employees' skills will be impacted over the next five years. Reportedly, the importance of cognitive skills is growing the fastest, reflecting the increasing importance of adaptability in the workplace. Surveyed enterprises believe that the most rapidly increasing important skills are adaptability, flexibility, agility, motivation, and self-awareness (World Economic Forum, 2025). In the context of digitalization and globalization, individuals need to continuously adjust and develop to meet the rapidly changing environment and challenges (Abbas & Shamim, 2023; Soltani, 2025). Therefore, cultivating adaptive performance has become an urgent priority to thrive in ongoing technological changes.

Digital transformation is profoundly affecting various industries, especially the e-commerce industry (Criveanu, 2023). E-commerce, as a digital commerce model based on the Internet, relies on network platforms for buying, paying, logistics, and other business activities (Wang et al., 2024). It is closely linked to the progress and innovation of technology and directly faces challenges brought by the rapid iteration of technology (Grant, 2025). Compared with other traditional industries, the e-commerce industry requires more adaptability to technology, as its operations, marketing, and services almost all rely on the support of emerging technologies (Qin et al., 2024). As





technology rapidly advances, the work environment in the e-commerce industry continues to change, and employees must not only adapt to new workflows but also cope with constantly changing consumer demands and market trends (Sharma et al., n.d.).

In the face of changing consumer demands, Alibaba's annual "Double 11 Shopping Festival" is one of the largest shopping events in the world (Wang & Yang, 2024). During this period, consumer demand surges, and e-commerce platforms need to prepare inventory and warehouse adjustments in advance to cope with unexpected sales growth (Pu et al., 2024). Employees must quickly respond to the ever-changing order volumes, customer inquiries, and delivery pressures. The total sales of various e-commerce platforms during the Double Eleven Festival in 2024 reached 1.44 trillion yuan, an increase of 26.6% over 2023 (Sohu News, 2024). During the Double 11 shopping festival, faced with overwhelming orders and online customer inquiries, employees needed to adjust strategies and optimize work processes in a timely manner. This once again emphasized the importance of adaptability for employees.

Market trends in e-commerce are subject to continuous evolution (Grant, 2025). In recent years, social media platforms have significantly enhanced their e-commerce capabilities, with Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok leading the charge by integrating shopping functionalities that allow brands and merchants to sell products directly through these platforms (Joshi, 2025). TikTok, in particular, has emerged as a prominent force, with its short video content rapidly transforming into a key driver for e-commerce, especially among younger demographics (Park & Park, 2021). Between 2020 and 2021, TikTok's e-commerce growth surged, reflecting an increased adoption





of short videos and live streaming for product promotion and sales (Kant, 2025). These compelling businesses to swiftly adjust their product supply chains and marketing strategies in response to this shifting demand.

Participation in emerging TikTok trends provides a concrete context in which adaptive performance can be observed among e-commerce employees. Engaging with trending content requires employees to demonstrate creativity, marketing flexibility, and rapid problem-solving skills, as they must quickly design, produce, and promote content that aligns with shifting consumer preferences and platform algorithms (Kohli, 2025). For example, rural e-commerce livestream hosts in Shaanxi Province often adapt traditional product displays into short, engaging videos for Douyin, adjusting scripts and visuals in response to real-time audience engagement data, thereby exemplifying adaptive skills in digital marketing (Zhang et al., 2024).



Consequently, adaptability refers to an individual's ability to adjust effectively to new, changing, or unexpected situations and environments, and it has become a critical competency for e-commerce professionals (Lancry, 2025; Selvan et al., 2025). Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have redefined operational processes, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and consumer engagement (Grant, 2025). These innovations underscore the imperative for e-commerce enterprises to continuously innovate in order to align with evolving consumer expectations (Praswati et al., 2024). As such, employees must demonstrate agility in adapting to emerging trends. Moreover, the integration of these advanced technologies, coupled with the rising demand for personalized services and





expedited delivery, further supports the necessity for ongoing adaptation within the dynamic e-commerce landscape (Grant, 2025).

As the world's largest e-commerce market, China will have more than 70 million e-commerce employees by 2025 (Zhao & Lü, 2024). There is still a talent gap in the e-commerce industry. According to the 2023 E-commerce Talent Survey Report published by NetEase and Yingdong Education, which surveyed 400 e-commerce sellers, more than 40% of sellers report a talent shortage. Among the surveyed enterprises, 33% urgently need platform operations personnel, 27% need multi-skilled talent, 16% need customer service personnel, 8% need product planning and R&D talent, and 6% need graphic design and video personnel (Chen, 2024). The most in-demand talents are platform operations and multi-skilled talents, as these employees can handle the changing market environment and technology updates (Sharef et al., 2024). Additionally, adaptive performance at various job positions helps employees cope with the changes in the e-commerce industry, improving flexibility and competitiveness within the company (Moroz, 2024). Therefore, the rapid development of the e-commerce industry and fluctuating market demands make adaptive performance a key trait sought after by e-commerce enterprises.

As the province with the highest e-commerce output among the five northwestern provinces, Shaanxi Province has demonstrated unique potential in the field of agricultural e-commerce. Its rich agricultural resources and products provide significant market demand for e-commerce platforms (Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Shaanxi Province, n.d.). The province's e-commerce infrastructure has significantly improved, with county-level comprehensive commercial service centres





and township commercial centres reaching 91% and 96% coverage, respectively, by early 2025 (Shaanxi Provincial People's Government, 2025).

Furthermore, 83 county-level e-commerce public service centres and 8,486 village service stations have been established. Shaanxi has actively developed rural e-commerce, promoted "digital commerce to empower agriculture," and cultivated e-commerce live-streaming bases and rural e-commerce leaders, thus popularizing new business models such as live-streaming sales, instant retail, and community group purchasing (Shaanxi Provincial People's Government, 2025). By November 2024, Shaanxi's online agricultural product retail sales reached 29.7 billion yuan, a year-on-year growth of 16.8%, with fruit retail sales ranking second nationwide, growing by 18.3%. Wugong County's e-commerce has upgraded from "buy northwest, sell nationwide" to "buy nationwide, sell globally" (Shaanxi Provincial People's Government, 2025).

With the rapid growth of the digital economy and e-commerce, employees in Shaanxi province are encountering significant challenges in adapting to technological changes, enhancing their skill sets, and pursuing continuous training. According to the Shaanxi Provincial Statistics Bureau (2024), the total online retail sales in Shaanxi reached approximately 191.39 billion yuan in 2023, highlighting e-commerce as a critical driver for regional economic growth. However, against this backdrop of rapid development, individual skills gaps have increasingly emerged as significant issues. The Ministry of Commerce's China E-Commerce Talent Development Report (2024) indicates substantial talent shortages in Shaanxi, particularly in livestreaming e-commerce, cross-border trade, and rural e-commerce, with pronounced deficiencies in





platform operation and interdisciplinary comprehensive skills. Such skills gaps indicate employees' challenges in quickly adapting to constantly emerging technologies and new business models.

Insufficient training systems exacerbate employees' capability shortfalls. Surveys reveal that while some regions in Shaanxi have initiated grassroots-level e-commerce training programs, such as Yan'an City's elite e-commerce training in 2024, these programs are often short-term and lack continuity (Song, 2024). Additionally, employees generally face difficulties in technological adaptation, which negatively impacts their performance. Employees transitioning from traditional offline commerce to online platforms often struggle significantly with acquiring digital tools and data analytical skills (Chen, 2024). Recognizing these issues, the Shaanxi Provincial Government emphasized the necessity of reinforcing individual skill training to enhance employee adaptability to technological changes and fluctuating market demands, thus promoting sustained improvements in individual performance (Shaanxi Provincial Government, 2024).

In Shaanxi Province, the e-commerce sector has been growing rapidly, driven by advancements in digital technologies and an expanding market for online retail. However, this growth presents unique challenges for employees in the region, particularly in adapting to technological changes, shifting consumer behaviors, and an increasingly competitive market environment (Zhang et al., 2024). Many employees in Shaanxi's e-commerce industry face skill gaps and limited exposure to advanced technological practices, which can hinder their ability to keep pace with the fast-evolving digital landscape (Li, 2022; Ying & Wang, 2022). This is especially true in





rural areas, where employees may lack access to sufficient training or resources to develop the necessary skills to thrive in the e-commerce sector.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) plays a critical role in helping these employees overcome such challenges. By developing key components such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, employees in Shaanxi can better adapt to the dynamic nature of the e-commerce market (Moroz, 2024). Self-efficacy helps employees believe in their ability to tackle complex tasks, while hope and optimism provide the motivation to set and achieve goals despite the uncertainties of the digital environment. Resilience enables them to bounce back from setbacks and persist in the face of difficulties, crucial for overcoming the challenges of working in a rapidly changing sector (Yuzi et al., 2025).



In this context, integrating psychological capital into e-commerce research is particularly important in Shaanxi. It provides a foundation for understanding how individual psychological resources can help employees in this region navigate technological disruptions and market fluctuations (Luo et al., 2019). As these employees gain confidence and the ability to adapt, they can better contribute to the growth and competitiveness of e-commerce companies in Shaanxi, positioning themselves to overcome the region's current limitations in technological infrastructure and workforce development (Luo et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2024).

Innovative work behavior (IWB) further enhances this process. In the e-commerce sector of Shaanxi, employees need to engage in IWB to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that will improve business performance and help the company





stay competitive (Abbas et al., 2024). IWB enables employees to apply their psychological resources—such as hope, optimism, and resilience—into actionable solutions. This behavior is critical for adapting to changes in market demand and technology, which are particularly pronounced in the rapidly developing e-commerce industry of Shaanxi (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022). By fostering IWB, employees in Shaanxi can drive innovation and improve adaptive performance, thereby contributing to the sustainable success of e-commerce companies in this region.

Accordingly, employee performance, particularly adaptive performance, plays a crucial role in the success of e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi Province. By prioritizing and nurturing adaptive performance, these businesses can enhance operational excellence, boost customer satisfaction, foster innovation, and strengthen their brand presence (Vicente & Cunningham, 2025). This, in turn, will facilitate sustainable long-term growth in an increasingly competitive e-commerce landscape. Given the unique challenges faced by e-commerce in Shaanxi, studying employee adaptive performance becomes essential (Cheng et al., 2025). Understanding how to effectively cultivate adaptive performance not only supports the individual development of employees but also aligns with the strategic objectives of local enterprises. This research can provide valuable insights that drive improvements, ultimately benefiting both the workforce and the broader economic landscape of the region.





1.3 Problem Statement

In the e-commerce industry, employee adaptive performance faces numerous challenges, largely driven by the rapid development of the sector, technological innovation, and shifting market demands (Moroz, 2024). The dynamic nature of e-commerce requires employees to continually adjust their work methods to accommodate emerging business models, technological tools, and evolving consumer preferences (Tiwari & Dubey, n.d.). Employee adaptive performance, which refers to the ability to flexibly adjust and perform effectively in the face of new tasks, uncertainties, and changing conditions, is crucial to the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of individuals (Suardana, 2025). However, despite the growing importance of adaptive performance in contemporary employees, employees in the e-commerce sector still face significant challenges in this area.



E-commerce employees, particularly in rural and agricultural regions of Shaanxi, face a highly dynamic work environment characterized by rapid technological changes and evolving consumer demands. For instance, employees must frequently adapt to new digital platforms and tools, such as Taobao Rural e-commerce terminals or TikTok Shop, to manage online transactions and marketing activities effectively (Koswara, 2025). This skill requirement is critical because approximately 62% of products purchased online in rural areas are unavailable in local physical stores, requiring employees to efficiently handle digital platforms to ensure successful sales (Luo et al., 2019). Moreover, the high-pressure environment refers to the combined impact of heavy workload, rapid task switching, and performance expectations, which significantly affects employee adaptability; surveys indicate that nearly 48% of e-





commerce frontline staff in rural China report difficulty in meeting sales targets due to these pressures (Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore, employees' ability to quickly acquire new knowledge and perform under pressure is essential for sustaining adaptive performance and maintaining organizational competitiveness in these fast-evolving digital marketplaces.

Secondly, the increasing demand for innovation in the e-commerce sector means that employee innovation is a key factor in enhancing adaptive performance (Zygiaris, 2022). Organizations need employees who can propose novel solutions, quickly adapt strategies and business models, and deal with new challenges in a fast-moving market (Holbeche, 2023). Furthermore, innovation is not instantaneous, it requires employees to engage in creative thinking, problem-solving, and a willingness to take risks (Shet, 2024). In this process, employees' psychological capital, particularly self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, can provide the necessary support to face challenges (Karimi et al., 2023). However, how to effectively enhance individuals' psychological capital and leverage it to improve adaptive performance remains a challenge for many employees (Ain et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024).

As a representative of China's western region, Shaanxi faces challenges in the development of e-commerce (Yin & Wang, 2022). According to the 48th Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet, the "Internet Protocol Version 4" (IPv4) resources in the western region account for only 9.16% of the country, and the "China National Domain Name" (CNDN) accounts for only 27% of the country. The construction of 5G base stations also lags behind relatively (Yang, 2022). Against this backdrop, employees of e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi face challenges in their





ability to adapt to new technologies and adjust their adaptive performance in the rapidly changing digital economy, and there is a lack of effective training support systems.

In Shaanxi Province, rural e-commerce employees are predominantly local youth returning to their hometowns, grassroots farmers, and former traditional retail practitioners, this composition contributes to a generally weak foundation in e-commerce skills and a lag in the adoption of digital tools among these workers (Ying & Wang, 2022). In many county-level livestreaming initiatives, hosts often lack professional training, rely on monotonous sales scripts, and possess limited data analysis skills, resulting in extremely low conversion rates from live broadcasts (Zhao et al., 2024). Furthermore, the rapid iteration of platform rules and the frequent updating of content formats have left e-commerce staff facing a practical dilemma of “not understanding the rules and failing to keep up with the pace” (Liu, 2021). In particular, the coexistence of cross-border e-commerce, local livestreaming, and multiple e-commerce platforms means that employees must rapidly learn new rules, respond to diverse customer needs, and overcome technological barriers, factors that impose even higher demands on their adaptive capacity (Cao, 2022).

Despite the significant progress achieved by Shaanxi’s e-commerce sector in recent years under government promotion, such as establishing 73 county-level service centres and providing training to hundreds of thousands of participants, the adaptive performance of individual employees at the micro level remains a cause for concern (Li et al., 2024). The absence of a systematic adaptation mechanism, low rates of training transfer, and insufficient organizational support have caused employees under environmental pressure to frequently exhibit fatigue, avoidance, and resistance (Wei et





al., 2023). Therefore, examining the key variables that affect e-commerce employees' adaptive performance at the individual level constitutes an important pathway toward promoting the high-quality development of the regional digital economy.

Psychological capital has been widely recognized as an important factor influencing employee adaptive performance (Ain et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024). According to Luthans et al. (2024), psychological capital refers to the positive psychological resources employees possess to cope with challenges and maintain a positive mindset. It includes four key dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2024). These dimensions not only contribute to employees' day-to-day performance but also have a profound impact on their adaptive performance (Tang et al., 2024). Self-efficacy enables employees to maintain a sense of control and belief in their abilities when faced with uncertain or difficult tasks, thus enhancing their performance in dynamic work environments (Bandura, 2023).

Hope, as a goal-oriented psychological trait, helps employees set clear goals and adjust their strategies to overcome obstacles, thus improving their adaptability (Freeze, 2024). Resilience and optimism enable employees to recover quickly from setbacks and maintain a positive attitude, which is crucial for adapting to new environments and tasks (Shet, 2024). However, despite the theoretical support for the impact of psychological capital on adaptive performance, how to enhance these psychological resources and utilize them to improve employees' adaptive performance in the e-commerce industry in Shaanxi Province remains a less explored area.





The psychological resources of e-commerce practitioners in Shaanxi Province generally face challenges, and there is a lack of psychological capital. Firstly, due to the intense competition and rapid updates in the e-commerce industry, many practitioners lack confidence in their own success. When faced with fluctuations in performance, their emotions tend to fluctuate as well, resulting in a lack of stable psychological expectations (Ying & Wang, 2022). Issues such as a poor development environment and insufficient incentive mechanisms have led to the difficulty of retaining high-quality talent, with local practitioners generally feeling uncertain about their future prospects (Zhang, 2021).

The e-commerce industry in Shaanxi Province is experiencing rapid technological development and ever-changing market demands (Reddy, 2024). Within this environment, employees must continuously learn and adapt to new technology platforms, shifting consumer demands, and updated platform regulations. Psychological capital can provide employees with the necessary psychological support, helping them maintain a positive attitude and cope with stress in the face of these changes, thereby enhancing their adaptability (Chong & Malakhova, 2025). While this has been theoretically established, its specific manifestation in the Shaanxi e-commerce environment requires further empirical research. The selection of psychological capital (PsyCap), innovative work behavior (IWB), and adaptive performance as key variables in this study is grounded in their direct relevance to the research question and the theoretical framework. Psychological capital was chosen due to its well-established role in influencing individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes (Luthans et al., 2024). PsyCap, comprising hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, has been shown to significantly impact employees' ability to adapt to workplace changes and



navigate challenges, making it central to understanding adaptive performance in dynamic environments such as e-commerce (Avey et al., 2011).

The introduction and cultivation of rural e-commerce talent in Shaanxi lacks sustainability, and the narrow career advancement pathways have caused many to see no long-term development opportunities (Ying & Wang, 2022). Faced with performance fluctuations in live-streaming sales, changes in platform traffic algorithms, or unexpected logistics and after-sales issues, many employees struggle to maintain resilience and, when encountering setbacks, tend to experience anxiety or even give up (Fang et al., 2022). Overall, e-commerce practitioners face deficiencies in psychological resources such as confidence and optimism, which has become a hidden concern affecting their sustainable development.



As the e-commerce industry gradually transitions from an extensive, traffic-driven model to one focused on refined and data-informed operations, employees' innovative work behavior has become a critical factor in improving employee performance (Alheet et al., 2021). Innovative work behavior refers to a series of actions in which employees generate, advocate for, and implement new ideas or methods in the workplace to improve processes, products, or services (AlEsa & Durugbo, 2022). In Shaanxi Province, under policy initiatives such as “Digital Commerce Empowering Agriculture” (Shu Shang Xing Nong) and “Livestreaming to Support Farmers,” enterprises across counties have begun to integrate new business models such as content-based e-commerce, short-video marketing, and community group buying, thereby placing increasing expectations on employees' capacity for innovation (Wei et al., 2023).





However, in reality, employees in most e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi remain in purely execution-based roles and lack both the authority and incentives to innovate (Ying & Wang, 2022). Field studies reveal that grassroots livestreaming teams often broadcast for up to eight hours a day using highly repetitive scripts, leading to significant content homogenization that severely suppresses employees' willingness to express themselves and engage in creative work (Zhang, 2023). In addition, the absence of a strong regional culture of innovation and the lack of systematic training mechanisms have failed to stimulate innovative tendencies among staff (Li et al., 2024). As a result, the lifecycle of e-commerce products remains short, repurchase rates are low, and these factors collectively restrict the improvement of overall employees' performance.



Both theoretical and empirical studies have shown that psychological capital is a critical antecedent for fostering innovative behavior (Karimi et al., 2023). Employees with a high sense of confidence and hope are more inclined to propose new ideas and take the initiative to implement them, thereby enhancing their innovative output (Hasan et al., 2023). At the same time, innovative work behavior itself serves as a key pathway for employees to adapt to change and solve emerging problems in the workplace (Hasan et al., 2023). Therefore, as Shaanxi's e-commerce sector shifts from rapid expansion to high-quality development, innovative behavior becomes an intrinsic driver of employee sustainability. It may also function as a crucial mediating mechanism through which psychological capital influences adaptive performance. Innovative work behavior was selected as a mediating variable because it directly relates to how employees express their psychological resources through proactive actions. IWB has been linked to the





ability to generate, promote, and implement new ideas and solutions, which are crucial for navigating the rapid technological changes and evolving market demands characteristic of the e-commerce sector (Jong & Hartog, 2010). This makes IWB an essential mechanism through which PsyCap influences adaptive performance.

Despite the urgent need to examine how e-commerce enterprises, especially those in the retail industry, can foster psychological capital and innovative work behaviors among their employees, research on this topic remains limited in Shaanxi Province (Chin et al., 2023). Most studies related to e-commerce development focus on factors such as improving supply chain quality, enterprise development, and policy measures (Shen & xia, 2021; wang et al., 2024; Zhang, 2023). Therefore, there is a research gap in the field of psychological capital and innovative behaviors among employees in e-commerce enterprises of Shaanxi province, which provides a valuable opportunity for research. This gap is significant because positive psychological resource and innovation is a key strategy for e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi Province to stand out from the competition in the same industry (Yang et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the relationship between adaptive performance, psychological capital, and innovative work behavior is of significant practical importance from the employee perspective (Devassy & Jindal, 2024). Guided by Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study examines how psychological capital influences adaptive performance, with innovative work behavior as a mediating mechanism. Psychological capital provides employees with the psychological support they need to better cope with work pressures and challenges, thereby enhancing adaptive performance (Luo et al., 2021). Meanwhile, innovative work behavior drives adaptive performance by enabling





employees to propose innovative solutions and adjust quickly to changing work environments (Ain et al., 2023; Devassy & Jindal, 2024).

The interaction between psychological capital and innovative work behavior plays a pivotal role in improving employees' adaptive performance (Karimi et al., 2023). In addition, despite existing theoretical support, the relationship between psychological capital, innovative work behavior, and adaptive performance, particularly in the context of the e-commerce sector in Shaanxi Province, remains underexamined. This study aims to fill this gap by providing in-depth empirical analysis and theoretical support, offering valuable insights for human resource management in the e-commerce sector, and contributing to the enhancement of employee adaptive performance.



1.4 Research Objectives

Generally, this research seeks to determine the effect of psychological capital on the adaptive performance of employees at e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province, with the mediation of innovative work behaviour. Specifically, this research aims:

RO1: To examine the effect of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) and innovative work behaviour on adaptive performance of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province.



RO2: To determine the effect of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) on innovative work behaviour of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province.

RO3: To assess the mediating role of innovative work behaviour in the effect of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) on adaptive performance of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province.

1.5 Research Questions

Generally, this research seeks to provide an answer to the following main question:

What are the roles of psychological capital and innovative work behaviour in affecting the adaptive performance of employees at e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi Province?

Specifically, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What are the effects of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) and innovative work behaviour on adaptive performance of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province?

RQ2: What is the effect of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) on innovative work behaviour of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province?

RQ3: Does innovative work behaviour mediate the effect of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience) on adaptive performance of employees in e-commerce enterprises in Shaanxi province?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H1: Self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance.

H2: Optimism has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance.

H3: Hope has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance.

H4: Resilience has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance.

H5: Innovative work behaviour has a significant positive effect on adaptive performance.

H6: Self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on innovative work behaviour.

H7: Optimism has a significant positive effect on innovative work behaviour.

H8: Hope has a significant positive effect on innovative work behaviour.

H9: Resilience has a significant positive effect on innovative work behaviour.

H10: Innovative work behaviour mediates the effect of self-efficacy on adaptive performance.

H11: Innovative work behaviour mediates the effect of optimism on adaptive performance.



H12: Innovative work behaviour mediates the effect of hope on adaptive performance.

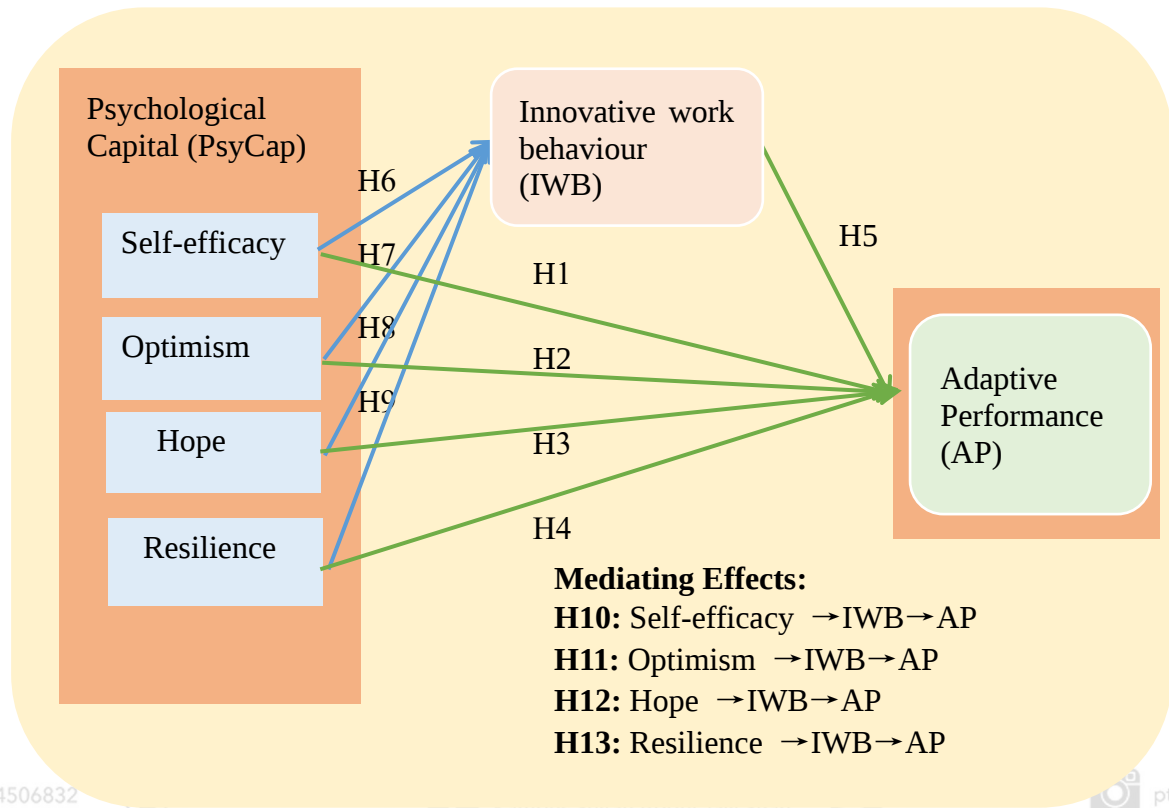
H13: Innovative work behaviour mediates the effect of resilience on adaptive performance.

1.7 Research Framework

The research framework, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, provides a comprehensive view of the relationships between Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), and Adaptive Performance (AP). In this framework, psychological capital is conceptualized as the independent variable (IV), consisting of four core dimensions: Self-efficacy, Optimism, Hope, and Resilience (Luthans et al., 2024). These dimensions collectively represent an employee's psychological resources, which influence their ability to perform in dynamic and uncertain work environments (Kharismasyah & Perdhana, 2025). Specifically, Self-efficacy refers to the belief in one's ability to complete tasks and face challenges, while Optimism reflects the positive outlook on future outcomes. Hope involves setting goals and identifying pathways to achieve them, and Resilience captures the ability to recover from setbacks and continue pursuing goals despite adversity (Luthans et al., 2024).

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



The dimensions of psychological capital are hypothesized to directly influence Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), which is conceptualized as the mediator between psychological capital and Adaptive Performance (AP). Innovative work behaviour refers to the actions employees take in generating, promoting, and implementing new ideas, processes, or products within the workplace (Alshahrani et al., 2025). It is considered a critical behaviour in environments marked by rapid change, such as the e-commerce sector, where employees are continually tasked with finding innovative solutions to meet the evolving demands of the market (Jia et al., 2025).



The framework proposes nine direct hypotheses (H1–H9) to examine the direct effects of the four dimensions of psychological capital on both innovative work behaviour and adaptive Performance. Specifically, these hypotheses seek to establish how each dimension of psychological capital influences innovative work behaviour, and how innovative work behaviour in turn affects adaptive performance. These hypotheses are grounded in the understanding that employees with higher psychological capital are more likely to engage in innovative behaviours due to their enhanced cognitive and emotional resources, ultimately improving their ability to adapt to changing work conditions (Ngo & Vu, 2025). The research also proposes four mediating hypotheses (H10–H13) that investigate the role of innovative work behaviour as a mediator between each dimension of psychological capital and adaptive performance. By examining the mediating role of innovative work behaviour, this study aims to uncover the processes through which psychological capital influences adaptive performance, thus providing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving adaptive performance.

This model is grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018), which posits that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect valuable resources to cope with stress and environmental demands. According to COR theory, employees leverage their psychological resources, such as psychological capital, to engage in innovative behaviours that help them navigate uncertain and rapidly changing environments (Ozyilmaz, 2020; Pandey et al., 2021). Employees with greater psychological capital are better positioned to manage stress, overcome challenges, and engage in creative problem-solving, which ultimately enhances their adaptive performance (Kim et al., 2019). Adaptive performance, in this





context, refers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in the work environment, learn new skills, and apply them to improve their performance in new or unfamiliar situations. This ability is particularly valuable in industries like e-commerce, where technological advancements, shifting market conditions, and evolving consumer demands require employees to continuously innovate and adapt.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory underpins this study by suggesting that employees who possess high levels of psychological capital are more likely to proactively engage in innovative work behaviour, which, in turn, supports the enhancement of their adaptive performance (Melhem et al., 2025). The model posits that psychological capital serves as a foundational resource that employees draw upon to engage in innovative work behaviour, and that these innovative behaviours, driven by psychological resources, enable employees to effectively cope with workplace challenges and improve their ability to adapt (Giner et al., 2023). Employees who possess abundant psychological capital can utilize these resources to optimize their potential, solve problems related to uncertainty, crisis, or external pressures, and enhance their adaptive performance (Luo et al., 2022).

This conceptual framework is designed to examine the complex interplay between psychological resources, innovation, and adaptive performance, offering valuable insights into how these elements interact to contribute to organizational success. By investigating these relationships, this research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how psychological capital, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive performance function together within organizations, particularly in industries that are heavily impacted by external changes, such as e-commerce. The findings of this study



will contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical strategies for enhancing employee performance, particularly in dynamic work environments where adaptability and innovation are essential for maintaining competitive advantage.

1.8 Research Contributions

1.8.1 Theoretical Contribution

A review of the existing literature reveals that the theoretical foundation and empirical research on the impact of psychological capital on employee performance in e-commerce enterprises remain underexamined (Khoshaim, 2024; Tee, 2024; Zhang & Xu, 2024). Therefore, this study extends existing research on employee performance in e-commerce enterprises and contributes to the literature both theoretically and practically.

The primary contribution of this study is the extension of an adaptive performance model based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. This study examines how psychological capital (PsyCap) enhances innovative work behaviour, which in turn improves adaptive performance among employees in e-commerce enterprises. As the e-commerce industry experiences rapid growth, technological advancements, and intensified market competition, businesses are facing increasingly complex operational environments that demand greater adaptability from employees (Macon & Hughes, 2023). While adaptive performance is recognized as a key determinant of organizational competitiveness (Costa & Castro, 2021), limited research



has been conducted on adaptive performance in the e-commerce sector (Li et al., 2020). To address this gap, this study extends and empirically validates a research model grounded in COR theory, utilizing CB-SEM to systematically examine the relationships between psychological capital, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive performance.

Furthermore, although previous studies have established that psychological capital plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' psychological resilience, its specific mechanism in influencing innovative work behaviour, and ultimately adaptive performance, remains underexamined (Abbas et al., 2024; Frimpong et al., 2024). This study proposes that innovative work behaviour serves as a mediating variable between psychological capital and adaptive performance, meaning that employees with higher psychological capital are more likely to engage in innovative behaviours, which in turn enhance their adaptive performance. By investigating this mediating effect, this study not only expands the scope of factors influencing adaptive performance but also highlights psychological capital as a highly malleable psychological resource that can serve as an effective intervention strategy for improving employees' adaptability. These findings provide both theoretical insights and practical implications for e-commerce enterprises seeking to enhance employee performance in dynamic work environments. Existing literature suggests that the theoretical and empirical foundations linking remain underdeveloped (Devassy & Jindal, 2024; Luo et al., 2021). Therefore, this study extends prior research on the relationship between psychological capital and adaptive performance and contributes to literature in several ways.

To date, few studies have investigated the positive role of psychological capital in improving adaptive performance in e-commerce enterprises within a unified





theoretical framework. Most existing research focuses on how employee training supports organizational growth in e-commerce settings, while relatively little attention has been paid to how psychological capital specifically contributes to employees' adaptive performance (Ying & Wang, 2022). To address this gap, this study adopts Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Given that COR theory views both psychological capital and innovative work behavior as key personal resources that can enhance adaptive performance, this study provides deeper insight into how these two variables interact to influence employee adaptability. As such, the study contributes to the literature not only conceptually but also methodologically, by highlighting COR theory as a viable and theoretically grounded alternative model for understanding the psychological capital–adaptive performance relationship. Moreover, the findings demonstrate the applicability of COR theory in explaining how psychological resources function in fast-paced, dynamic work environments such as e-commerce.

Building on the theoretical foundations of the Conservation of Resources theory, this study extends the understanding of resource investment by demonstrating that psychological capital functions as a psychological resource that employees leverage to enhance adaptability in dynamic work environments (Peethambaran & Naim, 2024). Employees with higher self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience tend to perceive change as an opportunity rather than a threat, thereby increasing their engagement in proactive behaviours such as innovative work behaviour, which enables them to adapt more effectively to environmental uncertainties (Iqbal et al., 2023). By conceptualizing psychological capital as a resource accumulation mechanism and innovative work behaviour as a resource utilization mechanism, this study advances Conservation of





Resources theory by illustrating how employees translate psychological resources into adaptive innovative work behaviours, ultimately enhancing adaptive performance (Alwali, 2023; Cooper et al., 2018).

Furthermore, while prior studies have provided empirical evidence on the role of psychological capital in influencing adaptive performance, very few have examined the mediating role of innovative work behavior in this relationship. In particular, the differential effects of each dimension of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience) on adaptive performance remain underexamined. By examining the distinct dimensions of psychological capital and their interactions, this study offers conceptual clarification on how psychological capital, innovative work behavior, and adaptive performance are interconnected. The results also provide empirical support for the differential impacts and interrelationships among the psychological capital components.

In addition, this study contributes to the measurement literature by validating the effectiveness and reliability of existing scales used to assess self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience, adaptive performance, and innovative work behavior. Through a rigorous empirical approach, the study offers a comprehensive explanation of how innovative work behavior helps to solidify the link between psychological capital and adaptive performance. The validated measurement model adds to the repository of reliable tools for future performance research, enabling researchers to confidently examine the nuanced effects of psychological capital dimensions in predicting adaptive outcomes.





1.8.2 Practical Contribution

The present study offers valuable insights at the employee level for managing human resources in dynamic e-commerce environments. Grounded in Conservation of Resources theory, the findings indicate that employees' psychological capital, particularly optimism, hope, and resilience, constitutes a critical personal resource that enhances adaptive performance. In fast-paced, innovation-driven contexts such as livestream commerce, these positive psychological capacities enable employees to cope with continuous change and complex challenges, thereby sustaining their effectiveness. Notably, self-efficacy alone did not significantly predict adaptive performance, suggesting that confidence must be complemented by forward-looking optimism and hope, as well as the capacity to recover from resilience, to translate into actual adaptability.

From a managerial perspective, these results underscore the importance of cultivating psychological capital among employees as a practical strategy to improve adaptability. Human resource development initiatives can integrate targeted training and coaching programs to build optimism, hope, and resilience in employee (Corbu et al., 2021). Managers should also foster a supportive organizational climate characterized by psychological safety, openness, and autonomy, which reinforces these personal resources and encourages innovative thinking (Liu et al., 2023; Su et al., 2022). In practice, recognizing and rewarding employee achievements is a simple but effective way to boost morale and optimism while buffering stress, thereby fortifying employees' resilience and willingness to embrace change (Prabhakar et al., 2024).





Furthermore, the mediating role of innovative work behavior in this study signals that organizations should actively encourage creativity and experimentation at the individual level. E-commerce managers can promote an innovative-friendly culture by providing employees with the autonomy to examine new ideas, training in creative problem-solving, and a tolerance for trial-and-error learning. By channelling employees' psychological capital into innovative work behaviors, organizations not only spur innovation but also amplify adaptive performance outcomes. In sum, this research contributes practically by guiding managers in developing their workforce's psychological capital and fostering a culture of innovation, thereby enhancing employees' adaptive performance, and sustaining competitive advantage in rapidly evolving e-commerce markets.



1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

1.9.1 Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance refers to the ability of employees to adjust and respond effectively to changes in their work environment to meet job demands, including stress and crisis management, creative problem-solving, cultural adaptability, and the ability to acquire new knowledge (Park & Park, 2021).



1.9.2 Psychological Capital

Psychological capital (PsyCap), representing an individual's positive psychological resources, is a key factor theoretically linked to both innovation and stress management (Avey et al., 2009; Ghafoor & Haar, 2022; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). As a psychological asset, psychological capital serves as a valuable resource pool that not only fosters innovative work-related ideas but also mitigates work-related stress. Rooted in the framework of positive organizational behaviour, psychological capital comprises four primary components: hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy (Hernandez, 2023).

1.9.2.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve goals in specific situations (Bandura, 2023). As an important dimension of psychological capital, self-efficacy reflects an individual's confidence when facing challenges and complex situations (Hariyani & Putra, 2024). It is closely related to their ability to execute tasks, solve problems, and adapt to new changes (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). In the e-commerce context, self-efficacy reflects an employee's confidence in their ability to manage digital tasks, solve customer-related issues, adapt to technological changes, and engage in innovative behaviors required for online sales and marketing activities (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2023; Umrani et al., 2023).



1.9.2.2 Optimism

Optimism, as defined within the framework of psychological capital, refers to an individual's general tendency to expect positive outcomes and view challenges as temporary and manageable (Giancaspro et al., 2022). It is characterized by a hopeful attitude toward the future, where individuals believe that, in the face of adversity, they are able to find a way to succeed (Wong et al., 2023). In the context of e-commerce employees, optimism is measured by evaluating their confidence in achieving success in digital tasks, overcoming online sales challenges, and adapting to technological changes within the e-commerce environment (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021). Employees with higher levels of optimism are likely to approach challenges in their work with a positive attitude, believing that obstacles can be overcome and that the future holds opportunities for success (Ghazali & Afsar, 2022; Purol & Chopik, 2021).



1.9.2.3 Hope

Hope, as a dimension of psychological capital, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to plan and take proactive steps to achieve specific goals, while maintaining a sense of optimism about future outcomes (Dursun, 2021). It involves not only a desire for a positive future but also the perceived pathways to achieve that future and the motivation to pursue those pathways (Colla et al., 2022). For e-commerce employees, hope is assessed in terms of their ability to maintain motivation in managing online tasks, such as digital sales or customer engagement, despite external challenges (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2023). Identify and implement new strategies for increasing sales, adapting





to changing platforms or technologies, and overcoming setbacks like competition or operational difficulties (Volberda et al., 2021). Remain committed to long-term success and achieving professional goals in the dynamic, fast-paced e-commerce environment (Reddy, 2024).

1.9.2.4 Resilience

Resilience is defined as the extent to which an individual can maintain motivation and continue pursuing their goals despite encountering obstacles, stress, or setbacks (Whitfield & Wilby, 2021). It encompasses the ability to recover quickly from challenges, adapt to change, and persist in achieving desired outcomes, particularly in the face of adversity or uncertainty (Moşteanu, 2024). In the context of e-commerce, resilience among employees is demonstrated through their capacity to bounce back from setbacks such as poor sales performance, customer dissatisfaction, or technical issues with the platform (Alwan et al., 2023). It also includes adapting to technological advancements, digital tools, and shifting market conditions while sustaining effective performance. Moreover, resilient e-commerce employees remain committed to their professional goals even when confronted with disruptions like market volatility, evolving customer expectations, or organizational changes (Gazi et al., 2024).



1.9.3 Innovative Work Behaviour

Innovative work behaviour is operationally defined as the degree to which employees create novel solutions, advocate for these ideas, and successfully implement them to enhance job performance or individual efficiency (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022). For e-commerce employees, innovative work behaviour is specifically measured by their ability to develop innovative sales strategies, adopt new digital tools, and improve customer engagement or operational processes in the online environment (Chin et al., 2023).

1.9.4 E-commerce Employees

For this study, e-commerce employees are defined as individuals employed in any capacity within an e-commerce organization in Shaanxi Province, China, whose primary responsibilities involve tasks directly or indirectly contributing to the operation of online business activities (Lin, 2021). These employees may work across various departments such as marketing, sales, customer service, logistics, and digital content creation, with a particular emphasis on roles related to live-streaming commerce, online sales, and content production, which are central to the growing e-commerce industry in Shaanxi (Zhang, 2023).

1.9.5 E-commerce Enterprise

An e-commerce enterprise refers to a business organization that operates primarily through digital platforms to conduct transactions involving the buying and selling of goods, services, or information (Corvalan et al., 2023). These businesses utilize the internet, websites, mobile apps, and other digital tools to interact with customers, manage transactions, and deliver products or services. E-commerce enterprises can be classified into various business models such as Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Business-to-Business (B2B), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), and others (Mäkelä, 2023).

1.10 Scope of Study

This study aims to investigate the impact of psychological capital (PsyCap) on adaptive performance among e-commerce employees in Shaanxi Province, China, with a focus on the mediating role of innovative work behavior (IWB). The scope of this study is clearly delineated in terms of geographical focus, target population, conceptual framework, and methodological approach.

The geographical scope of the study is limited to Shaanxi Province, specifically focusing on employees involved in rural e-commerce and agricultural product e-commerce, cross-border e-commerce, and the e-commerce transformation of traditional enterprises. The target population consists of e-commerce employees who have at least one year of work experience in roles directly related to online sales, digital marketing,



customer service, live-streaming sales, or other e-commerce-related tasks. Employees in managerial or purely administrative roles, who do not directly contribute to customer-facing or operational tasks, was excluded from the study. This focus ensures that the study includes individuals whose work directly influences the success of e-commerce operations.

The exclusion of managerial staff and part-time employees from the sample is based on several considerations relevant to the study's focus on frontline employees, such as those in operations, customer service, and logistics, who are directly involved in technological changes and operational adjustments. First, frontline employees are primarily engaged with the technological changes within the organization and are required to adapt continuously to new systems and processes (Chen et al., 2020). In contrast, managerial staff typically focus on decision-making, strategy, and resource management, rather than daily technological operations, and thus their roles are less likely to involve direct interaction with technological change on the same scale (Utama & Samaad, 2025).

Second, the nature of managerial roles significantly differs from that of frontline employees, with managers overseeing operations without direct involvement in the technical tasks or operational changes that frontline employees face. This distinction makes meaningful comparisons between the psychological capital and adaptive performance of these two groups challenging. Third, part-time employees generally work fewer hours and are often in support roles, which limits their exposure to the core technological changes and operational tasks that are central to the study (Cirillo et al., 2025). As a result, part-time employees may not experience the same degree of





adaptability requirements, potentially skewing the results if included (Fuchs et al., 2024). Finally, excluding both managerial staff and part-time employees enhances the consistency and representativeness of the sample, ensuring that the focus remains on frontline employees who are directly impacted by technological shifts (Jørring, 2025). This exclusion criterion helps to minimize potential confounding factors related to differences in job roles, thereby enhancing the validity of the study's findings.

The conceptual scope of the study includes three main constructs: psychological capital (PsyCap), innovative work behavior (IWB), and adaptive performance. PsyCap is examined through its four core components: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, while IWB is studied as a mediating variable between PsyCap and adaptive performance. Innovative work behavior refers to the generation, promotion, and implementation of novel ideas to improve job performance and organizational outcomes. Adaptive performance is defined as employees' ability to adjust to changing work environments, including technological advancements and shifts in market dynamics.

The methodological approach for this study is quantitative in nature. Data were collected over three months using an online survey administered to approximately 500 e-commerce employees in Shaanxi. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyze the relationships between psychological capital, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive performance, providing robust empirical insights into how psychological resources contribute to employee adaptive performance.





This study excluded e-commerce employees who are part-time, freelance, or self-employed, unless they are directly involved in core operational tasks such as live-streaming or digital marketing. Additionally, employees in purely managerial roles who do not directly engage in e-commerce processes was excluded from the sample. By focusing on individuals directly involved in e-commerce operations, this research ensures that the findings are applicable to those who play an active role in driving innovation and adaptability in the sector.

In summary, the scope of the study is focused on e-commerce employees in Shaanxi Province who meet the eligibility criteria, specifically targeting those with relevant work experience in operational roles. The study aims to understand how psychological capital influences employees' ability to adapt to changes and innovate in the dynamic e-commerce environment.



1.11 Research Structure

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the key topics under investigation and outlines the fundamental concepts of the study. Chapter 2 offers a critical review of the literature related to e-commerce enterprises, psychological capital, and adaptive performance. Chapter 3 details the research methodology employed to test the proposed hypotheses. Chapter 4 presents and interprets empirical findings from the hypothesis testing. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the key results of the study, highlights its limitations and implications, suggests directions for future research, and offers concluding remarks.





1.12 Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to the study, which aims to investigate the impact of psychological capital (PsyCap) on adaptive performance among e-commerce employees in Shaanxi Province, China, with a particular focus on the mediating role of innovative work behavior (IWB). This chapter systematically outlines the research background, problem statement, objectives, questions, framework, hypotheses, and contributions, laying the foundation for the study.

Section 1.2 (Research Background) begins by discussing the global trend of digital transformation, particularly in the e-commerce sector, which has undergone significant changes due to technological advancements. This section highlights the rapid development of e-commerce and underscores the challenges faced by e-commerce enterprises in adapting to technological progress and market changes. The growing importance of adaptive performance—defined as employees' ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions—is emphasized, particularly in industries like e-commerce that are deeply impacted by digital transformation. The study also investigates the current situation in China, focusing on Shaanxi Province, where e-commerce is expanding rapidly, particularly in rural areas. However, the region still faces significant challenges related to technological adaptation and the development of the required workforce skills.



In Section 1.3 (Problem Statement), the research identifies gaps in existing literature, specifically regarding the relationship between psychological capital and adaptive performance, particularly within the context of Shaanxi's e-commerce sector. This section discusses how rapid technological advancements and shifting market demands present challenges for e-commerce employees in adapting to new tools, processes, and business models. It also highlights the lack of effective training and development programs to support employees in improving their adaptive performance. The role of psychological capital—comprising self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—is emphasized as a key factor in helping employees cope with these challenges. However, the impact of psychological capital on adaptive performance in the e-commerce sector remains underexamined, particularly in Shaanxi.



Section 1.4 (Research Objectives) outlines the primary goal of this study, which is to examine how psychological capital affects adaptive performance, with innovative work behavior as a mediating variable. This section highlights the study's aim to assess both the direct and indirect effects of psychological capital on adaptive performance and to investigate the role of innovative work behaviour in this relationship. By achieving these objectives, the study intends to enrich theoretical and practical knowledge on how psychological capital can be leveraged to enhance employees' adaptability and innovation in the e-commerce sector.

Section 1.5 (Research Questions) lists the key questions that guide the study. These questions focus on how psychological capital influences employees' ability to adapt to the changing e-commerce environment and the role of innovative work behavior in this process. Additionally, the questions aim to examine how employees'





psychological resources can be developed and utilized to enhance their adaptability, innovation, and overall performance in the digital economy.

Section 1.6 (Research Hypotheses) presents the theoretical foundations for the study, drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and adaptive performance theory. The framework connects psychological capital to adaptive performance, suggesting that employees with higher levels of psychological capital are better equipped to tackle new challenges. Furthermore, it positions innovative work behavior (IWB) as a key mediator in the relationship between psychological capital and adaptive performance. Innovative work behaviour is conceptualized as the ability of employees to generate, advocate for, and implement new ideas to improve processes and increase adaptability in the workplace.



Research Framework in Section 1.7 are formulated based on the research framework and questions. The study hypothesizes that psychological capital positively influences adaptive performance, both directly and indirectly through innovative work behaviour. These hypotheses provide the foundation for empirical analysis, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between psychological capital, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive performance.

Section 1.8 (Research Contributions) discusses the study's contributions, emphasizing both theoretical and practical aspects. The theoretical contribution involves extending COR theory and adaptive performance theory to the e-commerce context, offering new insights into how psychological capital affects employee performance in this dynamic sector. The practical contribution focuses on providing



actionable recommendations for e-commerce enterprises on how to develop employees' psychological capital and promote innovative behaviors to enhance employee performance and organizational success in the fast-evolving digital economy.

In Section 1.9 (Definition of Terms), the chapter clarifies key constructions used in the study, such as e-commerce enterprises, adaptive performance, psychological capital, and innovative work behavior. This section ensures clarity and consistency in understanding these terms, which are central to the research.

The scope of the study is defined in Section 1.10, focusing on e-commerce employees in Shaanxi Province with at least one year of experience in operational roles such as online sales, digital marketing, and customer service. The study adopts a quantitative approach, gathering data through an online survey administered to approximately 500 employees. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the relationships between psychological capital, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive performance.

Finally, Section 1.11 (Research Structure) outlines the structure of the dissertation. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, background, problem, objectives, framework, and methodology. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on e-commerce, psychological capital, and adaptive performance. Chapter 3 details the research methodology, including the sampling, data collection, and analysis methods. Chapter 4 presents empirical results, and Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research.



In Section 1.12 (Summary), the chapter summarizes the study's objectives, theoretical framework, key constructs, and methodology, emphasizing the importance of understanding how psychological capital and innovative work behavior enhance e-commerce employees' adaptive performance in Shaanxi Province.

