



From Strategy to Adaptability: How Strategic Leadership Shapes Organizational Resilience via Adaptive Culture

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini menyelidiki pengaruh kepemimpinan strategis terhadap ketahanan organisasi, dengan budaya adaptif sebagai variabel mediasi, dalam konteks organisasi yang berlokasi di Surabaya, Indonesia. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan pemodelan persamaan struktural kuadrat terkecil parsial (PLS-SEM), data dikumpulkan dari 160 responden organisasi (sektor publik = 42,5%, sektor swasta = 57,5%). Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan strategis tidak secara langsung memengaruhi ketahanan organisasi ($\beta = 0,110$, $p = 0,221$). Namun, kepemimpinan strategis secara signifikan memengaruhi budaya adaptif ($\beta = 0,609$, $p < 0,001$), yang pada gilirannya memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap ketahanan ($\beta = 0,586$, $p < 0,001$). Lebih lanjut, budaya adaptif ditemukan memediasi sepenuhnya hubungan antara kepemimpinan strategis dan ketahanan organisasi ($\beta = 0,357$, $p < 0,001$). Temuan-temuan ini menyoroti peran penting budaya adaptif sebagai mekanisme transmisi yang melaluinya kepemimpinan strategis mendorong ketahanan. Secara teoritis, studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur kepemimpinan dan ketahanan dengan menegaskan peran mediasi budaya. Secara praktis, studi ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya menumbuhkan nilai-nilai budaya adaptif untuk menerjemahkan kepemimpinan menjadi kemampuan ketahanan yang nyata, terutama dalam lingkungan yang dinamis dan penuh ketidakpastian.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan Strategis, Budaya Adaptif, Resiliensi Organisasi, Mediasi, PLS-SEM

Abstract: This study investigates the effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience, with adaptive culture serving as a mediating variable, in the context of organizations located in Surabaya, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from 160 organizational respondents (public sector = 42.5%, private sector = 57.5%). The results indicate that strategic leadership does not directly affect organizational resilience ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.221$). However, strategic leadership significantly influences adaptive culture ($\beta = 0.609$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn has a positive and significant effect on resilience ($\beta = 0.586$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, adaptive culture is found to fully mediate the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational resilience ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the pivotal role of adaptive culture as a transmission mechanism through which strategic leadership fosters resilience. Theoretically, the study contributes to leadership and resilience literature by confirming the mediating role of culture. Practically, it underscores the importance of cultivating adaptive cultural values to translate leadership into tangible resilience capabilities, especially in dynamic and uncertain environments.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Adaptive Culture, Organizational Resilience, Mediation, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

In today's volatile and complex business environment, organizational resilience has become a critical determinant of long-term survival and sustainable performance. Organizations across sectors must continuously adapt to external shocks, such as technological disruptions, global economic crises, climate change, and health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. These dynamic and unpredictable changes compel organizations to not only respond swiftly but also recover and grow stronger after disruption (Halik et al., 2024). As a result, scholars and practitioners are increasingly exploring the internal drivers of resilience, particularly those related to leadership and organizational culture.

Research Gap: While previous studies have explored the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational resilience, limited research has examined the mediating role of adaptive culture in the Indonesian context, particularly in Surabaya's mixed public-private organizational environment. Most prior studies have focused on developed economies or single-industry settings, leaving a gap in understanding multi-sector resilience pathways in emerging market cities.

Novelty: This study introduces a context-specific model that integrates strategic leadership, adaptive culture, and organizational resilience, tested in a developing city with significant digital and structural transformation pressures. The inclusion of Surabaya, a city undergoing rapid economic and technological changes, provides unique empirical insights not widely covered in existing literature.

Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in shaping how organizations perceive and respond to change and uncertainty. It refers to leaders' capacity to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create strategic change (Lakshman et al., 2025). Through vision setting, resource allocation, and the promotion of proactive behavior, strategic leaders lay the foundation for resilient behavior across all levels of the organization. However, leadership alone may not be sufficient. The cultural environment within the organization significantly determines how well strategic intentions are translated into adaptive practices (Magsi et al., 2018).

One cultural element that has gained prominence in recent years is adaptive organizational culture. Adaptive culture fosters

values such as flexibility, learning, innovation, openness to change, and shared responsibility (Zhang et al., 2023). Organizations that cultivate such a culture are more likely to institutionalize resilience through embedded learning mechanisms and decentralized decision-making. Adaptive culture can thus act as a bridge between strategic leadership and resilience by reinforcing behaviors that align with rapid adaptation and collective recovery during crises (Sott & Bender, 2025).

A growing body of literature suggests that both strategic leadership and adaptive culture are vital to resilience (Georgescu et al., 2024; Muadzah & Suryanto, 2024). Yet, empirical studies exploring the mediating role of adaptive culture in the link between strategic leadership and organizational resilience remain limited, particularly in the context of developing economies and public sector organizations, where bureaucratic structures often hinder cultural adaptation. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining whether adaptive culture mediates the influence of strategic leadership on organizational resilience.

Table 1. Organizational Shocks in Indonesia (2020–2024)

Year	Sector	Key Event	Organizational Impact
2020	Health & Public	COVID-19 Pandemic	Operational disruption, HR restructuring
2021	Finance	Digital banking transformation	Regulatory adaptation, cybersecurity risks
2022	Energy	Fuel subsidy removal	Public backlash, operational cost increase
2023	Technology	AI-based disruption	Skill gaps, strategic realignment
2024	Environment	Climate-induced flooding	Supply chain disruption, contingency failures

Source: Compiled from Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), 2024

The urgency of this research lies in the critical need for organizations to build internal capacities that support resilience in the face of growing uncertainty. In contexts where resources are limited and challenges are systemic—as seen in many developing countries—strategic leadership must be complemented by an adaptive organizational culture to ensure resilience is not

merely reactive, but proactive and transformational. By empirically testing the mediating effect of adaptive culture, this study contributes not only to theoretical development but also offers practical guidance for leaders seeking to institutionalize resilience within their organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grand Theory: Resource-Based View (RBV)

This study is primarily grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that organizations can achieve sustained competitive advantage through the effective management and development of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) internal resources ([Hunt & Madhavaram, 2012](#)). In the context of resilience, strategic leadership and adaptive culture are considered intangible strategic assets that contribute to an organization's dynamic capability to withstand and respond to environmental turbulence ([Abdeen et al., 2025](#)).

According to RBV, leadership practices that strategically align internal resources, coupled with an organizational culture that promotes learning and adaptability, can foster resilience as a dynamic capability (Davis, 2024). This theoretical lens provides a foundation to examine how internal mechanisms—namely leadership and culture—can be leveraged to build organizational resilience.

Strategic Leadership and Organizational Resilience

Strategic leadership refers to the ability of top executives to guide the organization toward long-term success by aligning vision, resources, and innovation ([Ferede et al., 2024](#)). It involves anticipating threats, embracing complexity, and initiating organizational learning—traits directly relevant to resilience-building.

Recent empirical studies confirm a positive relationship between strategic leadership and organizational resilience. For instance, [Azmi et al., \(2025\)](#) found that strategic leaders in Malaysian manufacturing firms played a crucial role in enhancing their firms' resilience during supply chain disruptions. Similarly, [Hussein et al., \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that visionary and adaptive leadership improved Saudi Arabia firms' responses to pandemic-related crises by fostering strategic flexibility and stakeholder engagement.

These findings underscore that strategic leadership is a primary driver of organizational resilience through its influence on decision-making, resource deployment, and proactive change.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational resilience.

Strategic Leadership and Adaptive Culture

Strategic leadership does not operate in isolation; it shapes and is shaped by organizational culture. Adaptive culture, characterized by openness, innovation, collaboration, and learning, supports strategic implementation by embedding values that align with change and complexity ([Zhang et al., 2023](#)).

Recent studies emphasize the role of strategic leaders in fostering such cultures. For example, ([Jaaffar et al., 2023](#)) observed that transformational leaders significantly influenced the development of adaptive cultural values in Jordanian firms, which in turn enhanced performance. Furthermore, ([Sott & Bender, 2025](#)) found that strategic leaders cultivate adaptive norms by promoting agility and continuous feedback within teams.

These findings suggest that strategic leadership is instrumental in creating and sustaining an adaptive organizational culture.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive culture.

Adaptive Culture and Organizational Resilience

An adaptive culture enables organizations to respond to disruptions with agility, coherence, and shared purpose. It fosters proactive problem-solving, cross-functional collaboration, and resilience learning processes ([Georgescu et al., 2024](#)).

According to ([Jayanto et al., 2025](#)), companies with strong adaptive cultures demonstrated higher resilience when facing environmental uncertainty, particularly in SMEs during economic downturns. Additionally, ([World Bank, 2023](#)) reported that cultural adaptability predicted how quickly Korean technology firms recovered from cyberattacks and retained stakeholder trust.

These insights affirm that adaptive culture serves as a cultural infrastructure for resilience,

embedding flexibility and shared responsibility within the organization.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Adaptive culture has a significant positive effect on organizational resilience.

The Mediating Role of Adaptive Culture

The mediating role of adaptive culture suggests that while strategic leadership directly influences resilience, its effects are amplified or channeled through the cultivation of a conducive cultural environment. Leaders set the direction, but culture operationalizes resilience through shared beliefs and behaviors.

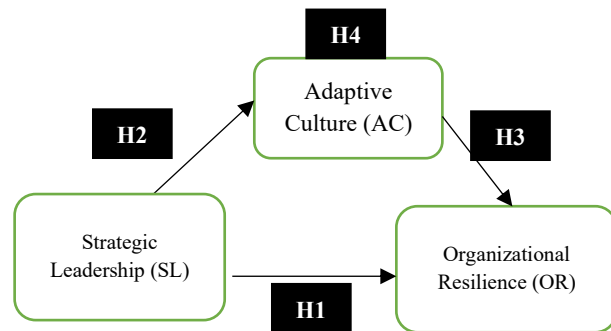
A study by [Phuc et al., \(2023\)](#) found that adaptive culture partially mediated the relationship between leadership and organizational learning, which is closely linked to resilience. Similarly, [Sott & Bender, \(2025\)](#) demonstrated that adaptive culture functioned as a conduit through which leadership style affected crisis recovery in public sector institutions.

These findings support the notion that adaptive culture is not merely an outcome of leadership, but a mechanism through which leadership exerts a transformative impact on resilience.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Adaptive culture mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational resilience.

Conceptual Framework

To provide a structured understanding of the relationships among the key constructs, this study develops a conceptual framework grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The framework illustrates how strategic leadership, as an intangible organizational resource, directly influences organizational resilience and indirectly through its impact on adaptive culture, which serves as a mediating variable. This model posits that strategic leadership fosters an adaptive organizational culture, which in turn enhances the organization's ability to anticipate, absorb, and recover from disruptions. By integrating these constructs, the framework captures both the direct and indirect pathways through which internal leadership capabilities shape organizational resilience in dynamic environments.



Source: Author's (2025)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a hypothesis-testing approach, aimed at examining the causal relationships among strategic leadership, adaptive culture, and organizational resilience. The quantitative design enables the researcher to systematically test the theoretical framework and validate the mediating effect of adaptive culture within the context of organizational behavior. This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing large data sets to uncover statistical relationships among variables ([Hair et al., 2021](#)).

Questionnaire Validation: Prior to full deployment, the survey instrument underwent a pre-survey pilot test involving 20 managers from both public and private organizations in Surabaya. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine question wording, ensure clarity, and confirm construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 for all scales).

Research Location Advantage: Surabaya, the second-largest city in Indonesia, hosts over 4,500 registered private companies and more than 1,200 public institutions (BPS Surabaya, 2024). Its diversified economy, spanning manufacturing, services, and government administration, provides a rich setting for analyzing leadership, culture, and resilience across sectors.

The research population consists of middle to senior-level managers in public and private sector organizations in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, who are directly involved in strategic decision-making and organizational development. These managers are considered key informants, as they possess the contextual knowledge to evaluate leadership practices, cultural values, and resilience capacity within their organizations. The sampling technique employed is purposive sampling, which allows the selection of respondents based on specific characteristics

relevant to the study's objectives (Sugiyono, 2020). To ensure data robustness and representativeness, a minimum sample size of 150 respondents is targeted, in accordance with [Hair et al., \(2019\)](#), who suggest that for models with mediation and multiple latent constructs, a sample above 100 is considered sufficient for structural equation modeling (SEM).

Data collection was conducted between April and July 2025, using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments in previous studies. Strategic leadership was measured using items adapted from [Azmi et al., \(2025\)](#), while adaptive culture was assessed using indicators based on the Competing Values Framework developed by [Dewi and Fitrio, \(2022\)](#) also [Jayanto et al., \(2025\)](#). Organizational resilience was measured using scales validated by [Phuc et al., \(2023\)](#) which capture anticipation, coping, and adaptation capacities. All items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The research location—Surabaya—was selected because it represents a growing urban economy with diverse organizational types that are currently undergoing transformation due to digitalization and post-pandemic recovery. This contextual background provides a relevant setting for studying how leadership and culture interact to influence resilience in complex environments.

For data analysis, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using Smart-PLS 4.0 software. PLS-SEM is appropriate for exploratory models with multiple constructs and mediating variables, especially when the data does not follow a normal distribution or when the sample size is relatively small ([Hair et al., 2021](#)). The analysis followed a two-stage approach: first, the measurement model was evaluated to assess construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity; second, the structural model was tested to examine path coefficients, R^2 values, and the significance of mediation effects through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Mediation was assessed following the procedures outlined by ([Hair et al., 2021](#)), which are widely used in behavioral research.

All ethical considerations were taken into account. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each respondent prior to data collection. Anonymity

and confidentiality were assured throughout the process.

Research Indicators

Table 2. Research Variables and Indicators

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	Source
Strategic Leadership (X)	Strategic Vision	The leader articulates and communicates a compelling long-term direction.	(Azmi et al., 2025; Hussein et al., 2024; Jaaffar et al., 2023)
	Environmental Awareness	The leader monitors and anticipates external trends and challenges.	
	Resource Mobilization	The leader aligns and utilizes resources strategically to achieve goals.	
	Change Orientation	The leader encourages innovation and prepares the organization for change.	
Adaptive Culture (M)	Openness to Change	Employees show receptiveness to new ideas and uncertainty.	(Dewi & Fitrio, 2022; Jayanto et al., 2025)
	Learning Orientation	The organization promotes continuous learning and feedback.	
	Collaboration	Inter-unit collaboration and teamwork are strongly practiced.	
	Innovation Support	New ideas and creativity are encouraged and rewarded.	
	Responsiveness	The organization can quickly respond to changing external conditions.	
Organizational Resilience (Y)	Anticipation Capability	The organization identifies	(Jayanto et al., 2025;

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	Source
		potential disruptions in advance.	Phuc et al., 2023)
	Coping Capability	The organization effectively manages ongoing disruptions or crises.	
	Adaptation Capability	The organization learns from experiences and adjusts strategies accordingly.	
	Flexibility	The organization is able to change operationally and structurally as needed.	

Source: Adapted from previous research (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The demographic profile of respondents provides insight into the organizational background and managerial experience of the individuals surveyed. A total of **160 valid responses** were collected from middle to senior-level managers working in various organizations across Surabaya, Indonesia. The distribution of respondents by gender, age, educational background, position, organizational sector, and years of experience is summarized in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics (N = 160)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	61.3%
	Female	62	38.7%
Age	26–35 years	48	30.0%
	36–45 years	72	45.0%
	>45 years	40	25.0%
Education	Bachelor's degree (S1)	90	56.3%
	Master's degree (S2)	65	40.6%
	Doctorate (S3)	5	3.1%
Position	Middle-level Manager	104	65.0%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Senior-level Executive	56	35.0%
Organizational Sector	Public Sector	68	42.5%
	Private Sector	92	57.5%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	35	21.9%
	5–10 years	74	46.3%
	More than 10 years	51	31.9%

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in **Table 3**, the sample comprises 61.3% male and 38.7% female respondents, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. The largest age group was 36–45 years (45.0%), followed by 26–35 years (30.0%) and those above 45 years (25.0%). In terms of education, the majority held a bachelor's degree (56.3%), with a significant proportion holding a master's degree (40.6%), suggesting a well-educated sample. Regarding managerial roles, most respondents were middle-level managers (65.0%), and the remaining were senior-level executives (35.0%). The sample included representatives from both public (42.5%) and private (57.5%) organizations, ensuring sectoral diversity. In terms of professional experience, 46.3% had 5–10 years of experience, followed by those with over 10 years (31.9%), indicating that most respondents had substantial exposure to organizational processes.

Outer Model Analysis (Measurement Model Evaluation)

In the context of PLS-SEM, the evaluation of the outer model focuses on assessing the measurement quality of latent constructs through three main criteria: indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Ghozali, 2021; [Hair et al., 2021](#)). This evaluation ensures that the observed indicators accurately measure their respective latent variables and that the constructs are distinct from one another.

Indicator Reliability. Indicator reliability is examined through the value of outer loadings (λ). Indicators are considered reliable when their loading values exceed the threshold of 0.70, although loadings between 0.60–0.70 may be acceptable in exploratory research ([Hair et al., 2019](#)). In this study, all indicator loadings fall

within the acceptable range ($\lambda > 0.70$), confirming that each item significantly contributes to its respective construct.

Strategic Leadership items (SL1–SL4) have loading values between 0.826 and 0.912. Adaptive Culture items (AC1–AC5) range from 0.738 to 0.907. Organizational Resilience items (OR1–OR4) show loadings between 0.839 and 0.898.

Convergent Validity. Convergent validity is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). AVE should be ≥ 0.50 , indicating that more than half of the variance in indicators is captured by the latent construct. CR values should be ≥ 0.70 , reflecting internal consistency reliability.

Table 4. Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Strategic Leadership	0.911	0.937	0.789
Adaptive Culture	0.887	0.917	0.691
Organizational Resilience	0.885	0.921	0.744

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

All constructs in the model meet the recommended thresholds, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and construct reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity ensures that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. Fornell Larcker criterion was conducted. The square root of AVE for each construct should be higher than its correlations with any other construct.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Fornell Larcker Criterion

Construct	Strategic Leadership	Adaptive Culture	Organizational Resilience
Strategic Leadership	0.888		
Adaptive Culture	0.609	0.831	
Organizational Resilience	0.467	0.654	0.863

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

All diagonal values ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) exceed the off-diagonal inter-construct correlations, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Similarly, HTMT values for all construct pairs are below the 0.85 threshold, confirming discriminant validity.

Based on the results of indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, it can be concluded that the measurement model meets the necessary psychometric requirements. Thus, the measurement instruments used in this study are both valid and reliable for assessing strategic leadership, adaptive culture, and organizational resilience.

Inner Model Analysis (Structural Model Evaluation)

R-Square Test. The R^2 value represents the amount of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables. According to (Ghozali, 2021; Hair et al., 2019), R^2 values of 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67 (substantial) can be used as benchmarks.

Table 6. R-Square (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Interpretation
Adaptive Culture	0.371	0.367	Moderate
Organizational Resilience	0.435	0.428	Moderate

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

Based on Table 6, the R-Square value for Adaptive Culture is 0.371, meaning that 37.1% of the variance in Adaptive Culture is explained by Strategic Leadership. Likewise, the R-Square for Organizational Resilience is 0.435, indicating that Strategic Leadership and Adaptive Culture together explain 43.5% of the variance in Organizational Resilience. According to Hair et al., (2019), these values fall in the moderate category, suggesting the model has acceptable explanatory power for social science research.

Effect Size (f^2). Effect size (f^2) measures the impact of a specific exogenous variable on an endogenous variable. According to Hair et al., (2019), 0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, and 0.35 = large effect.

Table 7. F-Square

Exogenous Variable	To Adaptive Culture	To Organizational Resilience	Interpretation
Strategic Leadership	0.589	0.014	Large (to AC), Small (to OR)
Adaptive Culture	–	0.383	Large (to OR)

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

From **Table 7**, the f^2 effect sizes demonstrate that Strategic Leadership has a large effect on Adaptive Culture ($f^2 = 0.589$) but only a small effect on Organizational Resilience directly ($f^2 = 0.014$). In contrast, Adaptive Culture has a large effect on Organizational Resilience ($f^2 = 0.383$). These findings imply that the influence of Strategic Leadership on Organizational Resilience is largely mediated through Adaptive Culture.

These results support the mediating role of Adaptive Culture as theorized in the conceptual framework and confirm that organizational resilience is best achieved not solely through top-level leadership strategies, but through the creation of a responsive and adaptive cultural foundation that permeates the organization.

Model Fit. The model fit evaluation in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), including in PLS-SEM, is essential for determining how well the proposed theoretical model represents the observed data. Although PLS-SEM emphasizes prediction over fit, recent advancements recommend model fit assessment to ensure the overall coherence, credibility, and parsimony of the structural model. A good model fit suggests that the relationships specified between constructs and indicators are consistent with empirical data and theoretical expectations ([Hair et al., 2021](#); [Henseler et al., 2015](#)).

Table 8. Model Fit Indices

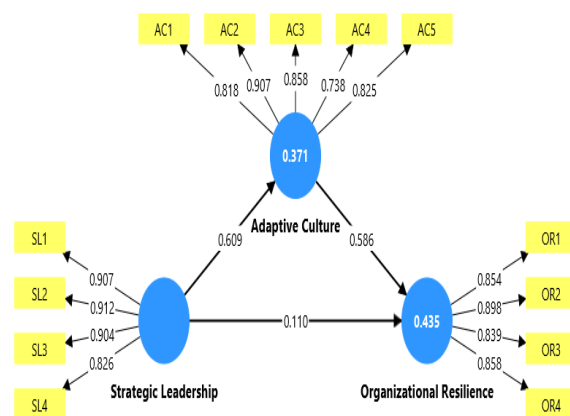
Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.057	0.057	< 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2016)	Good Fit
d_ULS	0.299	0.299	Close to 0	Acceptable Fit
d_G	0.197	0.197	Close to 0	Acceptable Fit
Chi-Square	185.945	185.945	Lower is better (descriptive only)	Acceptable
NFI	0.877	0.877	> 0.80 (acceptable), > 0.90 (good)	Near-Good Fit

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

Overall, the model demonstrates a satisfactory level of fit, confirming that the hypothesized relationships and construct measurements are empirically supported. This adds confidence in

proceeding with interpretation and theoretical generalization of the results.

To complement the statistical analysis, the **figure 2** below illustrates the structural model, including the standardized path coefficients between latent constructs and their respective indicators. This visualization highlights the strength and direction of the relationships tested in the study, confirming the role of Adaptive Culture as a mediating variable between Strategic Leadership and Organizational Resilience.



Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model with Path Coefficients and R^2 Values

Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing

The main objective of inner model analysis is to assess the path coefficients and test the significance of the direct and indirect effects using bootstrapping (typically 5000 resamples).

Table 9. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient (O)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Significance
H1	Strategic Leadership → Organizational Resilience	0.110	1.223	0.221	Not Supported
H2	Strategic Leadership → Adaptive Culture	0.609	10.383	0.000	Supported
H3	Adaptive Culture → Organizational Resilience	0.586	7.550	0.000	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient (O)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Significance
H4	Strategic Leadership → Adaptive Culture → Org. Resilience	0.357	5.869	0.000	Supported (Mediated)

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

The hypothesis testing results demonstrate a nuanced relationship among strategic leadership, adaptive culture, and organizational resilience. The direct effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience is found to be statistically insignificant, indicating that leadership alone may not be sufficient to enhance resilience within an organization. This suggests that leaders' strategic vision and direction may require supporting internal mechanisms to influence resilience outcomes effectively.

However, the analysis confirms that strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on adaptive culture. This implies that strategic leaders play a vital role in fostering a work environment that is open to change, continuous learning, and innovation. In turn, adaptive culture significantly predicts organizational resilience, supporting the notion that organizations with the capacity to adapt and respond flexibly to change are more resilient in facing uncertainties.

Interestingly, the indirect effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience, mediated by adaptive culture, is also statistically significant. This finding confirms the mediating role of adaptive culture, indicating that the influence of strategic leadership on resilience is not direct but occurs through the cultivation of an adaptive organizational culture. The implication of this result is that leadership efforts aimed at resilience must prioritize shaping cultural attributes that enhance adaptability and responsiveness.

In sum, the model underscores the importance of cultural transformation as a strategic pathway through which leadership exerts its impact on resilience. These findings align with existing theoretical perspectives that view adaptive culture as a central mechanism linking leadership behavior to organizational outcomes, particularly in dynamic and uncertain environments.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal several important insights into the dynamics of strategic leadership, adaptive culture, and organizational resilience. Contrary to initial expectations, the direct effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience was found to be statistically insignificant. This finding challenges previous assumptions and studies that assert a direct and linear relationship between leadership and resilience (Azmi et al., 2025; Hussein et al., 2024). One possible explanation is that resilience as a complex organizational capability does not emerge solely from top-down leadership directives. Instead, it is more likely to be the product of systemic processes, including cultural and structural readiness, learning capacity, and distributed decision-making (Abubakar et al., 2019). In other words, leaders alone may not be able to directly build resilience without simultaneously embedding enabling mechanisms within the organization.

Comparison with Previous Studies: The finding that strategic leadership does not directly influence resilience contrasts with Azmi et al. (2025), who found a direct positive link in Malaysian manufacturing firms. However, it aligns with Abubakar et al. (2019), which emphasized that systemic cultural readiness is a necessary intermediary. This suggests that sectoral and national contexts play a moderating role.

Potential Influence of Digital Transformation: As organizations in Surabaya increasingly adopt digital platforms, artificial intelligence tools, and data-driven decision-making, adaptive culture becomes critical for integrating technological changes. Digital transformation may accelerate feedback loops, enhance collaborative networks, and reshape decision-making hierarchies, further reinforcing the mediating effect of adaptive culture.

Significantly, the study confirms that strategic leadership positively influences adaptive culture. This supports prior research that emphasizes the critical role of leadership in shaping and reinforcing cultural norms that promote adaptability, innovation, and continuous improvement (Changalima et al., 2025). Strategic leaders are typically forward-looking and adept at managing paradoxes, which enables them to create environments that encourage flexibility, experimentation, and learning from failure

([Malibari et al., 2025](#)). As such, they cultivate adaptive culture as a strategic asset.

Further, the positive relationship between adaptive culture and organizational resilience aligns with existing literature (Muadzah & Suryanto, 2024) that views organizational culture as a foundational element for resilience. An adaptive culture provides psychological safety, supports decentralized decision-making, and facilitates swift responses to environmental shifts—all of which are essential characteristics of resilient organizations.

Perhaps the most important and novel finding of this study is the significant indirect effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience via adaptive culture. This highlights adaptive culture as a full mediator, implying that leadership must work through culture to influence resilience outcomes. This finding adds theoretical nuance to the resilience literature by proposing a cultural mechanism that channels the effects of leadership, which has not been sufficiently emphasized in previous models. Prior studies have explored the leadership–resilience link ([Azmi et al., 2025](#); [Hussein et al., 2024](#)), but few have explicitly tested the mediating role of adaptive culture. This offers a fresh theoretical contribution and enriches our understanding of how strategic intent is operationalized in dynamic environments.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the literature on organizational resilience by highlighting the mediating role of adaptive culture. It also strengthens the contingency view that leadership effectiveness is not only a function of individual traits but is also mediated by internal organizational systems ([Hunt, 2011](#)). By integrating concepts from strategic leadership and organizational culture theories, this study contributes to the development of a more integrated and process-oriented framework for building resilience.

Practical Implications

Practically, these findings suggest that organizations should not rely solely on strategic leadership to foster resilience. Instead, leaders should actively invest in cultural development, particularly by promoting adaptability, shared learning, and openness to change. Training programs, open communication systems, and innovation-supportive policies are recommended

interventions. Furthermore, human resources and organizational development units should collaborate closely with top management to ensure that leadership behavior is aligned with cultural initiatives that reinforce resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effect of strategic leadership on organizational resilience, with adaptive culture serving as a mediating variable. The findings reveal that strategic leadership does not have a statistically significant direct effect on organizational resilience. This suggests that while strategic leaders may set direction and vision, their influence on resilience is not immediate or automatic. Instead, resilience appears to be shaped by more embedded organizational processes and cultural dynamics that support responsiveness and adaptability.

Theoretical Contribution: This study extends the Resource-Based View by demonstrating that adaptive culture functions as a dynamic capability through which strategic leadership is operationalized into organizational resilience. It provides empirical evidence from an emerging economy context, contributing to cross-national comparative studies on resilience mechanisms.

Nevertheless, the results confirm that strategic leadership has a significant and positive effect on adaptive culture. Leaders who demonstrate strategic thinking, long-term orientation, and innovation-driven behavior tend to foster an organizational culture that is open to change and continuous improvement. Adaptive culture, in turn, is shown to significantly enhance organizational resilience, indicating that cultural adaptability plays a central role in enabling organizations to navigate uncertainty and disruption.

Importantly, the study found that adaptive culture fully mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational resilience. This highlights that the impact of strategic leadership on resilience is not direct, but operates through cultural mechanisms. Adaptive culture acts as a pathway through which leadership initiatives are translated into organizational capacities to anticipate, absorb, and respond to environmental changes. This finding adds a novel contribution to the existing literature by positioning culture as a critical intermediary in resilience development.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the argument that leadership effectiveness depends not only on strategic behavior but also on its ability to influence organizational systems and values. It supports the view that resilience is a systemic outcome shaped by aligned leadership and adaptive cultural frameworks. Practically, the findings underscore the need for leaders to prioritize the cultivation of adaptive norms, shared values, and learning systems as strategic levers for resilience building.

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to a specific sector and geographic area, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of a purely quantitative design may not fully capture the nuanced interactions between leadership, culture, and resilience. Future research should consider a broader and more diverse population, as well as employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into how adaptive culture mediates strategic leadership in different organizational contexts.

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