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BI Norwegian Business School

Elizabeth Solberg

Adapting to Changing Job Demands: A Broadcast Approach to Understanding Self-Regulated Adaptive Performance and Cultivating It in Situated Work Settings

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Article 1

Learning to adapt: Examining a developmental process of adaptive performance and for whom it is more relevant

Solberg, E.

Article 2

Coping with changing job demands: How learning goal orientation and developmental supervisor support enhance adaptive performance

Solberg, E.

Article 3

When midway won't do: The consequences of mediocre development support on employees' willingness to be flexible

Solberg, E., Lai, L., Dysvik, A.

Adapting to Changing Job Demands

A Broadcast Approach to Understanding Self-Regulated
Adaptive Performance and Cultivating It in
Situating Work Settings

by
Elizabeth Solberg

A dissertation submitted to BI Norwegian Business School
for the degree of PhD

PhD specialization: Leadership and Organizational Behaviour

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List of Articles

Article 1 Learning to adapt: Examining a developmental process of adaptive performance and for whom it is more relevant

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Accepted for presentation at the 2017 Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA

Article 2 Coping with changing job demands: How learning goal orientation and developmental supervisor support enhance adaptive performance

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Solberg, E., Lai, L., Dysvik, A.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2016 Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA and is also available in the conference proceedings

Summary

Although employees' "adaptive performance" is increasingly important for maintaining both individual job performance and contributing to organizational performance, there continues to be only a superficial understanding of how, why, and when employees' adapt to changing job demands in situated work settings (Jundt, Shoss, & Huang, 2015). The dissertation applies a broadcast method to extend understanding in this area, in that it includes three independent field studies that each elaborate a different process, and thus a different set of mechanisms that should be important for producing adaptive performance, enhancing the effectiveness of this behavior, and eliciting employees' willingness to display it at work.

Study 1 draws from the discrepancy detection and correction mechanisms outlined in control theory (e.g., Klein, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) to elaborate why task learning processes are often needed to enable adaptive performance, how developmental supervisor support facilitates the learning-adapting sequence, and why it is more relevant for employees who are generally less open to work change. Findings made in a sample of federal employees supports that there is a positive relationship between acquiring new learning and adaptive performance, but that this relationship is significantly stronger for employees less open to work change than for employees more open to work change. Further, it is only among employees who are less open to work change that developmental supervisor support is found to facilitate adaptive performance by way of increasing employees' learning activities. Accordingly, Study 1 provides greater understanding regarding why new learning relates to adaptive performance, among whom new learning is particularly important for performing adaptively, and thus where external efforts to facilitate employees' learning activities are most relevant for adaptive performance.

Study 2 combines the goal activation and striving mechanisms of achievement goal theory (e.g., DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Dweck, 1989) with the stressor appraisal and coping mechanisms identified in the organizational stress literature (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005) to predict that employees having a learning goal orientation (LGO) appraise demands for adaptive performance more constructively than employees having a low LGO, and thus cope with these demands more effectively. Findings made in a sample of manufacturing employees supports that employees having a high LGO cope with high demands for adaptive performance more effectively than employees having a low LGO. However, developmental supervisor support is also found to improve the

effectiveness of low learning-oriented employees' adaptive performance when demands for this behavior are high. Accordingly, Study 2 indicates that having a high LGO, or receiving supervisor support that aligns with one, facilitates a more constructive appraisal-coping process, and thus more effective adaptive performance, when facing changing job demands.

Study 3 builds on the psychological need satisfaction and internalization mechanisms of self-determination theory (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005) to elaborate a conditional, motivational process in which a critical threshold of intrinsic work motivation must be summoned by developmental supervisor support before it will elicit a flexible role orientation, and thus employees' willingness to be flexible towards changing job demands. Findings made across three employee samples (financial advisors, respite care workers, oil and maritime service employees) support the predicted J-shaped relationship between intrinsic work motivation and employees' willingness to be flexible that is facilitated by developmental supervisor support. Accordingly, Study 3 provides a better understanding as to how and when intrinsic work motivation enhances employees' willingness to be flexible, and of the types and degree of supervisor support that facilitate this relationship.

While the three studies included in this dissertation distinctly contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms that underlie adaptive performance and factors that facilitate it in situated work settings, combined they sow the seeds upon which a better understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior can grow. Specifically, this dissertation contributes to a budding view of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior (e.g., Chen & Firth, 2014; Jundt & Shoss, 2013), by providing preliminary insight into the self-regulated skill and behavioral revision processes that occurs as employees encounter and adapt to changing job demands, the self-regulated goal-striving and coping patterns that enable effective adaptive performance when changing job demands are high, and the ways in which external demands to adapt to changes at work become internalized, and therefore self-regulated. Second, the three studies collectively underline the need for supervisors to self-regulate their own behavior in order to provide the support important for developing adaptive performance to those employees who are less open to work change, less learning-oriented, and less intrinsically motivated. Thus, the dissertation appeals to research calling for managers to look beyond selection and staffing systems to provide the organization with adaptable employees, and take greater responsibility for cultivating self-regulated adaptive performance among existing staff – particularly those employees who are vulnerable to changing job demands (Moss, Dowling, & Callanan, 2009).

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
SPECIFIC RESEARCH GAPS	3
OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH	5
COMBINED CONTRIBUTIONS.....	6
CHAPTER 2	9
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING SELF-REGULATED ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE	9
CULTIVATING ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPERVISOR SUPPORT	16
CHAPTER 3 - LEARNING TO ADAPT: EXAMINING A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE AND FOR WHOM IT IS MOST RELEVANT (STUDY 1)..	19
INTRODUCTION.....	21
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES.....	22
METHODOLOGY.....	27
DISCUSSION	38
REFERENCES	43
CHAPTER 4 - COPING WITH CHANGING JOB DEMANDS: HOW LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL SUPERVISOR SUPPORT ENHANCE ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE (STUDY 2).....	49
INTRODUCTION.....	51
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES.....	53
METHODOLOGY.....	57
DISCUSSION	65
REFERENCES	69
CHAPTER 5 - WHEN MIDWAY WON'T DO: THE CONSEQUENCES OF MEDIOCRE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEES' WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE (STUDY 3).....	75
INTRODUCTION.....	77
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES.....	79
METHODOLOGY.....	82
DISCUSSION	92
APPENDIX	95
REFERENCES	96
CHAPTER 6	101
SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS.....	101
COMBINED CONTRIBUTIONS: ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE AS SELF-REGULATED BEHAVIOR.....	105
LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	107
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	112
CONCLUSION.....	114
REFERENCES	116

Chapter 1

Introduction

The belief that remaining competitive in changing business environments requires continual adaptation has become a mainstay of contemporary management theory and practice (e.g., Boss, 2016; Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Organizations facing ongoing change are encouraged to develop the capability to manage it, often through investments intended to make human capital and human resource management (HRM) systems more flexible (Bhattacharya & Wright, 2005; Wright & Snell, 1998). On their part, employees are increasingly expected to take on a broader range of work activities, including demands to adapt to changing work situations (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000), without the formal readiness preparations generally advocated in the context of larger organizational changes (Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013).

It is within this context that constructs such as “human resource (HR) flexibility” and “adaptive performance” have received considerable scholarly attention. Strategic HRM scholars view employees who possess broad skills and display behavioral flexibility as valuable human resources that enable the organization to pursue the strategic alternatives needed to remain competitive when confronted with change (e.g., Beltrán-Martín, Roca-Puig, Escrig-Tena, & Bou-Llugar, 2008; Wright & Snell, 1998). Industrial/organizational (I/O) psychologists emphasize that the changes organizations make to meet the demands of dynamic business environments impacts what work consists of and how it is conducted (Jundt et al., 2015). Accordingly, organizational success depends on employees who perform adaptively by coping with and responding to changing job demands – behavior that often requires acquiring new skills to accommodate changes in core work tasks or to modify established modes of task performance (e.g., Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin et al., 2007; Hesketh & Neal, 1999). Both HR flexibility and adaptive performance are concerned with the skills and behaviors employees acquire and apply to adapt to changing job demands, and thus maintain effectiveness in changing work contexts. However, HR flexibility is generally examined at the macro-level as an organizational capability that is enabled by investment in flexibility-enhancing HRM systems (Beltrán-Martín & Roca-Puig, 2013; Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008; Bhattacharya & Wright, 2005; Ketkar & Sett, 2009). Adaptive performance is often viewed as an individual-level component of job performance that is determined by one’s personality or other personal attributes (e.g., Huang, Ryan, Zabel, & Palmer, 2014; Neal, Yeo, Koy, & Xiao, 2012; Pulakos, Dorsey, & White, 2006).

Empirical research supports that HR flexibility is positively related to an organization's operational and financial performance (e.g., Bhattacharya, Gibson, & Doty, 2005; Way et al., 2015) and that adaptive performance is distinct from prescribed task performance, contextual performance, and proactive behavior (e.g., Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin et al., 2007; Johnson, 2001). Further, macro-level research has identified a number of HRM practices that enhance HR flexibility, including formal training, developmental performance appraisal, and job enrichment (Beltrán-Martín & Roca-Puig, 2013; Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008; Ketkar & Sett, 2009). Micro-level research has found consistent support that adaptive performance relates positively with certain personality traits such as emotional stability and the achievement-striving facets of conscientiousness (Huang et al., 2014; Neal et al., 2012). Biographical constructs shaped by an individual's personal experiences or history with change, such as experience with change (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999), interest in working in situations that require adaptability (Pulakos et al., 2002), or openness to work change (Griffin et al., 2007; Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2010), have also been found to relate positively to adaptive performance.

Yet, despite these advances, there continues to be only a superficial understanding of how and why employees' adapt to changing job demands – i.e., display the behavioral flexibility or adaptive performance that is so vital to maintaining individual and organizational performance¹. Strategic HRM scholars have called for research to “examine, explicate, and illustrate the linkages” between the dimensions of HR flexibility and organizational performance (Way et al., 2015, p. 1126), a challenge that requires identifying the lower-level mechanisms that produce individual displays of behavioral flexibility (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998). A recent review of the adaptive performance literature also emphasizes the need for research to examine the processes that employees engage in to adapt to changing job demands (Jundt et al., 2015), a challenge that requires identifying what these processes comprise, and providing plausible explanations for why and how these components relate to produce outcomes relevant for adaptive performance. Nevertheless, there is to-date little research that identifies how and why employee adapt to changing job demands, how these adaptive responses can be activated and maintained, or the conditions under which relationships of interest could take form or be more relevant.

¹ As both behavioral flexibility (used in the HR flexibility literature) and adaptive performance refer to the behavior employees display to adapt to changing work demands, these terms should be viewed as synonyms. However, “adaptive performance” is the term preferred and more actively used in the present dissertation.

Specific Research Gaps

While both the HR flexibility and adaptive performance literatures emphasize a relationship between learning new skills and adapting to changing job demands, little research has elaborated or empirically examined the relationship between these behaviors. Empirical research in the strategic HRM literature suggests a sequential relationship between employees' skill development and behavioral flexibility (Beltrán-Martín & Roca-Puig, 2013; Ketkar & Sett, 2009) based on the argument that employees who develop broad skill sets are better enabled to conceive various ways to carry out their work, thus fostering behavioral flexibility. Based on similar arguments, research in the I/O domain propose that employees who frequently engage in general learning activities perform more adaptively across a broad range of adaptive behaviors (Han & Williams, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2002). However, neither stream of research has focused on the more proximal relationship assumed between acquiring the new task skills and strategies needed to adapt to changing job demands and applying these skills through adaptive performance (e.g., Griffin et al., 2007; Hesketh & Neal, 1999; Shoss, Witt, & Vera, 2012). In the adaptive performance literature, this proximal learning-adapting relationship is taken for granted, to the extent that established measures of adaptive performance (unidimensional) include items tapping both behaviors. This has made it a challenge to examine how new learning relates to adaptive performance or can be facilitated, or when new learning may be more relevant for performing adaptively.

Further, like other job demands, adapting to changing job demands requires effort and persistence on the part of employees and is therefore likely to lead to strain (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Karasek, 1979). Indeed, adaptive performance is often associated with an individual's ability to cope or "deal" with the strain caused by changing job demands (Griffin et al., 2007; Pulakos et al., 2000) through the use of problem-focused coping behavior (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999). Yet, no known research has addressed the different ways in which employees could appraise and cope with demands to perform adaptively (Jundt et al., 2015). Learning goal orientations (LGO), referring to an individual's preference to develop competence in achievement settings (Dweck, 1989), has been proposed to explain why some employees appraise and cope with job demands in a more problem-focused manner (N. P. Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). However, no known research has elaborated this proposition, or how a LGO could enhance employees' problem-focused coping in response to changing job demands, in particular. Examining LGO in this context is particularly relevant, as LGO is found to have a positive influence on adaptive outcomes in simulated training and

team settings (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002b; Kozlowski et al., 2001), but there has been little research on LGO and adaptive performance in situated work settings (Jundt et al., 2015).

Understanding why and how employees become motivated, and thus willing to adapt to changing job demands, is also an area where more research is needed. Early research emphasized that the willingness to adapt to changing job demands was an important component of adaptive performance (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999). More recent research, however, has focused exclusively on the behavioral displays of adaptive performance (e.g., Griffin et al., 2007) and there remains little research regarding the forms of motivation that underlie adaptive behavior or how such motivation develops (Jundt et al., 2015). Strategic HRM scholars, on the other hand, have long maintained that displaying behavioral flexibility is highly dependent on employees' motivation and willingness to be flexible (Way et al., 2015; Wright & Snell, 1998) and, in particular, that employee flexibility will only be realized when intrinsic work motivation is high (Guest, 1987). Yet, the theoretical and analytical frameworks adopted by macro-level research has made it difficult to elaborate or investigate such a behavioral perspective of HR flexibility, and no known research has bridged the macro-micro divide (Wright & Boswell, 2002) to examine how employees' willingness to adapt to work changes might be motivated by intrinsic work motivation or when.

Finally, while a number of HRM practices are found to enhance senior manager assessments of HR flexibility (e.g., Beltrán-Martín & Roca-Puig, 2013; Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008; Ketkar & Sett, 2009), little research has addressed the influence of HRM practices on employee flexibility at the individual-level of analysis (Camps, Oltra, Aldas-Manzano, Buenaventura-Vera, & Torres-Carballo, 2016). Similarly, recent literature reviews find that little research has identified contextual factors that influence individual-level adaptive performance (S. K. Baard, Rench, & Kozlowski, 2014; Jundt et al., 2015). Notably, few studies investigate the influence of supervisory support on adaptive performance as compared to other change-oriented behaviors (Chiaburu, Lorinkova, & Van Dyne, 2013). Indeed, research in the adaptive performance domain has generally promoted the selection and staffing of adaptable employees (e.g., Huang et al., 2014; LePine, Colquitt, & Erez, 2000; Pulakos et al., 2006) over identifying contextual factors in the work environment that increase current employees' adaptive performance (Sweet, Witt, & Shoss, 2015). However, taking a selection approach towards increasing adaptive performance in the organization might not always be feasible, nor is it an ethical solution for dealing with the obsolescence and displacement of task skills and strategies caused by changing job demands (e.g., Latham, 1988). Accordingly, scholars have called on managers to take greater responsibility for cultivating adaptive performance among

existing employees – particularly those who are vulnerable in situations requiring adaptive performance (Moss et al., 2009).

Objective of the Present Research

Existing research indicates that learning, coping, and motivational processes underlie employees' adaptive performance, yet little research elaborates or examines the various steps or actions that these processes comprise or provides plausible explanations for why and how these steps or actions relate to each other in producing desired outcomes. Without considering these mechanisms it is not only difficult to explain and empirically test how and why learning, coping, and motivation relate to adaptive performance, but also to identify the contextual factors that could facilitate process progression or the possible boundary conditions that limit the generalizability of underlying relationships (Anderson et al., 2006). Accordingly, a primary objective of this dissertation is to elaborate a set of learning, coping, and motivational processes that could be relevant for producing employees' adaptive performance such that facilitating contextual factors and boundary conditions that influence these processes can also be identified. The dissertation applies a broadcast method to develop theory and direct empirical inquiry towards this objective. That is, the three studies included in the dissertation each elaborate (and eventually examine) a different process, and thus a different combination of mechanisms that should be relevant for explaining how, why, and when outcomes relevant for adaptive performance are produced, in different employee samples. As a constant in the three studies, developmental supervisor support, defined as supervisory behavior aimed at assisting employees' goal-oriented learning and growth through the provision of helpful performance feedback, guidance, and learning opportunities (e.g., Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), is examined as a contextual factor that facilitates the outcomes of interest.

Study 1 draws from the discrepancy detection and correction mechanisms outlined in control theory (e.g., Klein, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) to elaborate why new learning enables adaptive performance, how developmental supervisor support facilitates this process, and why it is more relevant for employees who are generally less open to work change. Study 2 combines the goal activation and striving mechanisms of achievement goal theory (e.g., DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Dweck, 1989) with the stressor appraisal and coping mechanisms identified in the organizational stress literature (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LePine et al., 2005) to predict that employees having a learning goal orientation (LGO) appraise and thus cope with high demands for adaptive performance more effectively than employees having a low LGO. Developmental supervisor support is predicted to help employees having a low LGO,

who would otherwise cope ineffectively with high demands for adaptive performance, display more effective adaptive performance. Study 3 builds on the psychological need satisfaction and internalization mechanisms of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005) to elaborate a conditional, motivational process in which a critical threshold of intrinsic work motivation must be summoned by developmental supervisor support before it will elicit a flexible role orientation, and thus employees' willingness to be flexible towards changing job demands. The theoretical models proposed in each study are each tested in different employee samples. The predictions made in Study 1 are tested in a sample of federal employees, Study 2 in a sample of manufacturing employees, and Study 3 across three employee groups: financial advisors, respite care workers, and oil and maritime service employees.

Combined Contributions

The three studies included in this dissertation use different theoretical frameworks and make distinct contributions to the understanding of how, why, and when employees adapt to changing job demands. Yet, combined they sow the seeds upon which a better understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior can grow. Study 1 helps to understand the self-regulated skill and behavioral revision processes that occurs as employees confront changing job demands and attempt to perform adaptively. Study 2 helps to understand the self-regulated, goal-pursuit patterns that employees display when facing obstacles or negative feedback, and thus the way in which they cope with changing job demands. Study 3 helps to understand the way in which external demands to adapt to changing job demands become internalized and thus self-regulated. Collectively these studies contribute to a budding view of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior (e.g., Chen & Firth, 2014; Jundt & Shoss, 2013), by generating a broader awareness of the cognitive processes employees engage in to appraise and internalize demands to perform adaptively and the goal-directed learning and coping processes that enable their adaptive performance.

As understanding work behavior increasingly relies on understanding how, why, and when employees volitionally direct their attention and behavior towards activities that to contribute to organizational goals (Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010), having a better understanding of these processes and mechanisms as they relate to adaptive performance is generally warranted. Further, employees who self-regulate their work behavior require less control through HRM devices (Kaufman, 2015). Accordingly, a better understanding of self-regulated adaptive performance and what facilitates it could help managers reduce organizational expenses and increase coordination flexibility (Wright & Snell, 1998) by

reducing formal structures that are no longer viable, or even desirable, to control employee behavior in changing business environments (Tsui & Ashford, 1994). Self-regulated work behavior is also associated with greater feelings of well-being (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Lord et al., 2010), indicating that the welfare of both organizations and employees could benefit from a better understanding of self-regulated adaptive performance.

Further, the three studies indicate that developmental supervisor support promotes adaptive performance, particularly among employees who lack the resources or role orientations needed to self-regulate their own adaptive performance. Accordingly, adapting to changing job demands relies not only on employees' self-regulated adaptive performance, but also on supervisors' adaptive, self-regulated efforts to provide the developmental support important for cultivating adaptive performance to those employees who most need it. Thus, the dissertation contributes to research calling for managers to look beyond selection and staffing systems to provide the organization with adaptable employees, and take greater responsibility for cultivating self-regulated adaptive performance among existing staff – particularly employees who are vulnerable to changing job demands (Moss et al., 2009).

Chapter 2

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Self-Regulated Adaptive Performance

The proposition that employees' self-led, voluntary action is important in changing work contexts is not a novel proposition. Around the same time that research on HR flexibility and adaptive performance began to emerge, Tsui and Ashford (1994) argued that adaptive self-regulation was important because it substituted formal structures such as detailed job descriptions and standard operating procedures that were no longer viable, or even desirable, to control employee behavior in organizations operating in changing business environments. More recently, however, scholars have taken an interest in the self-regulated processes employees engage in to direct and expend effort on their adaptive performance at work (e.g., Chen & Firth, 2014; Jundt et al., 2015). While self-regulated processes can be initiated anytime an individual engages in voluntary action, they are often predicted when engagement in routinized activity (i.e., existing task strategies) no longer results in desired or expected outcomes (Karoly, 1993). Accordingly a core aspect of self-regulation is the act of adapting oneself and/or one's task strategies in order to maintain desired performance levels despite changing external demands (Lord et al., 2010). As changing job demands often render routine task strategies ineffective and require adapting one's task skills or strategies in order to maintain performance (Jundt & Shoss, 2013), it is easy to see why theories of self-regulation could offer a valuable framework upon which to understand adaptive performance.

Attaining and maintaining an internally-held desired state (i.e., a goal) is central to theories of self-regulation (Vancouver & Day, 2005). Accordingly, self-regulation is often described as a dynamic process consisting of setting goals, evaluating progress against goals, and revising behavior or goals when discrepancies between a goal and a current state are identified (Lord et al., 2010). While many self-regulation theories exist in organizational research, control theory is a central perspective and perhaps the most comprehensive with regards to understanding the dynamic processes associated with self-regulation (Vancouver & Day, 2005).

Control theory

Control theory is a general approach to the understanding the structure of self-regulating systems (Carver & Scheier, 1982). A central tenet of control theory is that the desire to eliminate performance discrepancies motivates individual behavior (Klein, 1989). The

negative feedback loop serves to identify performance discrepancies. The negative feedback loop can be viewed as an automatic process (Carver & Scheier, 1982) where feedback regarding one's performance is continuously monitored and compared versus a referent performance goal. A discrepancy identified by the performance-goal comparison process results in corrective action (i.e., behavior) aimed at reducing the discrepancy, assuming that commitment to the referent goal is high enough that it is not revised downward (Klein, 1989; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999). This corrective action can take the form of a change in behavioral intensity (i.e., trying harder) or in its direction (i.e., trying a different strategy) (Klein, 1989; Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984). Further, it can unfold in a process where conscious and considerable effort is needed to diagnose the source of the performance discrepancy and plan and execute the corrective course of action (Klein, 1989). Alternatively, it can take the form of an unconscious response that bypasses these diagnosis and planning stages, particularly when universal or previously learned task strategies (Wood & Locke, 1990) and behavioral scripts (B. E. Ashford & Fried, 1984; Gioia & Poole, 1984) are available to correct performance discrepancies.

Feedback is a central construct in control theory and refers to the information an individual receives about his or her task performance that is used to assess goal progress or maintenance (Vancouver & Day, 2005). Feedback may originate from an individual's own feelings and ideas, from the task environment, or from others in the organization (e.g., supervisors, coworkers) who are in a position to evaluate an individual's performance (Greller & Herold, 1975). It may be passively received with varying frequency or at various occasions (Klein, 1989), or it can be actively sought out through inquiry and monitoring behavior (S. J. Ashford, 1986). There is considerably more focus on negative feedback, indicating that a performance standard was not attained, and its corresponding revision processes. However, feedback can also be positive, indicating that an individual has exceeded his or her goal (Klein, 1989). Importantly, feedback must be salient to result in self-regulated efforts to reduce any discrepancy it identifies (Carver & Scheier, 1981). Feedback should be particularly salient in unfamiliar situations, when the feedback received is dramatically different from the feedback expected, and when others prompt the individual to attend to feedback (Taylor et al., 1984). Further, the perceived accuracy and relevance of feedback is important for whether or not it will be attended to or ignored (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979).

While Klein's (1989) model generally describes the conscious or unconscious revision processes that individuals can engage in to eliminate performance discrepancies identified by feedback, Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention theory describes in more detail

three revision processes aimed at eliminating performance discrepancies identified by negative feedback, and predicts when individuals will engage in each process. First, they argue that negative feedback initially sets off a “task-motivation process” in which effort (i.e., behavioral intensity) is initially increased behind current task behavior, or by activating task strategies and behavioral scripts that are available from past experience. However, if this task-motivation process does not culminate in correcting the performance-goal discrepancy, then attention is diverted towards higher level “meta-task processes” or lower level “task-learning processes.” Negative feedback cues that direct attention to the self and threaten self-confidence are held to trigger meta-task processes, for example, lowering one’s performance goals or choosing to engage in other (non-focal) tasks in which the individual can re-attain a positive self-image. However, task-learning processes should be activated when the feedback sign is negative, additional effort is found to be insufficient for correcting the performance-goal discrepancy, and making changes in the direction of one’s behavior (i.e., learning and applying new task strategies) is preferred to eliminate the discrepancy. Feedback interventions that refer to components of the task, are trusted, and lead to feelings of self-efficacy are held to promote task-learning processes (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), likely because they strengthen attributions that changing the direction of a behavioral strategy is under one’s control (Taylor et al., 1984) and, in turn, expectancies that such changes will be successful (Klein, 1989).

Control theory provides a logical foundation to think about adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior, as changes that impact what work consists of or the ways in which it is conducted are likely to render current task strategies insufficient, creating performance discrepancies that require behavioral modification to correct (Jundt & Shoss, 2013). Of particular interest in the present research, is theorizing relating negative feedback to learning processes and directional changes in task behavior (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), as it provides a useful framework to elaborate the currently elusive relationship between change-oriented learning and adaptive performance and to examine how different factors could facilitate or otherwise influence this relationship. Building on this framework, Study 1 elaborates the relationship between change-oriented learning and adaptive performance, and suggests that developmental supervisor support facilitates this relationship by providing the feedback likely to promote task-learning processes. However, drawing on the distinction between conscious and unconscious responses, Study 1 also argues that the relationship between developmental supervisor support, change-oriented learning, and adaptive performance should be stronger for employees who are generally less open to work changes. Employees who are generally less open to work change should have less experience with change (Axtell et al., 2002), and thus

fewer available task strategies and behavioral scripts upon which to base their adaptive performance. Therefore, they should naturally require more learning and are likely more dependent on supervisor support to identify their learning needs and direct their efforts.

Achievement goal theory / Self-regulated theories of coping

While control theory provides insight into the discrepancy detection and behavioral revision mechanisms that could underlie employees' adaptive performance, achievement goal theory provides a greater understanding of the goal activation and striving mechanisms that could influence employees' behavioral patterns and their levels of persistence when facing challenges or negative feedback (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). As such, it provides an indication of the ways in which they could cope with the strain created by changing job demands (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Originally developed in the educational literature to explain differences in student learning and responses to failure (e.g., Diener & Dweck, 1978; Dweck, 1986), achievement goal theory is generally concerned with the orientations individuals have towards developing or demonstrating ability in achievement settings, and the patterns of behavior that result from these orientations (Dweck, 1989). While different goal orientations are identified in the literature (e.g., Elliot, 1999; Elliot & McGregor, 2001), a learning goal orientation (LGO) is generally associated with employee adaptation (e.g., Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Kozlowski et al., 2001; LePine, 2005). A LGO refers to an individual's general predisposition to develop his or her level of competence in achievement settings (Dweck, 1989; Dweck & Legget, 1988). Learning-oriented individuals favor new and challenging work activities where they can learn and grow (Button et al., 1996; VandeWalle, 1997), a preference that is facilitated by their inclination to measure successful performance in terms of their own learning and improvement (Dweck, 1989). Further, they approach challenge and intensify their learning goal pursuit activities when confronting obstacles or threats such as negative feedback (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). A recent meta-analysis (Burnette, VanEpps, O'Boyle, Pollack, & Finkel, 2013) supports that learning-oriented individuals increase efforts behind their preferred learning strategies in the presence of obstacles and negative feedback. This is often described as displaying an "adaptive response pattern," and is believed to be facilitated by the tendency of learning-oriented individuals to view errors and negative feedback as information that is helpful to achieving their learning goal (Button et al., 1996; Diener & Dweck, 1978).

The goal-driven, adaptive response patterns displayed by learning-oriented individuals display a remarkable similarity to coping behavior, in particular, the problem-focused style of

coping behavior that involves strategizing and increasing effort in order to resolve the source of challenge or threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) that comprise a core component of adaptive performance (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin et al., 2007). Similar to the self-regulated adaptive response patterns associated with having a LGO (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005), the problem-focused coping associated with adaptive performance can also be viewed as self-regulated behavior in which changing task demands are appraised and adaptive coping is initiated when changes one's behavior is determined as the best strategy to meet new task demands (Edwards, 1992).

Coping refers to the efforts individuals undertake in order to respond to, or reduce, the strain created by (job related) stressors (de Rijk, Le Blanc, & Schaufeli, 1998), or stimuli in the environment that place demands on individuals and take time and effort to deal with (LePine et al., 2005). Problem-focused coping aimed at actively managing environmental stressors in such a way that the strain created by them is reduced is a commonly recognized form of coping, as is emotion-focused coping aimed at altering one's cognitions of the situation in order to reduce strain and distress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Similarly, Hobfoll (2001) refers to proactive coping as those strategies aimed at actively taking control of a stressful situation by optimizing or acquiring resources in a way that gives individuals an advantage against external demands. In this line of theorizing, resources refer to those cognitive and physical assets that individual's strive to manage more effectively, or alter, in order to maintain valued higher-order resources, such as feelings of control and goal accomplishment. On the other hand, more passive coping styles refers to the way in which individuals reframe demanding situations through unproductive cognitive reappraisals (e.g., downgrading goals or self-appraisals) or reduce cognitive and physical assets by withdrawing or disengaging from the situation in an effort to conserve valued higher-order resources (Hobfoll, 2001). While adaptive performance has been explicitly related to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) problem-solving coping strategies (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999), there are obvious similarities between problem-solving and other (pro-)active coping strategies aimed at taking control of demanding situations by taking action to solve or overcome the source of the problem (see also de Rijk et al., 1998).

As with research on goal orientations more generally, empirical examinations of the relationship between LGO and problem-focused or other active types of coping have been made with more frequency in research conducted among students in educational settings than in organizational research. However, a study from P. D. Parker, Martin, Colmar, and Liem (2012) bridges these literatures with findings that teachers who have a LGO engage in more problem-solving coping strategies, including persisting to "figure out" difficult things at work,

and less emotion-focused coping such as showing procrastination in dealing with issues and withdrawal from the work context. One explanation for this relationship is that learning-oriented employees who have a preference for seeking out learning opportunities in the task environment (VandeWalle, 1997) and intensify their learning strategies in the face of obstacles or threats (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005) are more likely to perceive workplace stressors as a challenge and not a hindrance (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2007). In their research on workplace stressors, LePine et al. (2005) propose that employees display problem solving coping strategies, and thus more effective performance, when they appraise workplace stressors (i.e., job demands) as a challenge they can overcome in order to learn and achieve and not as a hassle that unnecessarily hinder their ability to perform their job.

While having a high LGO could positively influence how employees appraise and cope with job demands more generally, LGO is particularly relevant for explaining how employees appraise and cope with changing job demands. Changing job demands constitute workplace stimuli that require not only time and effort to deal with, but also the ability to learn new tasks and new ways of performing one's work (Griffin et al., 2007; Hesketh & Neal, 1999; Pulakos et al., 2000; Shoss et al., 2012). Employees with a high LGO, given their preference for learning, should be more likely to perceive changing job demands as challenges that provide the opportunity to achieve their learning goal (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2007). Taking this as a starting point, Study 2 applies the challenge-hindrane stressor framework as a lens through which to predict the how highly learning-oriented employees should appraise and respond to demands for adaptive performance, and why this response pattern should be more effective than for employees who have a low LGO.

Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is an organismic-dialectic theory that assumes individuals are naturally inclined to self-regulated their behavior, but that this autonomous functioning is contingent on the social context in which the behavior unfolds (e.g., Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). SDT complements the frameworks presented above in that it is concerned with the mechanisms that explain why and how externally sanctioned behavior becomes self-regulated (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Such a perspective is particularly useful when considering workplace behavior such as adapting to changing job demands, as this behavior is typically expected of employees by the organization, and therefore inherently represents externally regulated behavior.

Central to SDT is the process of internalization, which reflects the manner in which individuals transform externally sanctioned behavior into self-regulated behavior (Deci et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and involves “taking in” the values, attitudes, and governing structures that underlie externally sanctioned behavior and accepting them as one’s own (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Internalization can be described as “intrinsic” in nature, reflected in feelings that externally sanctioned behavior is fully congruent with one’s goals and identities, and thus personally interesting and enjoyable (Chemolli & Gagne, 2014; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Alternatively, internalization can be “identified” such that individuals accept that externally sanctioned behavior is important to achieving other desired outcomes, and thus they engage in this behavior even though the behavior itself is not enjoyable. Internalization can also be “introjected” in nature, based on feelings of pressure or obligation to carry out externally sanctioned behavior, even though the individual does not identify with such behavior or accept it as one’s own.

The way in which externally sanctioned behavior is internalized has implications for the type of motivation that will underlie displays of the behavior, and thus the extent to which this behavior will be self-regulated. Specifically, SDT predicts that the intrinsic internalization of externally sanctioned behavior results in fully autonomous – or intrinsic – motivation, reflecting an individual’s desire to carry out the behavior because they find it interesting and derive satisfaction from engaging in the behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Accordingly, the motivation to engage in intrinsically internalized behavior comes from within the individual, making the behavior self-regulated (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000). On the other hand, externally sanctioned behavior that an individual feels an obligation to perform (introjected internalization), or that they find relevant, but not particularly enjoyable (identified internalization), will be more externally motivated, for example, by the desire to obtain a desired reward, or to avoid an undesired consequence (Gagné & Deci, 2005). As the motivation to engage in introjected or identified behavior requires some instrumentality between the activity and an extrinsic reward or consequence, the behavior that results from such forms of internalization will be more externally regulated (Ibid.).

Research tapping into the organismic-dialectic mechanisms of SDT supports that satisfying an individual’s basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence provides the “nutriments” vital to facilitating intrinsic forms of internalization and, thus, autonomous functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016). Social contexts facilitate the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. Research has traditionally focused on the positive influence of “autonomy-supportive”

social contexts that include providing individuals with a meaningful rationale for engaging in a given behavior, acknowledging feelings of concern regarding the behavior, and providing discretion with regards to when or how the behavior is to be conducted (e.g., P. P. Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Deci et al., 1994; Gagné, Koestner, & Zuckerman, 2000). More recent research identifies that basic psychological need satisfaction is also positively related to job resources such as task autonomy, skill utilization, and positive feedback (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008), formal HRM practices such as career development, development appraisal, and mentoring (Marescaux, DeWinne, & Sels, 2012), and supervisory behavior reflecting authentic (Leroy, Anseel, Garnder, & Sels, 2015) and servant leadership (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016).

The contribution SDT makes to a self-regulated perspective of adaptive performance is its ability to explain how employees come to internalize externally sanctioned demands to adapt to changing job demands, and thus why employees who might not inherently enjoy adapting to changes made in their work become willing to do so (Deci et al., 1994). In particular, the intrinsic internalization of one's work role is associated with a flexible role orientation that reflects the felt responsibility for a broad and dynamic range of work behavior (S. K. Parker & Ohly, 2008; S. K. Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997) – an orientation that should naturally include being willing to adapt to changing job demands. On the other hand, research indicates that employees critically evaluate changes and resist those that they believe negatively impact the intrinsic motivation they derive from their work (Oreg, 2006). Accordingly, a closer examination of how and when intrinsic work motivation should relate to employees' willingness to be flexible towards changing job demands is made in Study 3.

Cultivating Adaptive Performance: The Role of Developmental Supervisor Support

Self-regulation may imply behavior that is completely free from external pressure or influence. Nevertheless, research indicates that managers play an important role in prompting self-regulation among employees (Sitzmann & Ely, 2010) and cultivating self-regulated adaptive performance among those who might otherwise be vulnerable to change (Moss et al., 2009). Of the three theories reviewed above, SDT explicitly emphasizes that contextual factors, and supervisor support in particular (P. P. Baard et al., 2004; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016), influences self-regulated behavior by satisfying employees' basic psychological needs and, in turn, the intrinsic internalization of externally-regulated behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). However, control theory also emphasizes that feedback is needed to generate

self-regulated behavior, and that this feedback often comes from supervisors who are in a better position to assess employee performance and the factors that could be affecting it (Klein, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Taylor et al., 1984). Further, while achievement goal orientations are generally viewed as relatively stable dispositions, research also indicates that supervisors can influence goal-oriented behavior that is different from one's general goal-oriented preferences (e.g., Dragoni, 2005; Farr, Hofmann, & Ringenbach, 1993). This knowledge, coupled with the need for research to identify contextual factors that influence adaptive performance (e.g., S. K. Baard et al., 2014; Jundt et al., 2015), leads to the inclusion of developmental supervisor support in all three dissertation papers.

Developmental supervisor support reflects supervisory behavior aimed at assisting employees' goal-oriented learning and growth through the provision of helpful performance feedback, guidance, and learning opportunities. Consistent with conceptualizations of "developmental leadership" derived from transformational leadership theory (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), developmental supervisor support can be differentiated from emotional forms of supervisor support aimed and caring and showing concern for employees' well-being (e.g., Eisenberger, Stinglhamer, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). This distinction is important in the present research because emotional support, while it could protect employees from the stress associated with changing task environments (Chiaburu et al., 2013), is unlikely to have the same transformational effects on employees' ability and motivation to cope with and respond to changing job demands (e.g., Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Further, developmental supervisor support is differentiated from supervisor support for career development, in which career advice and career planning accompanies performance feedback, instruction, and on-the-job learning (e.g., London, 1993). While this distinction is not always made in the leadership literature (c.f., Zhang & Chen, 2013), it is important in the present research. Supervisor support that includes career development, while it is found to enhance "career adaptability" including skill development in anticipation of future positions and the ability to manage career changes (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005), should be less relevant for coping with and responding to changes in the type or nature of existing task work.

Developmental supervisor support is inherently aimed at helping employees acquire new or improve existing skills, knowledge, and abilities (Zhang & Chen, 2013): learning that – according to transformational leadership theory – prepares them to perform in diverse work situations (Avolio & Bass, 1995). Consistent with this theorizing, in Study 1 developmental supervisor support is expected to facilitate the learning needed to perform adaptively, by providing employees with the feedback necessary to detect changes in the task environment

that require adaptive performance and guiding them towards appropriate learning activities. However, the influence that developmental supervisor support should have on employees' self-regulated adaptive performance is expected to extend beyond enhancing employees' ability to be adaptive. Employees who experience opportunities to learn and apply new knowledge and skills in the workplace (i.e., enactive mastery) are also more likely to develop the self-efficacy, or confidence in their skills and abilities, that increases feelings of control over changing situations (Bandura, 1995) and produces adaptive emotional states that facilitate problem-focused coping in dealing with new and challenging situations (Maddux & Lewis, 1995). Further, developmental supervisor support has been argued to elicit learning-oriented attitudes and behavior among employees who do not inherently have a LGO (Dragoni, 2005; Farr et al., 1993). Accordingly, in Study 2, developmental supervisor support is expected to help employees having a low LGO cultivate the psychological resources (Gorgievski, Halbesleben, & Bakker, 2011; Hobfoll, 1989) needed to perceive changing job demands as a challenge that they can master, and thus cope more effectively with changing job demands. In Study 3, developmental supervisor support is predicted to increase employees' intrinsic work motivation and, in turn, willingness to adapt to changing job demands, by satisfying their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The articles included in this dissertation (pages 19-100) are not available open access, due to copyright matters. This also includes the tables and figures presented on these pages.

Article 1

Learning to adapt: Examining a developmental process of adaptive performance and for whom it is more relevant

Solberg, E.

Article 2

Coping with changing job demands: How learning goal orientation and developmental supervisor support enhance adaptive performance

Solberg, E.

Article 3

When midway won't do: The consequences of mediocre development support on employees' willingness to be flexible

Solberg, E., Lai, L., Dysvik, A.

Chapter 6

The primary objective of this dissertation was to theoretically elaborate and empirically investigate a set of learning, coping, and motivation processes that could be relevant for producing adaptive performance in situated work settings. Applying a broadcast method to develop theory and direct empirical inquiry, the three studies included in the dissertation each elaborated and examined a different process, and thus a different combination of mechanisms that sought to explain how, why, and when outcomes relevant for adaptive performance could be produced. As a constant in the three studies, developmental supervisor support was examined as a contextual factor that facilitates the outcomes of interest.

In this final chapter of the dissertation, the main empirical, theoretical, and practical contributions made in each of the three studies are discussed: first their distinct contributions, and then their combined contributions to a better understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior. Overall limitations of the research, future research directions, and practical implications are also discussed.

Summary of Main Findings and Contributions

Study 1: Learning to adapt to changing job demands

While adaptive performance is generally held to require new learning, little research has elaborated or empirically examined the proximal relationship between the learning that employees engage in to enable their adaptive performance and the task-oriented modifications employees make to perform adaptively. Seeking to address this gap, Study 1 examined the relationship between employees' monthly learning efforts and their monthly displays of adaptive performance in a sample of federal employees. As predicted, the positive relationship between employees' monthly learning efforts and their monthly adaptive performance was found to be significantly stronger for employees who were generally less open to work change. Further, it was only among employees who were generally less open to work change that monthly developmental supervisor support was found to facilitate monthly adaptive performance by way of increasing employees' monthly learning efforts. Accordingly, the empirical findings made in Study 1 support long-held theorizing that new learning is often needed to enable adaptive performance, but also provides greater understanding regarding the nature of the proximal learning-adapting relationship, how supervisors can facilitate this relationship, and among whom such efforts are most relevant.

The primary theoretical contribution of Study 1 is the explanation it provides for why and when adaptive performance will require new learning, whereas previous research has largely understood this relationship through lay assumptions. Drawing on control theory models linking task feedback and behavioral revision processes (Klein, 1989; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), Study 1 identified the “task-learning process” that employees should engage in when they determine that a directional change in their task-oriented behavior is needed to eliminate a performance discrepancy created by changing job demands. However, the extent to which employees engaged in task-learning processes to adapt to changing job demands was also predicted to depend on the skill and behavioral repertoires that employees already had at their disposal. Employees who are less open to work changes, as they should have less experience with change (Axtell et al., 2002), were assumed to have a more narrow range of available skills and behaviors on which to base their adaptation. Thus, they were predicted to adapt to changing job demands by engaging in a more conscious and effortful revision process, in which adaptive performance would more often require new learning (Klein, 1989). Employees who are more open to work change, as a result of their greater experience with change, were assumed to have a broader range of skills and behaviors on which to form their adaptive responses. Therefore, they were predicted to adapt more often to changing job demands using unconscious and scripted revision processes (B. E. Ashford & Fried, 1984; Gioia & Poole, 1984), as therefore have less frequent need for new learning in order to perform adaptively. Empirical findings lend support for these predictions.

Study 1 also makes an important practical contribution by identifying that developmental supervisor support facilitates the adaptive performance of employees who are less open to work change by way of stimulating the learning they need to adapt to changing job demands. Previous research has identified that openness to work change is important for performing adaptively (Griffin et al., 2007), and has identified forms of supervisory behavior that enhance the adaptive performance of employees who are highly open to work change (Griffin et al., 2010). Study 1 complements these findings by providing a greater understanding of the type of supervisory behavior that is needed to promote adaptive performance among employees who are less open to work change, and thus how a supervisor must regulate their supervisory behavior in order to manage employees who differ in their preferences towards supporting or resisting changes at work.

Study 2: Coping with changing job demands

Coping with changing job demands is generally associated with adaptive performance (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin et al., 2007); in particular, the problem-focused style of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) that involves behavioral efforts aimed at actively responding to and dealing with the problems caused by changing job demands. Yet, little research has addressed how employees cope with the demands for adaptive performance that they experience at work (Jundt et al., 2015), or what could contribute to the use of more constructive, problem-focused coping strategies that are generally associated with adaptive performance. Study 2 took a preliminary step towards addressing this gap. It combined achievement goal theory (e.g., DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Dweck, 1989) with stressor appraisal and coping frameworks (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LePine et al., 2005) to predict that employees having a high learning goal orientation (LGO) would display more effective adaptive performance, particularly when demands for adaptive performance were high, because they would be more likely to appraise demands for adaptive performance as a challenge and thus engage in more constructive, problem-focused coping strategies. Consistent with these predictions, employees having a high versus low LGO were found to display more effective adaptive performance, particularly when they experienced high demands for adaptive performance. However, employees having a low LGO who received high levels of developmental supervisor support were also found to display more effective adaptive performance than low learning-oriented employees who received low levels of developmental support when experiencing high demands for such behavior. Accordingly, Study 2 provided preliminary support that having a high LGO, or receiving the supervisor support that aligns with one, facilitates the more constructive, problem-focused coping strategies needed to adapt effectively with changing job demands, particular when experienced demands for adaptive performance are high.

Previous research has generally focused on the positive influence that having a high LGO should have on adaptive performance, but has not elaborated the possible “maladaptive” aspects of having a low LGO (e.g., Button et al., 1996; Kozlowski et al., 2001; LePine, 2005). A theoretical contribution of Study 2 is that by combining achievement goal theory with a challenge-hindrane framework it was able to predict how both high and low LGO should interact with experienced demands to perform adaptively to produce different levels of adaptive performance effectiveness, particularly when experienced demands for adaptive performance were high. Further, by identifying that employees having a low LGO could struggle to cope with the demands for adaptive performance because they would more likely to view these

demands as a hindrance, Study 2 was also able to identify why developmental supervisor support could help low LGO employees perform more adaptively as demands for adaptive performance increase. Thus, a practical contribution of this study is that it identifies developmental supervisor support as a contextual resource that helps low learning-oriented employees develop the psychological resources needed for displaying greater effort and resilience when required to adapt to changes at work.

Study 3: Internalizing demands to perform adaptively

Finally, while employees' willingness to accommodate changing job demands is held as a highly important motivational component underlying their displays of behavioral flexibility in research on HR flexibility (Way et al., 2015; Wright & Snell, 1998), little research has addressed the motivational mechanisms that underlie employees' willingness to adapt to changes made to their work. Study 3 was aimed at complementing macro-level studies of HR flexibility with a behavioral perspective of employee flexibility that emphasized the individual-level, cognitive processes that underlie employees' "will do" motivation to display behavioral flexibility. In particular, there was interest in elaborating and examining the relationship between intrinsic work motivation and employees' willingness to be flexible towards changing job demands, as there is evidence that this relationship could be complex and perhaps only viable at high levels of intrinsic work motivation (Guest, 1987; Oreg, 2006). Study 3 drew from self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005) and the literature on flexible role orientations (S. K. Parker & Ohly, 2008; S. K. Parker et al., 1997), to predict a curvilinear, "J-shape" relationship between intrinsic work motivation and employees' willingness to be flexible. Specifically, it was argued that a critical threshold of intrinsic work motivation would need to be summoned before it would trigger the intrinsic internalization of a flexible role orientation needed to positively influence employees' willingness to be flexible.

Findings made in Study 3 supported that the relationship between employees' intrinsic work motivation and their willingness to be flexible was curvilinear in a J-shaped pattern. Further, developmental supervisor support was predicted and found to have an instantaneous indirect effect on employees' willingness to be flexible through changes in intrinsic work motivation, such that high levels of intrinsic work motivation elicited from high levels of supervisor support were needed to generate high levels of willingness to be flexible. Moderate levels of intrinsic work motivation resulting from mediocre developmental support were found to be detrimental for employees' willingness to be flexible. Thus, the findings of Study 3 contributes to a more nuanced understanding as to how and when intrinsic work motivation

relates to employees' willingness to be flexible, and the degree of developmental supervisor support that is needed to facilitate a positive relationship between these variables. A practical contribution of this research is that it identifies both the type and degree of developmental supervisor support that is needed to facilitate high levels of intrinsic work motivation and thus employees' willingness to be flexible.

Combined contributions: Adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior

The three papers included in this dissertation utilize different theoretical frameworks and make distinct contributions to the adaptive performance and HR flexibility literatures. Yet, as argued in the introduction, in combination they sow the seeds upon which a better understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior can grow. Understanding work behavior increasingly relies on understanding how, why, and when employees volitionally direct their attention and behavior towards activities that to contribute to organizational goals (Lord et al., 2010). However, research aimed at understanding employees' self-regulated efforts and goal-directedness has been more widely associated with proactive work behaviors aimed at initiating change in the workplace (e.g., Bindl & Parker, 2011; Bindl, Parker, Totterdell, & Hagger-Johnson, 2012; Frese & Fay, 2001; S. K. Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010), than adaptive behaviors aimed at effectively coping with and responding to externally-initiated changes. This is surprising, as self-regulated behavior is said to be triggered by situations where routinized activity, i.e., existing task strategies, no longer results in desired or expected performance outcomes (Karoly, 1993). As such, a core aspect of self-regulation is the act of adapting one's task strategies in order to maintain desired performance levels despite changing external demands (Lord et al., 2010). Such descriptions are highly aligned with conceptualizations of adaptive performance as behavior aimed at adapting to changing job demands in order to maintain overall levels of job performance (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin et al., 2007). Still, little research has elaborated adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior, or identified the self-regulated processes that should enable adaptive performance (Jundt et al., 2015).

The three studies conducted as part of this dissertation make preliminary, but also significant contributions towards a better understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior. Using a control theory framework, Study 1 helps to understand the self-regulated skill and behavioral revision process that could occur as employees' confront changing job demands and learn the skills needed to adapt them. Other research has addressed self-regulated processes that could be relevant for linking learning and adaptive performance

in simulated training settings, and how such processes can be prompted by training design (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002a, 2008). However, no known research has addressed the self-regulated processes are relevant to acquiring the learning needed to perform adaptively in situated work contexts, or the contextual factors – supervisory behavior, in particular – that could be relevant for eliciting such processes. Jundt and Shoss (2013) use a control theory framework to elaborate adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior, but even their research – while it specifies learning as a likely step in the process to performing adaptively – does not specify why, how, or when learning is needed to produce adaptive performance.

Building on achievement goal theory and the challenge-hindrance stressors framework, Study 2 helps to understand the self-regulated, goal-pursuit patterns that employees could display when facing challenges or negative feedback, and thus the way they should cope with changing job demands. Again, research in simulated training settings has addressed the self-regulated, goal-striving processes associated with having a learning goal orientation (LGO) and their benefits for adaptive performance, and has also addressed how such processes can be prompted by training designs that elicits learning goals among training participants (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002b; Kozlowski et al., 2001). Coping has also been described as self-regulated behavior (Edwards, 1992) in which personal factors (e.g., goal orientations) interact with contextual factors (e.g., changing job demands) to appraise situational stressors and determine a course of action for dealing with these stressors before coping behavior is activated. However, no known research has integrated these perspectives to identify how having a LGO could influence employees' appraisal of changing work demands and thus the effectiveness in which they deal with these demands, despite predictions that having a LGO is particularly relevant for such triggering such mechanisms (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Finally, building on self-determination theory, Study 3 addresses the process in which external demands to adapt to changes at work are internalized, and thus become self-regulated. SDT is less concerned with the goal-striving and behavioral revision processes that are evident in other perspectives of self-regulated behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). However, it does explain why volitional, self-regulated behavior should result in better outcomes than externally regulated behavior, and thus why effort should be made to help employees intrinsically internalize demands to perform adaptively as a part of their job. The benefit of having employees who will display fully volitional, self-regulated adaptive performance when needed by the organization has been a central theme in research on HR flexibility (Way et al., 2015; Wright & Snell, 1998), and it is for this reason that Study 3 is positioned in the HR flexibility literature. However, as the extent to which employees are willing to display adaptive

performance also has implications for the effort and persistence they will display in carrying out such behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005), the findings of this study are also relevant for understanding behavioral displays of adaptive performance and the conditions under which it will be most effective.

In addition to contributing to a better understanding of the processes that underlie self-regulated adaptive performance, each of the three studies also demonstrates that adaptive performance can be facilitated by developmental supervisor support. The adaptive performance literature has generally advocated a selection perspective (S. K. Baard et al., 2014; Jundt et al., 2015), in which certain individuals are predicted to demonstrate more adaptability and deal with changing work contexts better than others. However, other scholars argue that supervisors also need to take responsibility for cultivating adaptive performance among existing employees, particularly those employees that are most vulnerable to changing job demands (Moss et al., 2009). The findings made in this dissertation contribute empirical support for the legitimacy of this argument. In Study 1, developmental supervisor support is indicated to help employees who are less open to change engage in the learning needed to adapt to changing job demands. In Study 2, developmental supervisor support is found to help employees having a low learning goal orientation display more effective adaptive performance when experienced demands for adaptive performance are high. In Study 3, developmental supervisor support is found – when provided at sufficiently high levels – to relate to the high levels of intrinsic work motivation needed to internalize flexible role orientations, and thus display greater willingness to accommodate changing job demands. Accordingly, a collective contribution of the research is the indication that adapting to changing job demands relies not only on employees' self-regulated efforts. It is also important that supervisors adaptively self-regulate their own behavior (e.g., Sosik, Potosky, & Jong, 2002) such that they provide the developmental support important for cultivating adaptive performance to those employees who most need it: in the present research, those employees who are less open to change, less learning-oriented, and who are less intrinsically motivated.

Limitations and directions for future research

The contributions summarized above should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, while each of the three studies elaborates specific mechanisms that underlie the predicted relationships between the variables of interest, not all mechanisms were operationalized or measured in the present research. For example, in Study 2, it is argued that the way in which high learning-oriented employees appraise changing job demands, and

subsequently cope with these demands, produces more effective adaptive performance than the way in which low learning-oriented employees appraise and cope with changing job demands. However, employees' appraisal of changing job demands was not operationalized or measured. Future research that incorporates measures of challenge and hindrance appraisal (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine, 2004) would be useful for validating the propositions made in this study. Similarly, in Study 3, the assumption is made that high levels of intrinsic work motivation go hand-in-hand with a flexible role orientation, and that it is this broader and more flexible view of one's role that underlies employees' willingness to be flexible. However, flexible role orientations were not measured in Study 3. Existing research finds that flexible role orientations are positively correlated with experienced job autonomy, self-efficacy, and supervisor/co-worker support (S. K. Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006) – i.e., satisfaction of the basic needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence that generate intrinsic motivation. Still, it would be useful if future research explicitly examined if and how intrinsic work motivation relates to flexible role orientations and, in turn, employees' willingness to be flexible or other adaptive performance outcomes. However, it should be noted that the flexible role orientations described and theorized in Study 1, while aligned with current conceptualizations, are not suitably captured by existing measures that reflect employees' perceived ownership for work-unit goals and for carrying out extra-role behavior in production contexts (e.g., S. K. Parker et al., 1997; S. K. Parker et al., 2006). While the term "flexible role orientation" is intuitively appealing for research on employee flexibility/ adaptive performance, it might be necessary to distinguish a different dimension of role orientation (S. K. Parker, 2007) that more explicitly focuses on employees' felt responsibility for flexibly applying their skills and behaviors in order to accommodate changing work situations for this research.

Further, in Study 1, it was assumed that employees' who were less open to work change would require more learning to perform adaptively because they would have less experience with change and therefore fewer skills and behavioral repertoires on which to base their adaptation. Measuring openness to work change in this study as opposed to previous experience with change (e.g., Pulakos et al., 2002) or adaptive expertise (e.g., Bohle Carbonell, Könings, Segers, & van Merriënboer, 2016) was intentional in order to compare findings to those made in previous research (c.f., Griffin et al., 2007; Griffin et al., 2010). However, the arguments made in Study 1 – that experience with change influences employees' openness to work change (Axtell et al., 2002) – also suggests that openness to work change is malleable and could have been transformed during the study period as more experience with change was gained. Further, it is possible that developmental supervisor support, as it would provide employees who were

less open to work change with learning opportunities and the support needed to increase feelings of control over changing work situations, could positively influence employees' openness to work change. The research design applied in Study 1 did not allow for empirical testing of these possible relationships. Accordingly, future research that examines how openness to work change develops as employees gain experience with change (and, possibly, the types of change that have the greatest developmental effects) and if and how development supervisor support influences this development would complement findings made in Study 1.

Another concern is with the measure used to capture employees' adaptive performance. There is no widely accepted measure of adaptive performance (Shoss et al., 2012), perhaps because what constitutes adaptive performance still varies significantly between studies (Jundt et al., 2015). The measures of adaptive performance used in Study 1 and Study 2 are based on the general measure of task-oriented adaptive performance developed by Griffin et al. (2007), which has been shown to have discriminant validity with prescribed task performance and proactive work behavior and has been used in subsequent research (Griffin et al., 2010; Neal et al., 2012). However, a problem of using such a general measure is that it makes it difficult to distinguish adaptive performance that reflects substantial changes in the direction of task behavior from changes that might involve carrying out existing task strategies, but to a greater degree or with greater intensity (c.f., Dorsey, Cortina, & Luchman, 2010). For example, the item "Coped with changes that affect the way core work tasks are done" could reflect both types of behavioral change. Also problematic with this particular item, is that it could reflect both the behavioral, problem-solving forms of coping associated with performing adaptively or emotional coping strategies that are not indicative of adaptive performance. Problems such as these were hopefully circumvented in Study 1 and Study 2 by presenting respondents with information in advance of data collection regarding the nature of adaptive performance (i.e., reflecting substantial changes in what work consists of or how it is conducted) and management expectations regarding adaptive performance (i.e., that employees are expected to effectively cope with these demands). However, future research that develops and validates a more precise measure of adaptive performance that eliminates such ambiguities would be beneficial for increasing the reliability and validity of findings in this domain.

With regards to research design, both Study 1 and Study 3 proposed and tested mediated relationships in which X (developmental supervisor support in both studies) influences Y (employees' monthly adaptive performance in Study 1 and willingness to be flexible in Study 3) through changes in M (employees' monthly learning in Study 1 and intrinsic work motivation in Study 3). However, the research designs used in both of these studies cannot rule

out the possibility of reverse causality between the independent, mediator, and dependent variables. In order to validate causal inferences, future research adopting longitudinal research designs would be needed. On the other hand, while not ideal for determining causal effects, the repeated measure design used in Study 1 is beneficial for capturing the within-person variation that is indicative of self-regulatory processes (Lord et al., 2010) and therefore can be generally promoted for research aimed at examining the self-regulatory mechanisms that underlie adaptive performance over cross-sectional studies.

Other methodological concerns include the exclusive use of self-report data in Study 1 and Study 3. While employees were recognized as the most appropriate source of data with regards to the variables of interest in each study, this approach could lead to same-source bias and thus undermine the validity of findings made in these studies (P. M. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). In each study, measures for the independent, mediation, and dependent variables were separated proximally in order to reduce the likelihood of common method bias.

While the three studies combined utilized a broad range of employee samples, there is still reason to be concerned regarding the external validity of research findings. In particular, the generalizability of findings from Study 1 and Study 2 should be considered. These studies included two distinct and very different employee samples with regards to work type (“white collar” civilian service employees in Study 1, “blue collar” manufacturing employees in Study 2) and education (72 percent of respondents holding a master’s degree in Study 1, whereas only .05 percent of respondents in Study 2 had completed a bachelor’s degree), making it difficult to generalize findings between these samples, and to other, dissimilar occupational groups. Future research that replicates these findings in different occupational groups would lend support for the generalizability of findings.

A consequence of taking a broadcast approach in this dissertation, and addressing the learning, coping, and motivational components of a larger and more complex system of self-regulated adaptive performance in three discrete studies, is that it does not account for possible compound effects (Karoly, 1993). The intention of this approach was to “sow seeds broadly,” that is create a broader understanding of the processes held to underlie adaptive performance so that a deeper understanding of self-regulated adaptive performance could later grow. However, future research aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of self-regulated adaptive performance will require considering how the various self-regulated processes identified in this dissertation (and in other research) might interact to produce adaptive performance and related, relevant outcomes. For example, how employees appraise and cope with demands for adaptive

performance could also influence the extent to which they engage in new learning in order to respond to the changes they face (c.f., LePine, LePine, & Jackson, 2004).

Further, the three studies included in this dissertation address only micro-level mechanisms that combine in various individual learning, coping, and motivational processes to generate individual-level attitudes and behavior. Future research incorporating multilevel models (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000) is needed to truly “examine, explicate, and illustrate the linkages” (Way et al., 2015, p. 1126) between organizational demands for adaptive performance, employees’ displays of adaptive performance, and the organizational performance such behavior is held to be important for. Future research elaborating the situational mechanisms (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998) through which organizational demands for adaptive performance translate into employee behavior through, for example, work climate perceptions (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004), could be useful in explaining how macro-micro transition. Identifying the transformational mechanisms (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998) through which individual adaptive performance translates into group and, ultimately, organizational performance is also needed. Research in simulated team settings has addressed how individual team members’ adaptive capacities influence team-level adaptive performance. In this research, teams composed of more high learning-oriented members are found to perform more adaptively (LePine, 2005). Given the role supervisors are found to play in facilitating adaptive performance in the present dissertation, future research could investigate if teams led by developmental supervisors perform more adaptively than teams who are not led with a developmental focus, and the mechanisms, such as motivational climate (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2013), that could facilitate the higher performance of these teams. Further, there is interest in the HR flexibility literature in coordination flexibility in employee skills and behaviors, referring to the extent to which flexible employees are assigned to work activities that effectively leverage their broad skills and behavioral competencies (Way et al., 2015; Wright & Snell, 1998), which is held to contribute to higher levels of organizational performance. Thus, another avenue for future research could be to investigate the ways in which adaptive employees are coordinated by supervisors, or larger HRM systems, and if certain components of this coordination process (for example, if it is based on a learning philosophy or a performance philosophy) could produce greater performance outcomes in the organization.

Finally, focusing on developmental supervisor support and its possible influence on the various aspects of employees’ adaptive performance examined across the three studies was an intentional decision made to reduce some complexity in the otherwise broad research agenda

and to enable the provision of a more focused range of practical implications. However, future research that considers different contextual factors in relation to employees' adaptive performance is much needed and highly encouraged (S. K. Baard et al., 2014; Jundt et al., 2015). Further, future research that examines the relative influence developmental supervisor support has on employees' adaptive performance versus more emotional forms of developmental support (Eisenberger et al., 2002) would be helpful in understanding if developmental support indeed has a more transformational influence on employee behavior, as it is proposed to in other research (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Further, understanding the relative influence developmental supervisor support has on employees' adaptive performance versus more general perceptions of organizational support for employee development (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011) could be useful in determining the different responsibilities organizations and supervisors have in cultivating adaptive performance among existing employees.

Implications for practice

Despite the limitations of the three studies, the findings made in this dissertation may have important implications for practice. All three studies indicate that developmental supervisor support plays an important role in cultivating adaptive performance, particularly among employees who are not inherently open to, predisposed towards, or intrinsically motivated for displaying adaptive performance at work. Accordingly, the findings made in the three studies suggest potential benefits, particularly for the selection, development, and communicated expectations of supervisors in work contexts characterized by changing job demands.

First, developmental supervisor support constitutes specific supervisory behavior that is distinct from generalized emotional support, such as showing concern for employees' well-being (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). In particular, developmental supervisor support involves providing employees with helpful feedback regarding their performance at work aimed at encouraging performance improvement, guidance with regards to suggesting relevant strategies (or learning activities) for accomplishing this development, and learning opportunities such as assigning employees to challenging assignments where they can develop and strengthen the skills needed to achieve these developmental goals (Dragoni, 2005; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Scholars maintain that developmental supervisor support, as a transformational leadership behavior (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), can be developed (i.e., is not inherent to particular individuals) (Avolio, 2005). However, other research suggests that

supervisors who themselves have a learning goal orientation (LGO), and thus a preference for work activities that lead to self-development and learning, will more naturally display developmental supervisor support (Dragoni, 2005). Accordingly, assessing LGO as part of supervisor selection process could be valuable for ensuring the placement of individuals who are more developmentally oriented. Existing supervisors are recommended to become more aware of their goal orientations and the strength of their learning preferences. Reflection exercises aimed at identifying one's core values, preferences, and goals as they relate achievement situations in the context of work could be helpful for gaining this clarity (e.g., Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Existing supervisors having a low LGO could perhaps benefit, as in Study 2, from receiving developmental support from their own immediate supervisor, or perhaps an external coach or mentor.

Further, it is important that senior management clearly conveys the expectation that supervisors provide their employees with developmental support, and offers supervisors the resources needed to provide such support to employees at the high levels needed to elicit self-regulated adaptive performance (e.g., Study 3). For example, the availability of formalized developmental performance appraisal practices (Boswell & Boudreau, 2002) and job enrichment programs (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Herzberg, 1968), such as job rotation opportunities, or job crafting interventions (Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015) could be helpful in signaling to supervisors that developing employees is important (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) and supporting supervisor efforts to provide development support to their employees. However, it is important that discrete and infrequent formal interventions do not replace the informal, on-going support that is needed to keep up with the performance challenges employees meet in their day-to-day work and to facilitate continuous employee development (e.g., Study 1). In fact, a key conclusion from the dissertation is that supervisors need to self-regulate their developmental supervisory behavior in order to cultivate adaptive performance among their employees, and therefore not rely on formal systems to generate such behavior. One way to stimulate self-regulation among supervisors would be to inform them of the expectation to provide developmental supervisor support along with an assessment of their current performance of developmental support from a 360° degree feedback report. Similar interventions have been shown to increase self-monitoring behavior and, in turn, the self-regulated supervisory behaviors encouraged by senior management (Sosik et al., 2002).

The present research indicates that there is particular value in targeting developmental supervisory behavior towards employees who are less open to, predisposed towards, or intrinsically motivated for displaying adaptive performance at work. While it could be difficult

for supervisors to gauge their employees' level of openness to work change, learning goal orientation, or intrinsic work motivation (e.g., Moss et al., 2009), it is possible to observe the performance implications that are likely to result from such tendencies, preferences, and motivational states. Research generally indicates that employees who are less open to work change, have a low learning goal orientation, or are less intrinsically motivated perform their jobs less adaptively and effectively than employees who are high on these dimensions (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Griffin et al., 2007; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007). Developmental supervisors, as they will be concerned with following and providing feedback on their employees' performance, are more likely to identify these vulnerable employees early, and self-regulate their own developmental efforts in order to provide these employees with more intensive support. Supervisors who are not inherently oriented towards providing developmental support could be advised to identify struggling performers so that others, e.g., a HR manager or employee representative, could intervene and offer needed support. Such activities could already be taking place as a part of the organization's talent management program. Unfortunately, the demands faced by organizations in changing business environments often lead to talent management programs that intentionally prioritize identifying and investing in the "top talent" that are predicted to generate future value in the organization (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). However, ensuring efforts are made to identify and invest in the development of employees more vulnerable to changing job demands, so that they might more effectively contribute (i.e., perform) in this environment, reflects a more inclusive and ethical approach to talent management (Downs & Swailes, 2013; Swailes, Downs, & Orr, 2014) that has immediate value for organizations.

Conclusion

The three studies presented in this dissertation offer preliminary insight into why, how, and when employees adapt to changing work demands with specific focus on a set of learning, coping, and motivational processes that underlie employees' adaptive responses to changing job demands, the effectiveness of these efforts, and the willingness in which employees display such flexibility at work. Collectively, the three studies contribute to a more general understanding of adaptive performance as self-regulated behavior, in particular, the self-regulated skill and behavioral revision processes that employees engage in to perform adaptively, the self-regulated goal-pursuit/coping patterns that generate effective adaptive performance, and the internalization processes through which adaptive performance becomes self-regulated. Further, they illustrate the important role developmental supervisor support

plays in cultivating adaptive performance among employees who are less likely to have the resources or role orientations needed to self-regulate their own adaptive performance.

It was stated in the introduction that employees' adaptive performance is an increasingly demanded in-role work behavior that is expected without the need for formal readiness preparations generally advocated for large-scale organizational change. Ironically, the findings made in this dissertation indicate that considering and promoting employees' readiness to adapt to changing job demands could be more important than currently acknowledged. Findings indicate that organizations need to take responsibility to ensure that less adaptable, current employees receive the support needed to develop and enable their adaptive capabilities so that they can display the adaptive performance needed to maintain individual performance and contribute to organizational outcomes. By offering greater insight into why, how, and when employees could struggle with adapting to changing job demands and how supervisors can be of assistance in these situations, there is hope that future research and management practice will provide greater attention to these factors.

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