

# Work Engagement as a Mediator between Career Adaptability, Perceived Career Support and Employees' Task Performance

Daniel G. Hope

Economics and Management Department, Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, 31008 Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou City China  
Email: danielhope146@gmail.com

Zhang Lei

Economics and Management (HRM), Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, 31008 Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou City, China

Lydia L. Lahun

Economics and Management Department, Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, 31008 Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou City, China

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate how work engagement mediates the relationship between career adaptability and employees' task performance, as well as the relationship between perceived career support and employees' task performance. Prior to this study, there was only empirical evidence regarding the relationship between different social support variables, like POS and PSS, and different performance dimensions, such as contextual performance, extra-role behaviors, job performance and overall performance. Examining how career adaptability and perceived career support impact task performance, determining whether work engagement mediates these relationships, and examining how work engagement functions as a linking mechanism between employees' career-related resources and their actual performance at work are the objectives of this paper. Information was gathered from 400 workers across Liberian businesses, and the proposed framework was tested using regression analysis. Each respondent was asked to complete a questionnaire about their work experience. To accomplish the research goal for this exploratory study, a quantitative survey methodology was employed. The current study is quantitative (including the analysis of quantitative data obtained with the use of a structured questionnaire), deductive (testing research hypotheses), explanatory (examining cause and effect relationships), and empirical (based on primary data). The majority of the data showed that the hypotheses were supported. The association between employees' task performance and

perceived career support was shown to be totally mediated by work engagement. However, it was discovered that work engagement only partially mediated the association between employees' task performance and career adaptability. The results indicate that managers should take action to raise employees' engagement levels in order to support employees who score highly on perceived career support and career adaptability in their work performance. Employees' engagement is essential for transferring the benefits of perceived career support and career adaptability to employees' task performance.

**Keywords:** Work Engagement, Quantitative, Employees Task Performance, HRM, Career Adaptability, Perceived Career Support

### **Introduction**

It is theoretically and practically necessary to comprehend how employees maintain high performance levels in the quickly evolving and unpredictable workplace of today. This study is significant because it combines perceived career support (an organisational resource) and career adaptability (a personal resource) to explain how these factors affect task performance through the mediating function of work engagement. Although these variables have been studied separately in previous studies, their combined impacts within a single framework have received less attention. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm is used in this study to illustrate how organisational and individual resources work together to promote engagement, which in turn leads to better performance. To ensure ongoing productivity, employee well-being, and organisational competitiveness, organisations should use the findings as a practical guide for creating interventions that improve career support, foster engagement, and boost career adaptability.

There is currently little empirical data on how career adaptability, perceived career support, and work engagement all affect employees' task performance, despite the fact that these variables have each drawn a lot of attention in organisational research. Few previous studies have positioned work engagement as a mediating mechanism that links organisational and personal resources to performance outcomes. The majority of previous studies have either looked at organisational support as a determinant of employee attitudes or career adaptability as a predictor of career success. There is also a knowledge gap regarding how these linkages operate in a variety of work environments and during times of rapid organisational change because the research that are currently available are frequently context-specific. Closing this gap is essential because, in order to sustain high productivity, organizations are needing workers who are engaged, supported, and adaptable. Thus, this study is required to give a more comprehensive explanation of how perceived career support and career adaptability translate into improved task performance through work engagement, providing both theoretical advancement and useful advice for organisational effectiveness and employee development.

Competition between businesses is heightened by the introduction of globalization in corporate life and technological advancements. Businesses should effectively utilize human resources if they want to stay competitive in this kind of climate. It is essential to have human resources with good task performance and innovation. Nonetheless, people should get ready for the professional skills needed in today's fiercely competitive and increasingly globalized economic environment. Rapid industrialization significantly alters the needs for several vocations. Employees should develop the abilities necessary to provide career adaptability.

They will therefore be able to cope with the quick changes in working conditions and be productive in the corporate world. A person's career is the collection of experiences they have in one or more professional fields during their lives. Conversely, a person's career is a dynamic process that encompasses their life prior to obtaining a job, as well as their social life, family, and leisure activities. From this vantage point, it is evident that the idea of a career is not just associated with one's professional life. Throughout their careers, every person expresses interest in one or more professional fields. The current debate in academia and industry recognizes that employee engagement is necessary to improve task performance. One common definition of work engagement is a mental state made up of vitality, devotion, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2022). It is one of the organizational science themes that is being used the most right now. Because of the significance of work engagement, businesses spend over three-quarters of a billion dollars annually on employee engagement (Graber, 2015). Researchers stress the need for more studies to look at the sometimes-overlooked connections between career characteristics and work engagement, even if there are a number of studies that contribute to our understanding of what motivates people to perform well at work (Morgan, 2017). Furthermore, two career characteristics that assist managers in engaging staff members are perceived career support and career adaptability (Lee et al., 2016). The growing trend of outsourcing knowledge workers' human resources, often known as "high end HR outsourcing," necessitates a review of the strategies being used by businesses to boost productivity (Singh, 2018). Lately, companies have started adopting a liquid knowledge workforce that includes temporary workers, freelancers, and part-timers in emerging economies with demographic rewards (Naik, 2016). According to Klewes et al. (2017), a liquid knowledge worker is characterized by their high degree of mobility, capacity to adapt quickly, adaptability in their work schedule, accommodating disposition, keen attitude toward learning, and multitasking skills. Nonetheless, the fluid workforce presents a distinct set of engagement challenges for these firms due to its nimble and non-permanent character (Accenture, 2016a, 2016b). According to Tissenbaum et al. (2017) and Wu (2018), young people generally want flexibility in their careers and work. The primary goal of this study is to investigate how work engagement influences the relationship between employees' task performance and perceived career support, as well as between career adaptability and employees' task performance.

Employees' engagement is still a crucial factor from a human resources standpoint today. Organizations are choosing to shrink and restructure more than ever before due to the difficult economic environment, which has led to organizations looking into new strategies to keep and boost engagement. In order to maintain their competitive edge, organizations must find the ideal balance between encouraging and raising employees' engagement level (Knight, 2011). Gaining a competitive edge will depend more and more on your ability to draw in, engage, nurture, and keep talent. In the new economy, people are eager to switch employment frequently, competition is worldwide, capital is plentiful, and ideas are developed swiftly and affordably (Sundaray, 2011). Talented individuals will leave organizations that do not treat their personnel well. Due to their high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and frequent complete immersion in their work, engaged employees may have a significant competitive advantage in this scenario (Macey & Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson & Harter, 2004). It is believed that working environment, particularly job demands, job resources, and employee control over his work, determine work engagement (Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Since it also depends on individual resources, professional

flexibility may have an impact on engagement, as demonstrated by models of engagement and career adaptability (Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori & Dau Walder, 2012). While individual influence elements have not gotten enough attention, organizational factors that may affect employees' engagement have been the main focus of research on the topic (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Career adaptability and its effect on employees' engagement in an insurance setting have been the subject of little to no research.

According to Ferreira (2012), professional adaptability is an adaptive resource that helps people deal with transitions and job traumas during trying and uncertain times. Numerous occupational outcomes, such as tenure, engagement, job performance, and job satisfaction, are thought to be impacted by career adaptability (Klehe et al., 2011). It helps workers cope with changes in their workplace, including job insecurity, outsourcing, restructuring, and redundancy—all aspects of the contemporary business environment (Klehe et al, 2011). Certain abilities that embody adaptability, such self-control and coping mechanisms, are linked to results like involvement (Savickas, 1997). Some workers do not burn out despite the demands of their jobs and the rising pressures of the workplace; instead, they thrive on the pressure, enjoying hard work and handling high demands well (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001). Positive, satisfying, and work-related, work engagement is defined by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). According to Pitt-Catsouphes and Matz-Costa (2008), it can also be defined as the purpose that workers derive from their work as well as the time and discretionary effort they invest in it. Employers and employees may both gain from higher employees' engagement (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). Employees that are engaged are more productive, less prone to experience stress, and happier in their personal life. Employees who are more involved are likely to remain with a company longer than those who are not (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). According to Pitt-Catsouphes and Matz-Costa (2008), an engaged staff benefits the employer by exhibiting more productivity, innovation, profitability, and client relationships as well as longevity within the company.

## **Literature Review**

### *Employees Tasks Performance*

Employees' task performance, also known as in-role performance, refers to the formally mandated results and actions that directly support the organization's objectives (Motowildo & Van Scotter, 1994). Meeting business goals and making persuasive sales presentations are two examples of task performance (Behrman & Perreault, 1982). The importance of performance for organizational objectives is emphasized in the concept of employees' task performance. One important management idea is performance, which is the outcome of particular acts. One definition of performance is "accomplishment." Employee performance is one of the key components of company success. Employees' task performance is assessing a process and comparing actions to goals in order to determine the degree of "attaining goals" (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 1985: 432). The amount of output obtained indicates task performance. In a nutshell, Employees in companies have responsibilities that include supporting coworkers, management, and leadership; task performance refers to reaching a goal. It is a person's contribution to an organization's objectives. Individuals communicating verbally and in writing; putting out effort toward a particular goal; maintaining personal discipline; and contributing to team performance. Individuals use employees' task performance to carry out these tasks. He or she takes initiative, works hard,

solves organizational difficulties, and ensures motivation to achieve goals. When he or she applies his or her technical knowledge, skills, and abilities, he or she presents task performance. In addition to helping to improve individual performance, managers are also accountable for improving organizational performance (Tercan, 2017: 39).

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each of the primary multi-item components (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The validity and reliability of the scales were thoroughly established. Regular training and improvement can be used to monitor employees' task performance, according to Alagaraja<sup>1</sup> and Shuck (2015). Furthermore, Thomas and Feldman (2010) use metrics for measuring employee performance, such as core work performance, which encompasses in-role performance, security performance, and creativity, followed by citizenship performance, which is split into equally target-specific and broad organizational citizenship.

Since an employee's performance on a particular job or activity is the strategic foundation of a business, organizations must examine factors that contribute to enhanced performance more closely in order to achieve success, progress, and expansion (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). Employers, managers, and the entire organization view an employee's performance and productivity as a matter of great importance (Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, 2011). According to Ahmad and Khurram (2011), employees' task performance reflects the staff's overall beliefs about their behavior and contributes to the organization's success. According to Khan, Razi, and Ali (2011), employees' task performance is the amount and quality of work that is expected of an employee. Employers of labor have recognized the importance of employees' task performance in order to compete in today's global market, as a result of the ongoing competition among various business organizations. They have also realized that as employees' task performance improves, so does the firm's overall performance and profitability (Susanty et al., 2013). According to Liao et al. (2012), employees' task performance is defined as the full capacity and productivity of workers in achieving the anticipated value and execution of daily tasks in accordance with the organization's established method and timeline. Similar to this, Liao et al. (2012) regard employees' task performance as a gauge for advancements, inactivity, rewards, penalties, evaluations, and adjustments in compensation. Additionally, it fulfills workers' aspirations to become their best selves. Thus, employees' performance creates space for innovation among employees and the overall performance and innovation of the company in a way that the successful work of accomplished, motivated, and enthusiastic human resources produces innovative ideas for newer products or services and also increases performance quality and customer satisfaction (Sadikoglu & Cemal, 2010). Additionally, Ahmad and Shahzad (2011) contended that an employee's apparent performance reflects their whole conviction on their activities and contribution to the achievement of the organization's mission and goals. Additionally, they stated that the standards for employees' performance include the practices of salary, performance evaluation, and promotion. According to Anitha (2013), an employee's performance is a measure or indicator of their financial or other outcomes, and it also has an unwavering relationship with the success and performance of the firm. Additionally, according to Anitha (2013), the environment in which employees' complete tasks and adhere to other schedules, their relationships with supervisors, their relationships with coworkers and the team, the reward process, and employee engagement all influence performance.

### *Perceived Career Support*

According to the definition of perceived career support, a subordinate's assessment of how much "their organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing and career" This topic has generated a lot of attention among management and psychology scholars (Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002; Fuller et al., 2003; Stamper et al., 2003; Aube et al., 2007; Allen et al., 2008). There are several definitions of perceived career support in the literature. "Employees' in an organization from global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" is how Eisenberger (1986) defined perceived career support. "How much the organization values employees' contributions and cares about them" is another definition of perceived career support (Allen et al., 2008).

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each of the primary multi-item components (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The validity and reliability of the scales were thoroughly established. Career support perceived (Kraimer and Wayne, 2004). An analysis of the multifaceted concept of perceived organizational support within the framework of an overseas assignment.

According to Kraimer and Wayne (2004), perceived career support is the degree to which employees believe their company cares about their career needs and other components of perceived managerial assistance. If employees don't indicate that they need career guidance, it will have a small direct impact on their behavior and mood. The JD-R model of work engagement demonstrates that, in addition to supportive environments like valuing employees and motivating them to collaborate, resources like the social support of managers and coworkers create a motivating path that increases work engagement and, ultimately, improves task performance outcomes (Kraimer et al., 2011). Numerous researches have demonstrated that social support, such as perceived managerial support, and supervisor support are predictors of work engagement (e.g., Rich et al., 2010). Recent studies on workplace engagement have found a perfect relationship between perceived managerial support and work engagement (Rich et al.). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that encouraging work environments that provide employees a sense of value and motivation to collaborate are beneficial for employees' engagement (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; Nahrgang et al., 2011). Employee engagement is higher in companies where workers feel their needs are met, their career needs and growth are met, and they are cared for than in companies where workers are insecure about their needs. Because of the organization's support, employees feel that the association values and cares about them. Employees will feel secure when they think so, which will enable them to give their best to their work, devote their time and energy to it, and approach it with enthusiasm. Perceived career support is crucial for feeling energized, committed, and integrated, which is essentially job engagement (e.g., Heijden et al., 2009). According to De Vos et al. (2009), executive professional administration practices predict career advancement, and managerial support for progress predicts job presentation when perceived career opportunity within the association is elevated (Kraimer et al., 2011).

### *Career Adaptability*

According to Rossier et al. (2012), professional adaptability is the ability of an individual to plan for, investigate, and make judgments about their job options based on their

readiness reactions and coping resources. With reference to the specific sociocultural and socioeconomic context in which they live, career adaptability is a process by which individuals construct their professional lives in a dynamic way while simultaneously exhibiting the capacity to manage changes both proactively and effectively (Coetzee, 2008; Ferreira, 2012).

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each of the primary multi-item components (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The validity and reliability of the scales were thoroughly established. The 24-item scale developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) was used to gauge career adaptability. "Considering what my future will be like" is an example. The career adaptability scale in Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) study had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.92. Numerous studies have made use of this scale.

Ferreira (2012) argues that adaptability is a tendency to intentionally maintain a person-environment integration and encompasses the attitudes, behaviors, and competences that people utilize to fit into various professions. Career adaptability is related to the events, changes, traumas, and professional responsibilities that people encounter, as well as the psychosocial coping mechanisms that they require (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Adaptability resources are used to guide people's adaptable behaviors, according to the career creation theory (Stoltz, 2014). In order to adapt to changes in their jobs, people must also recognize that they may be motivated by the desire for new challenges or the desire to embrace different viewpoints that come with engaging in meaningful personal development (Brown, Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2012). The ability of individuals to manage their own careers, make career decisions, and have the self-assurance to adjust to changing work conditions is especially related to career adaptability as a personal resource (Bakker, 2011). According to Savickas (1997), professional adaptability is a bridging construct that fundamentally unites all viewpoints of the career or lifespan theory and entwines the career life stages. Adaptability is seen as essential for people to respond to and confront the difficulties that come with ever-changing work environments in response to the evolving nature of the workplace, regulation skills, and adaptation abilities (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

### *Work Engagement*

According to Truss et al. (2006), work engagement is a "passion for work" that includes mental, emotional, and physical aspects. Kahn (1990) asserts that psychological presence during the occupation and performance of an organizational function is the cause of work engagement. According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement is a multifaceted concept that includes cognitive, physical, and emotional engagement. According to Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) and Olivier and Rothmann (2007), engaged workers conceal their true identities, get physically involved in their work, and are emotionally and cognitively attached to their occupations. According to Rossier et al. (2012), work engagement indicates that a person feels deeply connected to and immersed in their work, puts more discretionary effort into it, and is focused and focused on it. Additionally, it is thought to be influenced by both the individual's control over their work and the working environment (Rossier et al., 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each of the primary multi-item components (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The validity and reliability of the scales were thoroughly established. Schaufeli and colleagues (2006). A brief questionnaire is used

to measure work engagement: An international investigation. *Measurement in education and psychology*, 66(4), 701-716.)

According to Vecina, Chacon, Sueiro, and Barron (2012), work engagement has been connected to motivation, prosocial behavior, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, personal initiative, and life satisfaction. According to Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris (2008), work engagement seems to be influenced by both personal and professional resources. Whereas personal resources are linked to resilience and positive self-evaluations that allow people to control and influence their environment, job resources are the aspects of the job that are useful in achieving career-related goals (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson, 2003; Tremblay & Meservey, 2011?). Work engagement, according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), is a pleasant, satisfying mental state associated with one's job that is marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engagement is a more permanent and ubiquitous affective-cognitive state that is not centered on any one thing, event, person, or behavior rather than a monetary and specific state (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The dimensions listed below are thought to be important for work engagement:

According to Bakker (2011) and Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), vigor is the capacity to exert effort, have high levels of energy, be resilient, and persevere in the face of adversity. Another definition of vigor is an employee's ability to bounce back from setbacks (Bakker, 2011). Dedication: describes the sense of purpose that a person gets from performing their duties, as well as their pride and excitement about their work, as well as their sense of challenge and inspiration. People that are highly dedicated find their work to be challenging, inspirational, and meaningful (Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). According to Bakker (2011) and Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), absorption is the state of being completely and contentedly absorbed in one's job, frequently making it impossible to separate from it. According to Bakker (2011), workers that exhibit high absorption are contentedly absorbed in their work and give their whole attention to the task at hand. Encouraging employees to be more dedicated to their employer and raising employee engagement levels in the company are two of the biggest challenges facing HR professionals as they attempt to improve workplace efficiency. According to Sartain and Finney (2003), HR must actually recognize creative and inventive behaviors in order to create a dynamic, energetic, engaging, and profitable company where workers will like their work. Organizations will not be able to reach their full potential if they are unable to positively engage their employees in their job as well as in the organization's values and aims. For the company to expand and be profitable, it is essential to invest in the environment that encourage employee engagement (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008).

### *Hypothesis Development*

One of occupational psychology's most studied concepts is task performance. The main reason for this is that practitioners are interested in knowing what causes variations in workers' performance. Scholars have attempted to establish a connection between a number of elements that may either directly or indirectly impact employees' task performance. These factors include work engagement, career adaptability, and perceived career support. Generally, youth have a desire for career and work flexibility (Tissenbaum et al., 2017; Wu, 2018), and the main objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of work

engagement in the relationship between perceived career support and tasks performance and between career adaptability and work performance. Though there are several studies that advance the understanding of what makes employees engaged in their work, scholars emphasize the need for additional research to examine the largely neglected relationships between career factors and work engagement (Morgan, 2017). In addition, the role of career adaptability and perceived career support are two career factors that help managers engage employees (Lee et al., 2016).

#### *Perceived Career Support and Employees' Task Performance*

An employee's assessment of how well the company manages, cares for, and supports their career is known as perceived career support (Lee et al., 2016). Employees evaluate their perceived worth to the company based on how well they believe they are treated by it, according to organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees' task performance has been found to be significantly predicted by social support. The relationship between social support variables, including perceived supervisory support (PSS) and organizational support (POS), and performance dimensions, such as task and contextual performance (van der Heijden et al., 2009; Riggle et al., 2009), extra-role behaviors (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), job performance (Kraimer et al., 2011), and overall performance (Feldman and Thomas, 1992), has been empirically supported by previous research studies. For instance, a 2009 study by van der Heijden et al. among workers of a multinational corporation with headquarters in the Netherlands found a favorable correlation between expatriate performance and perceived career assistance. Career support was also found to be a significant predictor of performance by Feldman and Thomas (1992) in their study of expatriates from various nations. Additionally, meta-analytical research has demonstrated that POS and task performance are positively correlated. In their meta-analytical study, for example, Riggle et al. (2009) found a moderately positive correlation between POS and employee performance. In a similar vein, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) discovered a favorable correlation between POS and improved task and extra-role performance after reviewing over 70 research.

The aforementioned data suggests that task performance will benefit from perceived career support, a significant POS component (Kraimer and Wayne, 2004). Employees who exhibit good attitudes and behaviors toward the company are likely to benefit it, according to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). When workers believe their company is interested in their professional requirements and is helping them advance their careers, they feel obligated to give back in a positive manner. Employees are therefore more likely to seek out every opportunity to advance the organization and its goals by performing better on tasks when they believe that their employer supports their professional development. According to Ng et al. (2010), because younger generations' careers are still in their infancy, professional assistance becomes even more crucial as a motivator. These writers contend that younger people have high expectations for their careers and that any assistance from their company makes them feel grateful, which is likely to be returned in the form of improved performance. De Vos and Cambré (2017) gathered information from 293 organizations' directors more recently. Following that, a recent study on the Taiwanese hotel business was carried out by Uen et al. (2018). They maintained that career assistance is likely to improve newcomers' performance because it is a crucial part of mentoring. This argument was validated by their findings. Using a sample of sessional academics, Heffernan (2018) discovered in another

recent study that perceived career support has a beneficial effect on task performance in the academic setting. In the setting of a telecommunications services company in South China and five-star hotels in Taiwan, respectively, Uen et al. (2018) and Yang et al. (2018) found similar results.

There is a correlation between career support and employee performance, according to several factors. The first reason is that scholars and practitioners believe that adequate career support can help employees perform better when organizations face these new challenges because today's intense, dynamic markets feature innovation-based competition, price performance, rivalry, decreasing returns, and creative destruction of existing competence. Understanding how mentoring affects employees' performance is crucial because, according to (Ofobruku & Yusuf n.d.), career support activities are seen by researchers as key factors in improving employees' performance. Some academics believe that adequate career support is a powerful tool for management advancement and a long-term competitive advantage for employee performance enhancement. Some organizations look for practical ways to give their employees the tools they need to excel; a time-tested strategy has been concentrating on the benefits of career support. This is due to the belief that career support is crucial in influencing group norms, helping teams deal with their surroundings, and coordinating cooperative actions (Ofobruku & Yusuf, n.d.).

*H1. Perceived career support is positively related to task performance.*

#### *Career Adaptability and Task Performance*

Career adaptability is defined by Savickas (2005) as a collection of abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that people use to choose employment that works for them. This shows how well a person can adapt their behavior to the demands of a changing career. Johnston (2016) asserts that professional adaptability, also known as self-regulatory traits that assist an individual in adjusting to unexpected situations, entails regular person–environment interaction. Given the non-permanent nature of occupations and high career aspirations, the concept of career adaptability is even more crucial for knowledge workers. The knowledge workforce is expected to fulfill a variety of organizational and social expectations during their career due to frequent job transitions (Rossieretal., 2012). Any profession where learning and using information is part of the job description, such as nursing, accounting, teaching, legal, engineering, etc., could be considered a liquid knowledge worker (DeCenzo et al., 2010). As a result, these employees must be able to handle and quickly adjust to shifting work circumstances. This argument stems from the definition of career adaptability provided by Savickas (2005), which posits that a shift in skills would be indicative of more career adaptability. As previously said, career adaptability through the provision of critical personal resources is likely to help employees effectively navigate the difficulties associated with frequent job changes. It is reasonable to assume that career adaptability will have a significant impact on job and career-related outcomes. Recent research, for instance, show a favorable correlation between these adaptation resources and workplace outcomes like career success, employment retention, job engagement, and job satisfaction (Brownetal, 2012; Rossieretal, 2012). The majority of career adaptability research links it to career-related outcomes, with little attention paid to other workplace outcomes. Few studies have attempted to investigate the relationship between employees' task performance and career adaptability, according to the literature (Zacher, 2014, 2015). Zacher (2014,2015) made the sole attempt to connect career adaptability with performance. Zacher et al. (2014) found a favorable correlation

between self-rated performance and career adaptability in their research of Australian employees. In a scenario-based study, Ohme and Zacher (2015) found that employees from different vocational backgrounds judged the job performance of fake employees and career adaptability favorably. Moreover, Zacher (2015) found that daily career adaptation significantly predicted daily task and career performance in a daily study.

Given the evidence presented above, we suggest that career adaptability and task performance are positively correlated. This is based on the idea that career adaptability will increase task performance by giving employees the skills they need to adapt to changing career needs and increase the likelihood of career success by improving person-organization fit. As a personal resource, career adaptability will assist workers in overcoming obstacles in their careers and advancing their performance and professional growth. Employee performance will increase and they will be able to concentrate more on their primary responsibilities thanks to adaptability resources that assist them in managing demanding and shifting organizational expectations.

*H2. Career adaptability is positively related to task performance.*

#### *Work Engagement as a Mediator*

The current study, which builds on the theoretical framework of the job demands resources (JD-R) model, views work engagement as a mediator of the relationship between knowledge workers' perceived career support, career adaptability, and task performance. Demerouti et al. (2001) examined the JD-R theory, which states that job resources, such as organizational support, set off a motivational process that results in organizational outcomes through work engagement (Gupta and Shukla, 2018; Gupta, 2018; Gupta et al., 2018; Gupta and Shaheen, 2018). In order to anticipate work engagement and the performance results that follow, the author of this research suggests that career adaptability is a personal resource and perceived career support is a significant workplace resource. When workers believe their company truly cares about advancing their careers, they feel appreciated. Social exchange theory states that a subjective cost-benefit analysis determines human relations. Employees are therefore more likely to adhere to the reciprocity standard by putting in more time and displaying greater energy and excitement at work when they believe that their company supports their career. Put another way, when workers find themselves in a supportive atmosphere, they are more likely to be personally invested in their work and, as a result, exhibit better work engagement. Poon (2013) provided evidence in favor of this claim by showing a favorable correlation between work engagement and perceived career assistance. The only study the author could locate in the literature that specifically examined the connection between work engagement and perceived career assistance was Poon (2013). In a study of 115 full-time workers who were also part-time graduate students in Malaysia, the author discovered that work engagement was positively and significantly impacted by perceived career assistance.

Related evidence generally supports the aforementioned connection (Rich et al., 2010; Crawford et al., 2010; Nahrgang et al., 2011). Rich et al. (2010) found that POS and PSS had a favorable impact on employee engagement at work. According to Crawford et al. (2010) and Nahrgang et al. (2011), who conducted meta-analysis, there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and supporting work engagement components. For employees who are constantly exposed to a variety of work situations and expectations,

career adaptability can be extremely important. The conservation of resources theory states that people spend money in order to prevent bad things from happening and to adapt swiftly and efficiently in stressful situations. Similar to this, career adaptability tools like confidence, curiosity, control, and concern can help workers cope with shifting demands at work. Because they are more likely to set realistic goals, seek out chances, and gather the right personal resources when faced with job hardship, employees who possess career adaptability may be happier in their workplace (Akkermans et al., 2013).

It has been suggested that engaged employees outperform their non-engaged counterparts because they are more energized, enthusiastic, and deeply involved in their work (Macey and Schneider, 2008), feel happier, share their engagement with others, have better health, and create their own personal and professional resources (Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2009). Several studies in the engagement literature show that job engagement is positively correlated with a number of employee performance metrics, such as task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Bakker et al., 2004; Salanova et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2013). Bakker et al. (2004), for instance, used multi-source data to show that engaged employees performed better both in and out of their roles and were evaluated higher by their peers. In a similar vein, Sala Nova et al. (2005) demonstrated that customers gave engaged workers higher ratings for their work performance. Furthermore, after doing a thorough evaluation of the empirical literature on the subject, Kim et al. (2013) came to the conclusion that work engagement and performance were positively correlated. It is therefore anticipated that task performance will be impacted by perceived career support (job resources) and career adaptability (personal resources) via the mediating effect of work engagement.

Engagement is a constructive behavior that piques interest and promotes favorable outcomes for both individuals and the organization. According to Shantz, Alfes, Truss, and Soane (2013), engaged workers have a strong sense of obligation to the company and go above and beyond in their work responsibilities, which improves task performance. Previous research shows that engagement improves performance at the individual, intra-individual, and group levels (May et al., 2004; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010; Christian et al., 2011); it also increases organizational profitability and lowers absenteeism (Morgan, 2004); and it predicts organizational financial performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2008). Engagement made them top achievers (Taleo Research, 2009), and "engaged employees experience positive emotions, which broaden people's 'thought action repertoire', leading them to become more attentive and absorbed in their work" (Fredrickson, 2001).

*H3. Work engagement mediates the relationship between perceived career support and employees' task performance*

*H4. Work engagement mediates the relationship between career adaptability and employees' task performance*

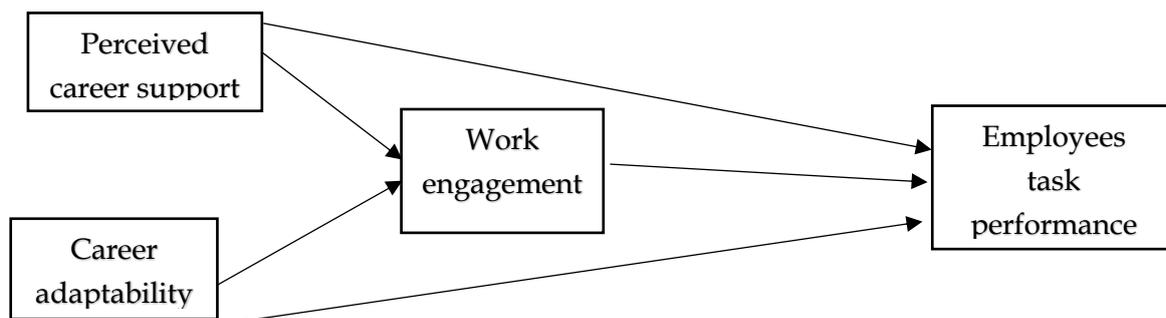


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Authors

### Research Objective

The goal of the current study was to experimentally evaluate the mediating function of work engagement in the relationship between employees' task performance and perceived career support, as well as between career adaptability and employee task performance. In order to inform career development interventions and engagement initiatives inside firms, human resource managers and practitioners may find it useful to analyze the relationship between employee task performance and perceived career support and career adaptability. The research approach and methodology are covered in detail in the following section of the article, which is followed by the results presentation and a discussion of the findings. The article ends with a succinct summary of the key findings, practical implications, and suggestions for possible further study.

### Methodology

Over the course of at least one month, information was gathered from 400 knowledge workers across Liberian businesses. The proposed framework was tested using regression analysis. As far as the authors are aware, this study is one of the few studies that examines and determines the function of work engagement as an intermediary between work performance and the two career-related dimensions. Each respondent was asked to complete a questionnaire about their work experience. To accomplish the research goal for this exploratory study, a quantitative survey methodology was employed.

#### *Measuring Instruments*

A five-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree) was used to measure each of the major multi-item categories. Because of their demonstrated validity and reliability, the scales were utilized. The four items of Kraimer and Wayne's (2004) scale were used to gauge perceived career support. For example, "(company) showed interest in my career." the researchers changed the item's tense from present to past in this instance. The perceived career support scale in Kraimer and Wayne's (2004) study has a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.88. Kawai and Strange (2014) employed this scale recently. The 24 items on Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) scale were used to gauge career adaptability. "Considering what my future holds" is an example item. In Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) study, the career adaptability scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.92. This scale was employed by Ghosh and Fouad (2017) and has been utilized in a number of investigations. The nine items on Schaufeli et al. (2006)'s scale were used to gauge work engagement. For instance, "I feel bursting with energy at work." the work engagement scale in Schaufeli et al. (2006) had a

Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.88. This scale was employed by hakanen et al. (2018) and has been utilized in a number of research. Task performance of employees, a six-item measure developed by alagaraja1 and shuck (2015). An example in the last three months, how many times did your work fall short of expectations?

*Data Analyses*

The data were analyzed in two stages. The first stage involved determining Cronbach's alpha coefficients to verify the multi-item scale's internal consistency. Regression analysis was performed step-by-step for two distinct models in order to evaluate the suggested framework in the second phase, which was the hypotheses testing phase. Perceived career support and career adaptability were recorded as independent factors in Step 2. A criterion proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) for the test of mediation states that the direct and substantial effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable should cease to be significant once the mediating variable is included. In line with their methodology, work engagement was added to Model 2 as a mediating variable in the association between work performance and the two independent variables—career adaptability and perceived career support.

Table 1

*Descriptive statistic*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Std.	Std.	Variance
	Statistic	statistic	statistic	statistic	error	deviation	
Gender	400	1	1	2	.025	.500	.250
Edu.	400	2	1	3	.026	.511	.261
Age	400	6	2	8	.080	1.604	2.573
Work Ex	400	5	1	6	.048	.951	.904

Source: Authors

**Results**

Two stages of data analysis were carried out: preliminary and hypothesis testing. The next sections present the findings from the analysis of the data in those two stages.

Table 2

*Correlations table*

	MEAN	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender	1.53	.500	-.056						
Edu.	1.38	.511	-.056						
Age	4.94	1.604	-.220**	.328**					
WEXP.	4.03	.951	-.205**	.254**	.621**				
CA	4.3357	.24470	.118*	-.046	-.156**	-.059			
WE	4.3344	.32683	.074	-.019	-.096	-.013	.621**		
PCS	4.2544	.39198	.094	.007	-.100*	-.073	.470**	.495**	
ETP	4.5244	.44588	.136**	-.148**	-.100*	-.061	.409**	.334**	-.249**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

*Preliminary Analysis*

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed in the first phase to verify the multi-item scale's internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value for each scale was higher than 0.60, as indicated in Table I. This implies that the scales were all dependable. It was discovered that all of the key variable pairs had significant and positive correlation coefficients. This implied the possibility of performing the regression analysis.

Table 3

*Reliability table*

#	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO
1.	Career Adaptability	.810	.864
2.	Work Engagement	.768	.822
3.	Perceived Career Support	.708	.724
4.	Employee Task Performance	.733	.692

Source: Authors

*Hypotheses Testing*

Table 4

*Test for direct relationships mediation by work engagement*

Variables	Model 1 (Control variable only)	Employees task performance Model 2 (Direct relationships)	Model 3 (with mediator)
Gender	0.097	0.156	0.003
Age	0.079	0.077	0.094
Edu.	0.045	0.076	0.057
Work experience	0.053	0.065	0.065
Career adaptability		0.6***	0.83***
Perceived career support		0.13***	0.41***
Work engagement		0.390***	
R2	0.49	0.35	0.42
Adjusted R2	0.24	0.12	0.18

\*p<0.05. \*\*p<0.01. \*\*\*p<0.001

Source: Authors

Multiple regression analysis was used to test each of the proposed associations. In the absence of the mediator, it was discovered that perceived career support (0.13\*\*\*) and career adaptability (0.6\*\*\*) both significantly and favorably predicted task performance as showed in (figure 2) and (figure 3). This suggests that H1 and H2 are supported. Additionally, it was discovered that both perceived career support (0.41\*\*\*) and career adaptability (0.83\*\*\*) significantly and favorably predicted work engagement. Additionally, task performance was positively and significantly impacted by work engagement (0.38). The mediation rule developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) stipulates this as a prerequisite. Table 2 demonstrates that perceived career support had an insignificant direct impact on employees' task performance when work engagement was introduced as a mediator. This suggested that perceived career support and work performance were fully mediated by work engagement. H3 was therefore supported. The association between career adaptability and

employees' task performance with the standardized regression coefficient was (0.6\*\*\*) as showed in figure 3. As a result, H4 received some support.

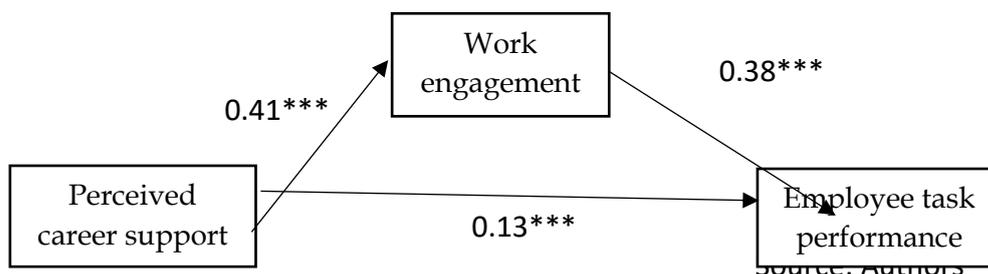


Figure 2. Direct and indirect relationship of perceived career support on employee task performance

Table 5

*Direct and indirect relationship of perceived career support on employee task performance*

	Effect	BootSE	t	p	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Direct	.13	.06	2.04	.04	.00	.25
Indirect	.16	.05			.07	.27

Source: Authors

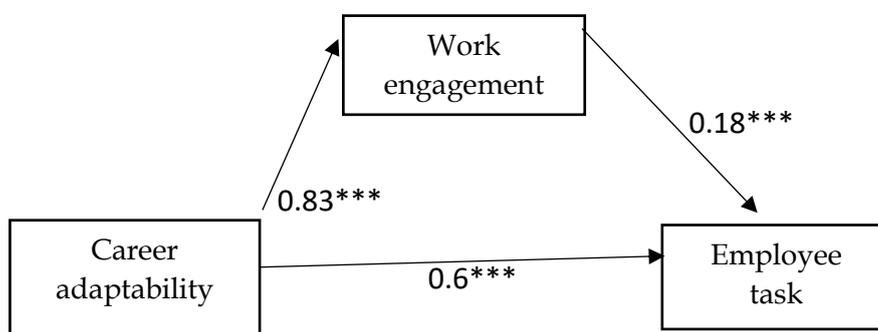


Figure 3. Direct and indirect relationship of career adaptability on employee task performance

Table 6

*Direct and indirect relationship of career adaptability on employee task performance*

	Effect	BootSE	t	p	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Direct	.60	.11	5.67	.00	.39	.81
Indirect	.15	.10			-.02	.37

Source: Authors

### Discussion

The majority of this study's results are consistent with what was anticipated. For instance, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory encompasses the finding that employees' task performance is positively and significantly correlated with perceived career support, which supports the author's claim. Prior to this study, there was only empirical evidence regarding the relationship between different social support variables, like POS and PSS, and different

performance dimensions, such as contextual performance (Vander Heijden et al., 2009; Riggle et al., 2009), extra-role behaviors (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), job performance (Kraimer et al., 2011), and overall performance (Feldman and Thomas, 1992). It is argued that career adaptability increases the likelihood of career success by improving person-organization fit and enhances task performance by giving employees the necessary skills to adapt to changing career needs. The findings, which demonstrate a favorable relationship between task performance and career adaptability, provide credence to this claim. The findings of earlier research, including those by Zacher (2014, 2015) and Ohme and Zacher (2015), are supported by this result.

All things considered; the findings imply that participants with greater task performance have more advanced career adaptabilities. According to earlier studies, this association is consistent with the theoretical relationship that should exist between the constructs (Bakker, 2011; Cotter & Fouad, 2012; Hirschi, 2009; Ito & Brotheridge, 2005; Rossier et al., 2012; Van den Heuvel et al., 2013). The findings showed that respondents who were more worried about their careers, were in charge of their careers, were interested in their careers, and had faith in their abilities to manage their careers performed better on tasks. These results are in line with those of Rossier et al. (2012), who found that career adaptability significantly influenced employee engagement in a Swiss sample, moderating the association between intrinsic dispositions and work-related outcomes. The findings are corroborated by Savickas and Porfeli (2012), who claim that employees' self-regulation techniques are supported by the career adaptability dimensions. Thus, according to Hirschi (2009), career adaptability might be connected to favorable organizational outcomes including workers' task performance and engagement. The ability of individuals to adjust their careers to a changing work environment may very well translate into discretionary effort and energy invested in their work, which is likely to influence employees' task performance, according to the findings discussed above and the definitions of employees' task performance mentioned above (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rossier et al., 2012). Similar study has shown that more career adaptability and perceived career support have helped knowledge workers become proficient, which in turn has been shown to improve well-being and reduce suffering (Hirschi, 2009). These findings are in line with those findings. According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012) and Van den Heuvel et al. (2013), the results also lend credence to the idea that career flexibility and perceived career support are critical success elements that guarantee employee dedication and motivation in the face of mounting environmental pressure.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study suggested, based on JD-R theory, that employees' task performance is impacted by perceived career support through work engagement. This is predicated on the idea that, as the attitude of knowledge workers dictates their conduct, it stands to reason that, via the mediating impact of work engagement (attitude), perceived career support will affect employees' task performance (behavior). The study's findings support this association, which is in line with the author's expectations. Despite the paucity of empirical data supporting this link in the literature, the results of this study are consistent with direct relationships (preconditions of mediation), that is, direct associations between employees' task performance, work engagement, and perceived career support. The mediation function of work engagement between employees' task performance and career adaptability was another hypothesis that was examined. Similar to earlier studies, such as those by Bakker et

al. (2004), Salanova et al. (2005), Kim et al. (2013), Rossier et al. (2012), and Tladinyane and van der Merwe (2016), it was discovered that there was a positive and significant correlation between work engagement, career adaptability, and employees' task performance. Therefore, our study showed sufficient evidence for a positive association between career adaptability and work engagement in the instance of knowledge workers, in contrast to Cotter and Fouad's (2012) finding that there was insufficient evidence to imply such a relationship. However, it was discovered that the association between employees' task performance and career adaptability was only partially influenced by the mediating function of work engagement.

### **Practical Implications**

This study is important because it elucidates how work engagement mediates the relationship between employees' task performance, perceived career support, and career adaptability. The study has significant implications for organisations, workers, and human resource professionals by showing that engagement is the mechanism that converts contextual resources (career support) and personal resources (career adaptability) into better task performance. The findings point to ways that organisations might improve performance by creating supportive environments and implementing engagement-focused interventions. For employees', the findings highlight how crucial career support and adaptability are to maintaining engagement and output. The report offers empirical direction to HR professionals and policymakers for creating evidence-based employee assistance and career development programs. Finally, by combining work engagement frameworks with career construction theory, this research adds to the body of knowledge on organisational behaviour and career development, which benefits the academic community.

The findings of this study are significant to practitioners since work engagement is widely recognized as a reliable indicator of employees' task performance. The following are some specific ways that the results could help the industry. First, the current study's proof of the direct and beneficial effects of career adaptability on task performance raises the possibility that employers will choose to hire knowledge workers with high career adaptability scores. This is due to the fact that these people frequently overcome career instability. Perceived career help has a direct and beneficial impact on work engagement and performance, indicating that young employees are eager to ask their employers for career support. It is recommended that managers look for strategies to give their staff members the impression that the company would support their professional development. By making this gesture, they would be able to give their work their whole attention and perform better. Third, the findings of the current study suggest that work engagement plays an important role in transferring the effects of perceived career support and career adaptability to employees' task performance. In light of these findings, organizations are encouraged to occasionally carry out engagement interventions to ensure that the engagement levels of knowledge workers are consistently high. Fourth, the findings of this study will offer important new information on the companies that outsource their human resource operations. The results imply that in order to improve employees' task performance, these businesses must make sure that workers devote all of their mental, emotional, and physical resources to their work at the same time. It would also allow organizations to make the best use of such a valuable and limited resource.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This study's findings are not without limitations. First, genuine causal inferences may be limited by the cross-sectional aspect of this study. Nonetheless, the study's author contends that theoretical foundations have been used to explain the cause-and-effect linkages in this investigation. Any cause-and-effect relationship must first go through this explanation procedure. However, by taking time lag into account as a significant mediator, researchers may be able to capture the dynamic of the proposed framework in further investigations. Second, this study did not use probabilistic sampling, although having a sizable sample size, which would have limited its applicability to the whole Liberian population. The results of this study may therefore be replicated in other settings in future research to increase the external validity of the conclusions. The hypotheses developed in this study may also apply to other countries, such as rapidly emerging nations with demographic dividends like China, Rwanda, and Uzbekistan, even if the sample is drawn from i-generation Liberians (Gray, 2017). Therefore, researchers should be interested in determining whether the current study's findings are comparable across the globe. The majority of researchers' attention has been on figuring out the non-career motivating elements that might influence full-time employees' task performance and work engagement over the last ten and a half years. Examining knowledge workers across a range of Liberian industries, this study found that career-related motivational factors have a significant impact on employees' task performance through work engagement. The findings of this study primarily support the self and role theory, which in turn encourages managers to recognize the value of career assistance and helping employees see the adaptability of their professions, particularly for knowledge workers.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study clarifies the impact of career support on employees' task performance. Career support has a positive correlation with employee performance. Organizational performance may be enhanced by matching HRM practices with performance management tactics. Improved staff performance leads to increased productivity and efficiency. Employee performance is influenced by a number of factors, including as pay, training opportunities, non-monetary benefits, managerial support, career support, supervisor support, etc. To sum up, career support is an essential management tool that Liberian firms can utilize to increase and enhance employees' productivity. This suggests that if career support concerns are not given due consideration, Liberian organizations may see a drop in employee performance. Employee performance declines are an indication of a failing organization, and companies should be encouraged to steer clear of them. According to the aforementioned, enhancing employee performance is crucial for company success. Organizations must therefore understand how career assistance initiatives might enhance worker performance. Effective career support programs are correlated with managers' and leaders' capacity to successfully raise worker performance in today's corporate environments. An organization's ability to establish a mentoring culture as a critical component of employee performance will largely determine its capacity to survive in a competitive market and boost worker productivity. Business outcomes can be enhanced by special actions such as skill-based training and development programs, work redesign, employee empowerment, job involvement, and appraisal and reward systems. The following recommendations are offered in light of the conclusion:

1. To improve employee performance and offer them the chance to update the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed in a competitive market, employee capacity building through training and retraining should be planned or conducted on a regular basis for all employees. 2. To improve employee performance and accomplish company objectives, managers and organizational leaders should implement career support. In the increasingly complicated corporate world, this will give organizations a competitive advantage. 3. To increase employee productivity across all organizations, companies should keep taking career support very seriously. Putting in place career assistance programs can help companies and organizations achieve their goal of improved, more goal-oriented employee performance.

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