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Research paper

The Influence of Adaptive Organizational Climate and Digital Technology Utilization on Employee Motivation Of Local Startups in Gorontalo

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Abstract

The development of digital technology and disruption of business innovation has affected various factors, including startups. The development of startups in Indonesia is currently quite rapid. At present, there are more than 1,500 local startups in Indonesia. A startup, as a dynamic and innovation-based business entity, requires an organizational structure that is flexible, adaptive, and makes optimal use of digital technology. The urgency of this research is that, first, Startups have great potential in driving the local economy in Gorontalo through innovation. Second, the startup work environment is often dynamic, full of uncertainty, and requires rapid adaptation. Third, the potential synergy of adaptive organizational climate and digital technology is likely to interact with the effective use of digital technology. The research objective is to determine the effect of adaptive organizational climate and digital technology utilization on the work motivation of startup employees in Gorontalo, both partially and simultaneously. The research method used is a quantitative approach with an exploratory type of research, with SEM-PLS analysis. The expected results are, first, an overview of the influence of an adaptive organizational climate, the use of digital technology, and employee work motivation at startups in Gorontalo. Second, the influence of organizational climate on employee work motivation is proven. Startups with a more adaptive climate are expected to have employees with higher work motivation. Third, the effect of digital technology utilization on employee work motivation is proven, with effective technology utilization expected to increase efficiency, collaboration, and ultimately work motivation. Fourth, the joint effect of adaptive organizational climate and digital technology utilization on employee work motivation is proven. The combination of the two is expected to have a greater impact on work motivation. The results of hypothesis testing show that the utilization of digital technology has a positive and significant influence on employee work motivation (sig = 0.000 <0.05). This is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, where digital technology contributes to the fulfillment of needs at various levels, ranging from increased work efficiency to skill development and self-actualization. Furthermore, the synergy between an adaptive organizational climate and the use of digital technology is crucial; an adaptive climate drives technology adoption, which in turn increases motivation, creating a learning environment and continuous innovation. Thus, investments in HR capacity, adaptive leadership, and digital technology infrastructure are key to maintaining employee motivation and ensuring startup sustainability amidst the challenges of the digital era.

Keywords: *Organizational climate; Adaptive; Digital technology; Work motivation; Startup.*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology and the disruption of business innovation have fundamentally changed the landscape, including the growth of startups. Indonesia is now one of the significant centers of startup activity, with more than 15,000 local startups in operation. This phenomenon highlights startups as highly dynamic, innovation-driven business entities, and as such, requires flexible, adaptive organizational structures, as well as optimal utilization of digital technology. In this context, the role of human resources (HR) is crucial, as the success of a startup depends heavily on the motivation and performance of its employees. Organizational support and adaptive leadership are the main foundations for achieving optimal performance in a fast-paced and challenging environment like a startup (Maula, 2021).

These conditions make digital transformation not just a trend, but an imperative strategy for the survival of the startup ecosystem in Indonesia. The adoption of capable technology allows startups to operate efficiently, reach a wider market, and present disruptive, innovative solutions (Wahyudi, 2023). However, the successful implementation of this technology is highly dependent on the capabilities of the human resources that drive it. In an environment characterized by VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), which is full of turmoil, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, startups need employees who not only have technical expertise but also an agile spirit and a high adaptive culture. They must be able to innovate, learn quickly, and adapt to constant change, both in terms of market and technology. Research by Berutu (2023) shows that leadership has a significant impact on the success of digital startups, emphasizing the importance of leadership factors in adaptation and growth. Therefore, startup organizations are required to create a work environment conducive to

employee development and foster a culture of collaboration. This organizational support includes the provision of continuous learning platforms, motivating reward systems, and opportunities for active participation in decision-making. Correspondingly, adaptive leadership becomes a decisive factor. Startup leaders must be able to navigate uncertainty, provide clear direction in the midst of change, and inspire employees to grow. The leader's ability to empathize, build a solid team, and empower individuals is key in maintaining the startup's optimal performance in fierce competition (Maula, 2021; Supriandi, 2024). Thus, investment in HR capacity building and adaptive leadership qualities is not just an operational cost, but a vital foundation for achieving sustainable growth and competitive advantage in this digital era.

This startup growth phenomenon is also starting to become apparent in various regions, including Gorontalo. Gorontalo's startup ecosystem is starting to grow and develop rapidly, along with the acceleration of technological development and a significant increase in the interest of the younger generation in the world of digital entrepreneurship. With a target of 1,000 digital startups, this initiative is expected to become an economic driver, create local innovations, and open up various business opportunities and new jobs in the region. This growth is a positive indicator of the potential of the digital economy in Gorontalo. However, the journey of local startups in Gorontalo is not free from various challenges. These challenges come not only from the side of intense business competition and fluctuating market dynamics, but also from within the organization itself. Specifically, the crucial issue faced is how to build an adaptive work climate among employees and ensure effective and relevant utilization of digital technology according to local needs and context. This emphasizes that the success of startups in Gorontalo depends not only on ideas or capital, but also on their ability to create an internal environment that is resilient and adaptive to change, as well as strategic in adopting technology.

One of the fundamental factors that significantly affects employee motivation and drives startup success is an adaptive organizational climate. This climate refers to a work atmosphere that actively supports flexibility, innovation, and openness to change. This kind of work environment is crucial for startup organizations, especially considering that they operate in a highly dynamic context, full of market uncertainty and disruptive innovation. Under these conditions, the ability to adapt, evolve, and respond quickly to external dynamics is key for startups to not only survive, but also thrive and achieve sustainable growth [7, 8]. Furthermore, the aspect of openness to change and employee participation in the decision-making process is also an integral element in shaping an adaptive organizational climate. When employees feel involved and their voices are heard, this will increase their sense of ownership and commitment to organizational goals. The study by Aldianto et al. further suggests that startups that are able to adopt organizational policies and practices that are responsive to environmental changes have a much greater chance of surviving and growing amidst high market volatility. Therefore, for startups in Gorontalo, creating and maintaining an adaptive organizational climate is not just a necessity but a fundamental strategy to optimize the potential of human resources and ensure sustainable innovation. Journals such as those discussed by Berutu (2023) and Maula (2021) confirm that startup success is strongly linked to leadership's ability to manage change and create a work environment that supports employee motivation and performance in the digital era.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Adaptive organizational climate

Organizational climate is the psychological foundation of the work environment that influences employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Historically, Litwin and Stringer (1968), as cited by Widiantika (2024), defined organizational climate as an internal quality perceived by organizational members, which then shapes their behavior. This collective perception includes various dimensions such as autonomy, structure, support, and rewards, with a positive climate directly correlated with job satisfaction and motivation (Abdullah Said Institute, n.d.). However, amidst a constantly changing business landscape characterized by VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), the concept of organizational climate has evolved into adaptive organizational climate.

The concept of "adaptive" emphasizes an organization's capacity to proactively and flexibly respond to change, a crucial need for startups and organizations operating in dynamic environments (Aldianto et al., in the context of the previous background). An adaptive climate is characterized by a work atmosphere that not only accepts but also supports flexibility, innovation, and openness to change (Ferdi, 2024). This creates an environment where employees feel empowered to take measured risks, contribute to innovative solutions, and be actively involved in the transition process.

An adaptive organizational climate is closely related to a responsive communication climate. Ferdi (2024) argues that a responsive organizational communication climate is a condition in which the organization creates an environment that supports open and transparent communication. In the context of an adaptive climate, responsive communication is key to disseminating information about changes, gathering input, and ensuring all members of the organization understand and are involved in adaptation efforts. Without effective communication, adaptation efforts will be difficult to realize, and the adaptive organizational climate will not be formed optimally.

Joecy (2024) examined how organizational climate affects innovative work behavior in companies. This research shows that an organizational climate that supports innovation plays a major role in encouraging employees to generate new ideas, implement them, and take initiatives to improve performance. In an adaptive climate, where change is constant, the ability of employees to innovate becomes very important, which means that an adaptive organizational climate must intrinsically support and encourage innovative behavior.

The role of leadership is central in shaping organizational climate, especially adaptive climate. Research by Jiip (2024) and ResearchGate (2024) shows that adaptive leaders form a supportive organizational climate to build organizational culture. Adaptive leaders can navigate uncertainty, provide clear direction in the midst of change, and empower employees to adapt, creating a sense of security that is essential for flexibility and openness to new things.

Adaptive organizational climate also impacts employees' psychological well-being. Rochma (2023) found that organizational climate has a significant and positive direct influence on psychological well-being. An adaptive work environment, characterized by flexibility and support for change, can reduce the stress and uncertainty experienced by employees, thereby improving their well-being. Employees who feel supported to adapt tend to have lower stress levels and higher motivation.

D. Julindrastuti (2024), in her research, identified organizational climate as a set of feelings and perceptions from workers that affect performance. In the context of adaptive climate, organizational climate is not just a driver of performance in general, but specifically encourages performance that is resilient and responsive to market dynamics. An organization's ability to adapt, reflected in its climate, directly contributes to sustainability and competitive advantage. As such, Adaptive Organizational Climate is a multi-dimensional construct that not only encompasses perceptions of the work environment in general, but also specifically promotes flexibility, innovation, open communication, leadership support, and employee well-being in response to the demands of a changing business environment. This concept is crucial for organizations, especially startups, in ensuring sustainability and growth amid market volatility.

H1: Organizational Climate Has a Positive Effect on Employee Motivation.

2.2. Digital technology adoption

Dedy Setiawan (2025) emphasizes that digital transformation is an essential process of adopting digital technology in organizations to improve operational efficiency, drive innovation, and strengthen competitiveness in the market. This transition to a digital business model requires not only investment in technology, but also changes in organizational culture and HR capabilities to be in line with the direction of digitalization.

Davis (1989) introduced the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a theoretical framework to explain and predict the determinants of user acceptance of information technology. The model posits that two primary belief constructs, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), fundamentally shape an individual's attitude toward using a technology, behavioral intention to use, and actual system adoption. In the context of digital technology adoption in organizations, TAM provides a robust lens through which to analyze how employees evaluate and embrace new digital tools. Perceived Usefulness reflects the degree to which an individual believes that using a system will enhance job performance, thereby aligning with organizational goals of efficiency and productivity.

Dyah Sugandini (2024) highlights that information technology adoption models vary widely depending on the implementation context and expected outcomes. Alexander's research shows the crucial role of technology adoption in organizational restructuring, strategic technology investment practices, and designing effective implementation strategies to ensure successful technology integration.

T. Genisa (2025) analyzes how digital technology integration brings significant innovation in the context of learning. This research outlines how digital technology can effectively increase user engagement, facilitate a more interactive learning process, and ultimately improve learning outcomes or capability development in organizations.

F. Mulia (2019), referring to ThuyUyen Nguyen (2009), identified four main factors that influence the digital technology adoption process. These factors include organizational factors (internal readiness), network factors (ecosystem and partnership), resource factors (capital and expertise), and environmental factors (regulation and market conditions), all of which contribute to the success or failure of technology implementation.

S.E. Atmojo (2025) argues that the utilization of digital technology is a very effective strategy to improve team collaboration skills and overall organizational performance. Digital technologies enable smoother communication, faster information sharing, and more efficient coordination between individuals and departments, which are essential for achieving ambitious business goals.

H2: Technology Utilization Has a Positive Effect on Employee Motivation.

2.3. Employee work motivation

Wongkar, Sendow, and Roring (2023) highlighted the relevance of McClelland's Need Theory, which focuses on three main motives: the need for achievement (n-Ach), the need for affiliation (n-Aff), and the need for power (n-Pow). In modern work environments, especially startups, the need for achievement is often dominant, where employees are motivated by challenges, clear feedback, and target achievement. Organizations that are able to provide an environment that supports the fulfillment of these needs tend to have more motivated and productive employees.

In their seminal work on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci (2000) provide a profound theoretical framework for understanding the spectrum of human motivation, with particular emphasis on the importance of intrinsic motivation. They define intrinsic motivation as the drive to engage in an activity for the inherent pleasure and satisfaction derived from the activity itself, in contrast to extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards or pressures. The core proposition of SDT is that three basic psychological needs, Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness, must be satisfied for intrinsic motivation to flourish and for optimal well-being and performance to be achieved. In the context of employee work motivation, this theory highlights that work which allows individuals to experience a sense of choice and volition (autonomy), to feel effective and capable of mastering challenges (competence), and to experience safe and supportive connections with colleagues (relatedness) will foster strong intrinsic motivation.

Atmojo et al. (2024) in their research outlined the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the impact of both on employee performance. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual, such as job satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and interest in the work itself. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation comes from external factors, such as salary, bonus, recognition, or promotion. The right balance between these two types of motivation is crucial to creating a sustainable work environment and fostering deep employee engagement.

Harahap and Saragih (2024) discuss the application of Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which states that an individual's motivation is influenced by how much he or she expects effort to result in a certain performance (expectancy), how much that performance will result in rewards (instrumentality), and how much value the individual places on those rewards (valence). In the context of startups, a clear explanation of career paths, reward systems, and the contribution of work to the company's larger goals can significantly increase employee motivation.

Rahman and Risa (2024) emphasized the importance of meaningful job design as a motivational driver. Jobs that provide autonomy, task variety, task identity, task significance, and feedback tend to motivate employees more. This approach is relevant for startups that want to create an interesting and challenging work environment, where employees feel responsible and have a real impact on the outcome of their work.

Mulyati (2024) examined how the transformational leadership style can significantly affect employee work motivation. Transformational leaders who are able to inspire, motivate, and empower their teams through a clear vision, effective communication, and personal support can foster a high sense of ownership and commitment. This is crucial for startups that often operate under high pressure and require strong morale from all team members.

H3: Adaptive Organizational Climate and Digital Technology Utilization Positively Affect Work Motivation

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research methodology

The research approach to be used is quantitative. The quantitative approach allows numerical data collection through surveys or structured questionnaires, making it easier for statistical analysis to test the influence of predetermined variables. with the type of exploratory research focused on finding new patterns of fundamental relationships between each variable to be studied.

3.2. Research design

The research design that will be used is a survey with a data collection method through a questionnaire. Collect data from a large number of respondents efficiently and get an overview of their perceptions of the research variables.

3.3. Research population

The population of this study comprises all employees working at startups operating in Gorontalo City. As there is no precise data on the total population size, the initial stage will involve identifying and mapping active startups in the area. The sampling technique to be employed is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. Startups will be selected based on predetermined criteria, such as having operated for at least one year and employing a minimum of five staff, to ensure the presence of meaningful organizational dynamics. A total sample of 200 respondents will be drawn from employees within these selected startups. This sample size is determined by applying the Slovin formula, which will be calculated based on the estimated population size obtained from the initial data collection phase.

3.4. Research variables

The dependent variable (Y) is employee work motivation, the operational definition is motivation, the independent variable (X1) is adaptive organizational climate, and the independent variable (X2) is the use of digital technology.

3.5. Data collection technique

Data collection techniques are carried out using a questionnaire that will be distributed to a sample of startup employees in Gorontalo City. This distribution can be done online using a survey platform, namely Google Forms, to reach respondents efficiently. And Offline if needed, by directly visiting the selected startups and providing physical questionnaires.

3.6. Data analysis technique

This research uses the statistical technique of Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). SEM- PLS was chosen because of its ability to analyze complex relationships between variables, including partial and simultaneous effects, with a sample size that does not have to be too large and without strict data distribution assumptions. The SEM-PLS analysis steps include:

1) Evaluation of the measurement model, namely the convergent validity test by checking the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value (>0.5). Furthermore, the discriminant validity test is to check whether the constructs are empirically different. And the construct reliability test checks the Cronbach's Alpha value (>0.7) and Composite Reliability (>0.7).
2) Evaluation of the structural model, namely the path coefficient significance test, which is to test whether the partial effect between the adaptive organizational climate on work motivation and the use of digital technology on work motivation is statistically significant (P value <0.05) through bootstrapping. Test the coefficient of determination (R-Squared: Measures the amount of variance in work motivation that can be explained simultaneously by the adaptive organizational climate and the use of digital technology and the Effect Size Test (F- Squared), which measures the relative contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable.

4. Results

4.1. Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model)

Evaluation of the measurement model consists of three stages, namely the convergent validity test, discriminant validity test, and composite reliability test.

1) Convergent validity test

Validity testing for reflective indicators can be done using the correlation between the indicator score and the construct score. Measurement with reflective indicators shows that there is a change in an indicator in a construct if other indicators in the same construct change. The following are the results of calculations using the smart PLS 4.0 computer program:

Table 1: Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Adaptive Organizational Climate	Employee Work Motivation	Digital Technology Utilization
X1.1	0.728		
X1.10	0.718		
X1.11	0.568		
X1.17	0.597		
X1.18	0.629		
X1.19	0.524		
X1.2	0.597		
X1.20	0.690		
X1.21	0.663		
X1.22	0.632		
X1.23	0.505		

X1.24	0.682		
X1.25	0.606		
X1.4	0.739		
X1.5	0.640		
X1.7	0.558		
X1.8	0.592		
X2.1			0.796
X2.10			0.655
X2.2			0.749
X2.3			0.762
X2.4			0.869
X2.5			0.709
X2.6			0.786
X2.7			0.828
X2.8			0.724
X2.9			0.866
Y1		0.715	
Y10		0.915	
Y11		0.764	
Y12		0.906	
Y2		0.838	
Y3		0.778	
Y4		0.882	
Y5		0.829	
Y6		0.848	
Y7		0.752	
Y8		0.898	
Y9		0.817	

According to Ghozali (2017), a correlation can be said to fulfill convergent validity if it has a loading value greater than 0.5. The output shows that the loading factor provides a value above the recommended value of 0.5. So that the indicators used in this study have met the criteria for convergent validity.

2) Discriminant Validity Test

An indicator is declared valid if it has the highest loading factor value for the intended construct compared to the loading factor value of other constructs.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Test Results

Variable	Adaptive Organizational Climate	Employee Work Motivation	Utilization of Digital Technology
X1.1	0.728	0.612	0.463
X1.10	0.718	0.445	0.399
X1.11	0.568	0.305	0.248
X1.12	0.494	0.326	0.284
X1.13	0.732	0.456	0.379
X1.14	0.673	0.485	0.462
X1.15	0.536	0.342	0.254
X1.17	0.597	0.239	0.154
X1.18	0.629	0.378	0.348
X1.19	0.524	0.334	0.241
X1.2	0.597	0.498	0.398
X1.20	0.690	0.396	0.319
X1.21	0.663	0.476	0.438
X1.22	0.632	0.453	0.397
X1.23	0.505	0.073	-0.099
X1.24	0.682	0.583	0.597
X1.25	0.606	0.649	0.680
X1.3	0.352	0.327	0.354
X1.4	0.739	0.506	0.389
X1.5	0.640	0.454	0.422
X1.6	0.412	0.289	0.278
X1.7	0.558	0.151	0.115
X1.8	0.592	0.329	0.264
X1.9	0.382	0.162	0.122
X2.1	0.423	0.697	0.796
X2.10	0.278	0.442	0.655
X2.2	0.342	0.635	0.749
X2.3	0.449	0.633	0.762
X2.4	0.663	0.869	0.869
X2.5	0.404	0.569	0.709
X2.6	0.416	0.688	0.786
X2.7	0.633	0.857	0.828
X2.8	0.396	0.596	0.724
X2.9	0.645	0.865	0.866
Y1	0.436	0.715	0.802
Y10	0.649	0.915	0.772
Y11	0.518	0.764	0.717
Y12	0.703	0.906	0.754
Y2	0.582	0.838	0.831
Y3	0.588	0.778	0.679
Y4	0.704	0.882	0.726

Y5	0.549	0.829	0.700
Y6	0.588	0.848	0.842
Y7	0.526	0.752	0.660
Y8	0.644	0.898	0.769
Y9	0.536	0.817	0.723
Y7	0.526	0.752	0.660

Cross-loading is an evaluation of discriminant validity on measurement items. Each measurement item has a higher correlation with variables that correlate with other variables. Overall, each item correlates more with the variable it measures, and the discriminant validity evaluation is fulfilled.

3) Reliability test

Ghozali (2017) states that a latent variable can be said to have good reliability if the composite reliability value is greater than 0.7 and the Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.7.

Table 3: Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Adaptive Organizational Climate	0.922	0.931	0.930
Employee Work Motivation	0.959	0.960	0.964
Digital Technology Utilization	0.927	0.940	0.938

Based on the value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, it is found that each variable has a value above 0.7, so that all variables are reliable.

4) Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Evaluation of the structural model in SEM with PLS is done by conducting the R-squared (R2) test and significance test through the estimated path coefficient.

a) R2 Testing

The output for the R2 value using the smartPLS 4.0 computer program was obtained:

Table 4: Determinant Coefficient Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Work Motivation	0.852	0.850

The R-squared value describes the proportion of variation in endogenous variables that can be explained by exogenous variables in the model. Based on the SmartPLS 4 results, the employee work motivation construct has an R^2 of 0.852, which means that 85.2% of the variation in behavior can be explained by the independent constructs in this study; the remaining 14.8% is determined by other factors outside the model. Referring to the criteria of Ghozali (2017), this value is considered strong.

b) Significance Test

The significance test on the SEM model with PLS aims to determine the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. Hypothesis testing with the SEM PLS method is carried out by performing a bootstrapping process with the help of the smartPLS 4.0 computer program, so that the relationship between the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables is obtained as follows:

Table 5: Significance Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Adaptive Organizational Climate -> Employee Work Motivation	0.207	0.201	0.057	3.647	0.000
Digital Technology Utilization -> Employee Work Motivation	0.814	0.819	0.052	15.670	0.000

Adaptive Organizational Climate (X1) → Employee Work Motivation (Y): coefficient 0.207 with t = 3.647 and p = 0.000. This means that the adaptive organizational climate in the company is related to the increase in employee work motivation. This relationship is positive and significant. Digital Technology Utilization (X2) → Employee Work Motivation (Y): coefficient 0.814 with t = 15.670 and p = 0.000. The higher the utilization of digital technology, the higher the employee work motivation.

5. Discussion

5.1. The effect of adaptive organizational climate on employee work motivation

Adaptive organizational climate plays an important role in influencing employee work motivation. According to Triastuti [18], organizational climate includes individual or group views regarding the internal state of the organization that can affect the attitudes, behavior, and performance of organizational members. Furthermore, Depri (2022) [19] suggests that each organization has a unique climate dimension, which serves as a foundation for employee behavior and performance. For example, a conducive work environment and a transparent management system can create a supportive work atmosphere, thereby increasing employee morale to achieve organizational goals. In the startup context, an adaptive climate that encourages flexibility, openness to new ideas, and support for constructive failure is crucial to retaining talent and encouraging continuous innovation. This shows that organizational climate is not just a backdrop, but a fundamental driving force that shapes employees' work experience and career aspirations.

In line with the importance of an adaptive organizational climate, the use of digital technology is emerging as a powerful catalyst in shaping a dynamic and competitive work environment. Adaptive organizations tend to be more open to integrating digital technology in every aspect of their operations, from internal communication to project management to product development. This utilization of digital technology not only improves operational efficiency and effectiveness but also creates a climate of innovation, where employees feel empowered to try new approaches, collaborate more effectively, and access relevant information quickly. For example, digital collaboration platforms can facilitate communication between dispersed teams, while data analysis tools enable faster, evidence-based decision-making. The ability

to adapt to new technologies and make optimal use of them becomes a key indicator of a healthy organizational climate, which in turn will affect how employees interact with their work and the surrounding environment, strengthening a sense of ownership and engagement.
Sastrohadiwiryo (2013) suggests that work motivation is related to the mental state that directs a person's behavior to achieve goals and meet needs that provide satisfaction. Motivation can come from within the individual (intrinsic motivation) or from external factors (extrinsic motivation). Highly motivated employees tend to have greater enthusiasm and persistence at work, which in turn will improve their performance. The results of this study are in line with previous studies showing that an adaptive organizational climate, coupled with adequate digital technology support, can encourage intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation. When employees feel that their organization is ready for change and equipped with tools that allow them to work smarter and more innovatively, their motivation will increase significantly. The synergy between adaptive climate and digital technology capabilities creates an environment where employees feel supported, appreciated, and have the opportunity to grow. This also aligns with theories such as the Theory of Digital Technology Adoption as a Driver of Organizational Transformation from Dedy Setiawan (2025) and Utilization of Digital Technology as a Strategy for Improving Collaboration and Performance from S.E. Atmojo (2025), confirming that the strategic integration of these three variables is key to creating organizations that are resilient, productive, and have motivated employees in the digital era.

5.2. The effect of digital technology utilization on employee work motivation

Based on the description of the data above, especially in hypothesis testing, a significance value (sig) of 0.000 is obtained, which is less than 0.05. This result was obtained through testing with the help of the SmartPLS program, which proves that the value is significant. This shows a positive influence of Digital Technology Utilization on Employee Work Motivation. This indicates that the better the Utilization of Digital Technology, the higher the Employee Work Motivation. This is in line with the findings of various previous studies, which underline that investment in relevant digital technology and adequate training will be directly proportional to increased employee productivity and job satisfaction (Smith & Jones, 2023). Efficiencies resulting from automation of routine tasks, easy access to information, and effective collaboration tools directly contribute to a more positive work experience, reduce frustration, and free up employee time for more strategic and value-added tasks.
In the context of motivation, these results can be further analyzed through the lens of theory. Based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, individual needs can be ranked from the most basic to the highest, starting with physiological needs and ending with self-actualization according to Wahyuni (2020). In this context, digital technology makes a positive contribution to the fulfillment of needs at various levels of the hierarchy. Digital technology enables increased efficiency in work, reduces the burden of manual work, and provides easier access to information needed to achieve goals (Putra and Muafi, 2024). This, in turn, can reduce job stress and increase job security and satisfaction, which are basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Employees who find it easier to complete tasks and have more time to focus on creative aspects or personal development will feel more motivated to perform better. In addition, the use of digital technology also provides opportunities for employees to develop new skills, which can increase their motivation to perform better. As stated by Handoko et al. (2025), employees who acquire new skills through digital technology feel that they are developing professionally, which has a direct impact on increasing work motivation. This directly meets the esteem needs and self-actualization needs in Maslow's hierarchy, where employees feel competent, valued, and have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
Furthermore, the synergy between Adaptive Organizational Climate and Digital Technology Utilization is crucial in maximizing employee motivation. Organizations with an adaptive climate will be more proactive in adopting and integrating digital technology, not only as an operational tool but also as a facilitator of employee development. When organizations consistently demonstrate a willingness to innovate and support the use of new technologies, it creates an environment that fosters curiosity, continuous learning, and resilience among employees (Chen & Liu, 2023). Employees in such an environment feel more motivated because they see that their organization is investing in the future, and they are an integral part of that evolution. This creates a positive feedback loop: an adaptive climate encourages technology adoption, which then increases work motivation, and motivated employees will further contribute to sustaining the company's adaptive climate. Thus, strengthening the adaptive organizational climate and strategically leveraging digital technologies are two mutually supportive pillars for building a highly motivated and adaptive workforce in this digital age.

5.3. The effect of adaptive organizational climate digital technology utilization on employee work motivation

The findings of this study confirm that Adaptive Organizational Climate and Digital Technology Utilization together exert a positive influence on employee work motivation. Non-technical aspects, such as a flexible work culture and structure, serve as the primary foundation for motivating employees, which is then strengthened by appropriate technological implementation. Therefore, it is recommended that local startup management in Gorontalo should not only focus on investing in advanced technology but also consistently nurture and develop an organizational culture capable of absorbing and integrating such technology. The synergy between these two variables creates an efficient, innovative, and empowering work environment, which is key to sustaining high employee motivation. This is supported by the statistical model, which shows a strong explanatory power, with the independent variables (Adaptive Organizational Climate and Digital Technology Utilization) explaining 85.2% ($R^2 = 0.852$) of the variance in Employee Work Motivation. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the adjusted R-square remains high at 0.850, indicating a robust and reliable model. This result aligns with existing studies showing that organizational culture, including elements of flexibility and adaptability, significantly impacts employee performance. (Akhsan & Pendrian, 2024; Nurhasanah et al., 2022). Astuti also asserts that organizational culture simultaneously has a positive effect on employee performance, thereby contributing to increased motivation. (Dewi Astuti, 2022).
Moreover, non-technical aspects such as an adaptable work culture and flexible structure serve as the foundational key before management shifts its focus to digital technology utilization. (Faridah et al., 2023). An organizational culture that actively supports technological integration fosters a work environment that is not only more efficient and innovative but also more resilient to change. (Mahmud & Tesniwati, 2023). This highlights the critical importance of fostering collaboration and collective learning within the organizational culture, elements that are intrinsically linked to the successful adoption of new technologies. (Anam & Purwanti, 2023). Research by Kurnia et al. supports this, demonstrating that a positive organizational culture can strengthen the relationship between digital technology utilization and employee performance outcomes. (Mahmud & Tesniwati, 2023). Ultimately, the synergy between a supportive organizational culture and strategic technology implementation does more than just boost work motivation; it becomes a crucial driver of sustained innovation, which is indispensable in the Industry 4.0 era. (Kurnia et al., 2023).

6. Conclusion

The rapid development of digital technology and disruptive innovation has fundamentally changed the business landscape, driving significant growth of startups in Indonesia, including in Gorontalo. This startup phenomenon requires organizations to have a structure that is flexible, adaptive, and optimal in the use of digital technology. In this context, human resources play a crucial role, where the success of a startup depends heavily on the motivation and performance of its employees, supported by leadership and an adaptive organizational environment (Maula, 2021). The adoption of capable technology is no longer just a trend but a strategic imperative for the survival of the startup ecosystem, enabling operational efficiency, broad market reach, and innovative solutions (Wahyudi, 2023). However, HR capabilities determine the success of this technology implementation, especially in the midst of a VUCA environment that requires employees to be agile, adaptive, and have a high culture of innovation (Berutu, 2023).

Therefore, HR capacity building and adaptive leadership qualities are vital foundations for sustainable growth. An adaptive organizational climate is one of the fundamental factors that influence employee motivation and drive startup success. This climate creates a work atmosphere that supports flexibility, innovation, and openness to change (Ferdi, 2024), which is especially important for startups operating in dynamic and uncertain environments. By involving employees in decision-making and creating an environment that is responsive to change, an adaptive climate can increase ownership and commitment. Studies show that startups with responsive organizational policies and practices have a greater chance of surviving and growing amid market volatility (Aldianto et al., 2023). Therefore, for startups, especially in Gorontalo, creating and maintaining an adaptive organizational climate is an essential strategy to optimize HR potential and ensure continuous innovation.

Overall, startup sustainability relies heavily on the synergy between adaptive organizational climate, digital technology utilization, and employee motivation. Investing in HR capacity building, adaptive leadership, and creating a conducive work environment are key to navigating the challenges and capitalizing on opportunities in the digital age. Thus, startups can not only adapt to the changes but also become market-leading innovators.

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