



## PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE HUMAN RESOURCE PERFORMANCE IN THE VUCA ERA

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### Article Information    Abstract

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In the face of the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) era, organizational sustainability depends heavily on strategic human resource management aligned with adaptive and innovative organizational culture. This study aims to investigate how progressive organizational culture acts as a strategic enabler to enhance human resource performance amidst dynamic and uncertain business environments. Utilizing a systematic literature review (SLR) approach and bibliometric analysis via VOSviewer, the study analyzes 63 selected articles from 2018 to 2025. The findings reveal that progressive cultures—characterized by adaptability, learning orientation, digital readiness, and collaborative leadership—play a pivotal role in fostering innovation, engagement, and agility in human capital. Such cultures embed performance strategies that emphasize developmental feedback, psychological safety, and cross-functional collaboration, positioning HR as a strategic driver of transformation. The study contributes to the theoretical discourse by demonstrating that organizational culture is not merely a backdrop, but a proactive strategy to optimize workforce performance in turbulent conditions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are a valuable investment for any organization or company, serving as a crucial determinant of success. Proper HR management is a strategic effort aimed at achieving organizational or corporate goals (Martin et al., 2016). Saprudin et al. (2019) explain that HR management focuses on the potential of each individual, resulting in competent resources capable of fulfilling organizational goals and satisfaction. Mathis and Jackson (2017) emphasize that HR management is not only oriented toward fulfilling labor needs but also toward developing employees' adaptability and innovation capabilities to ensure organizational competitiveness amidst a changing business environment. In a broader context,

Armstrong and Taylor (2020) argue that effective HR management must integrate organizational values, foster a productive work culture, and employ sustainability strategies to create long-term competitive advantage.

The emergence of globalization presents challenges for various organizational elements, including human resource management. Organizations and companies are competing to develop high-quality human resources with strong competitiveness amidst dynamic changes (Apascari et al., 2022; Sadikin et al., 2023). Employees, whether as individuals or groups within an organization, possess unique characteristics and personalities; thus, successful HR management depends on mastering relevant skills and knowledge (Ravi & Sumathi, 2023).

This can be achieved if organizations pay close attention to the internal needs of HR management (Martin et al., 2016).

Employee performance refers to the ability of employees to carry out specific skills. Poor organizational performance will further distance the organization from its goals, while organizational success will be supported by strong individual performances. Maximizing individual performance can only be achieved when supported by a strong and adaptive organizational culture (Johansen, 2017). In this regard, a progressive organizational culture is a crucial key in directing behavior, values, and work norms that encourage collaboration, innovation, and the courage to face uncertainty. Organizational culture not only serves as a value system guiding interactions in the workplace but also acts as a strategy for confronting the challenges of the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) era, characterized by rapid changes and uncertainty across various organizational operations (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014).

Theoretically, a strong and progressive organizational culture functions as a foundation for building organizational resilience by promoting flexibility, innovation, and speed in decision-making (Schein, 2010; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Such a culture internalizes values of adaptability, openness to change, and a willingness to take calculated risks—all essential characteristics for survival and growth amidst VUCA conditions (Kotter, 2012). One strategic approach to meeting these challenges is to develop a progressive organizational culture—one that not only maintains the organization's core values but is also open to innovation, collaboration, diversity, and continuous learning. This culture creates a work environment that fosters employee engagement, work flexibility, and the full development of individual potential (Alvesson, 2021). Organizations with adaptive cultures tend to be more capable of managing dynamic changes, including maintaining and enhancing employee performance under external pressures (Denison & Mishra, 2020).

In practice, organizations that are able to adjust their culture to the realities of the VUCA environment perform better than those adhering to bureaucratic and rigid cultural patterns. A study by Denison Consulting (2021) found that companies with innovative and change-responsive cultures are 2.5 times more likely to achieve superior financial performance. Similarly, research by Asif et.al (2024) in Indonesia's manufacturing sector confirmed that organizational cultures promoting cross-department collaboration and employee empowerment directly contributed to increased productivity and organizational agility amidst market uncertainties. Therefore, adapting

organizational culture is no longer a mere option but a strategic necessity to sustain organizational continuity and competitive advantage in this increasingly dynamic era.

Current phenomena indicate that many organizations have yet to optimally embed work cultures that are responsive to external dynamics, especially in the context of enhancing HR performance. Previous studies have primarily focused on technical factors such as training, compensation, or leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2019), but few have specifically examined the role of progressive organizational culture as a strategic variable in strengthening human resource performance in the VUCA era. This gap forms a crucial research opportunity to be explored further.

A study by Setyawati & Hamidah (2022) showed that companies in Indonesia's manufacturing sector experienced employee performance stagnation due to weak innovation cultures and poor adaptation to rapid changes. Similarly, Alqudah et al. (2022) found that technology companies in the Middle East with progressive cultures—such as flexible working practices and openness to new ideas—significantly improved employee performance amidst market uncertainty. An interesting case was also revealed by Al-Omouh et.al (2020) who studied technology start-ups in Europe and found that companies promoting knowledge-sharing and cross-functional collaboration maintained high performance despite high volatility during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the above background, this study aims to examine the role of progressive organizational culture in strengthening human resource performance amidst the challenges of the VUCA era. The focus is on how adaptive, innovative, and collaborative organizational cultures can serve as strategic factors in enhancing organizational resilience, productivity, and competitiveness. From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that a strong and progressive organizational culture not only supports the achievement of organizational goals but also serves as a crucial foundation for navigating volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in the modern business environment. This study is important because there remains a research gap in previous studies, which have mostly emphasized technical aspects of HR management while overlooking the strategic role of organizational culture in enhancing individual and organizational performance in dynamic conditions. Thus, the results of this research are expected to contribute theoretically by offering insights for organizations to design relevant work culture strategies to strengthen future competitiveness.

METHOD

To assess the role of progressive organizational culture in enhancing human resource performance within the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) era, a systematic research approach is employed. This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) combined with the use of VOSviewer, a software tool that facilitates the visualization of bibliometric networks, including co-citation and co-authorship patterns. VOSviewer enables a deeper understanding of the intellectual framework and development of research in organizational culture and human resource management (HRM) in the context of VUCA (Schein, 2010). By examining citation data, this approach identifies seminal studies, key themes, and areas of consensus or divergence in the literature, thereby providing a clearer picture of how progressive organizational culture impacts HRM performance. The systematic literature review process allows for the comprehensive evaluation and synthesis of research concerning organizational culture and HRM in a VUCA world. It ensures rigorous and reproducible results through a structured approach to selecting, reviewing, and interpreting scholarly work. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, SLR minimizes bias and increases transparency,

essential in a rapidly changing field where organizational culture is continuously evolving (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The data collection for this study involves sourcing peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings from authoritative databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These databases have been instrumental in previous research evaluating organizational culture and HRM. For this study, publications published between 2018 and 2025 related to "progressive organizational culture" and "HRM performance in the VUCA era" were selected. The search terms used for both concepts are outlined in Table 1. Articles unrelated to the central theme were excluded to maintain focus on the organizational culture and HRM aspects. The collected data will be organized systematically and analyzed using VOSviewer to create visual representations of the most frequently cited works, prevailing themes, and gaps in research. This methodology offers valuable insights into the current discussions surrounding progressive organizational culture and HRM, contributing to the broader academic and professional dialogue on improving human resource performance in a dynamic and unpredictable business environment (Kotter, 2012; Zhang-zhang et.al, 2022).

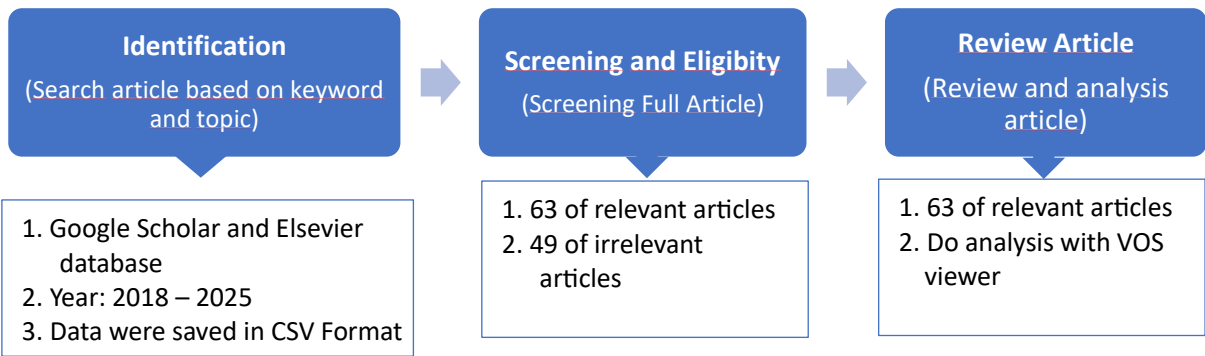


Figure 1. Process of Implementation Systematic Literature Review

Before conducting the analysis using VOSviewer, the researchers undertook several preparatory steps. First, they searched for and downloaded a total of 166 journal articles from Scopus database, using the keywords VUCA era, focusing on publications from 2018 to 2025. Second, they conducted a full-text review of these articles, carefully reading and selecting those that were most relevant to the research topic. Third, 63 articles that met the selection criteria were

analyzed using the VOSviewer software, which allowed the researchers to visualize data patterns such as keyword co-occurrences, topic clusters, and citation networks. Finally, the visual outputs generated by VOSviewer were interpreted to identify key research trends, thematic linkages, and knowledge gaps within the field of . These steps ensured a systematic and rigorous approach to the literature analysis process, enhancing the validity and depth of the research findings.

Table 1. Keywords used in literature review

Organizational Culture	Human Resource Perfomance	VUCA Era
“Organizational Agility”	“Human Resource”	“Vuca”
“Organizational Resilience”	“Performance”	“Volatility Uncertainties”

“Leadership”	“Behavioral Research”	“Ambiguity”
“Innovation”	“Employment”	“Digitalization”
“Culture”	“Development”	“Disruptive Innovation”

VOSviewer was utilized as an analytical tool to map the network of authors contributing to research on developing human resource performance through organizational culture in VUCA era. Through the visual outputs generated by VOSviewer, key patterns and themes were identified and categorized. The interpretation of these visualizations included: (1) the size of the connecting lines and circles, which reflects the intensity of relationships and the frequency of publications among authors or topics; (2) the numerical indicators divided into "links" (showing the connections between nodes) and "link strength," which were calculated based on either full or fractional counting approaches, as well as the number of keyword occurrences across the articles. Additionally, a temporal analysis of the publication years was conducted to understand the chronological distribution of research activities related to human resource performance, organizational culture and VUCA era. This temporal mapping helps in identifying evolving trends and highlights potential research gaps that future scholars might address.

VOSviewer provided various forms of visualization, including network visualizations that show the relationships among authors or keywords, overlay visualizations that display how research trends change over time, and density visualizations that highlight areas of high research concentration. The systematic use of VOSviewer enhances the ability to interpret complex bibliometric data effectively, making it a valuable tool in literature-based studies (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Perianes-Rodriguez, Waltman, & Van Eck, 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

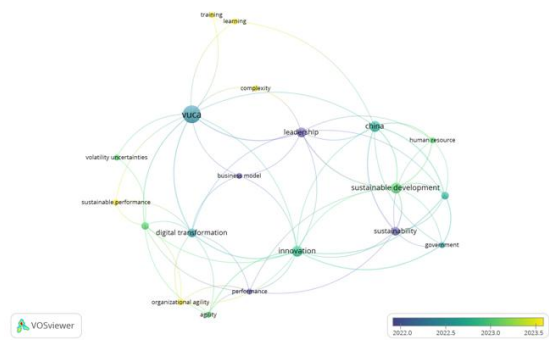


Figure 2. Vosviewer Output

Figure 2 illustrates the output of VOSviewer bibliometric analysis, visualizing a thematic network of key concepts associated with organizational culture, progressive strategies, human resource performance, and the VUCA

(Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) environment. The map reflects the co-occurrence of keywords extracted from selected scholarly literature, using a color gradient ranging from blue (older publications) to yellow (more recent works), providing insight into the evolution and current trends of the research landscape.

At the core of the network lies the term "VUCA," represented in a darker blue shade, signifying its centrality and foundational presence in the research. This keyword is closely linked with terms such as "volatility uncertainties," "complexity," "training," and "learning." These associations reflect a significant academic concern with how organizations adapt and evolve in unpredictable and fast-changing contexts. The emphasis on learning and training indicates the increasing importance of continuous development and capability-building as integral aspects of progressive organizational cultures within the VUCA era.

Surrounding this core are several interrelated clusters. The "digital transformation" and "organizational agility" cluster, shown in green to yellow tones, represents relatively newer areas of inquiry. These themes point to a shift toward strategic digital adaptation and flexible organizational structures aimed at enhancing performance and innovation. The frequent co-occurrence of these terms with "innovation," "agility," and "performance" underscores the role of digital capabilities as enablers of progressive strategy in uncertain environments.

The cluster featuring "leadership" and "business model," marked in blue and green, suggests sustained academic interest in the role of adaptive, visionary leadership and evolving business frameworks. These elements are vital to supporting change and resilience within complex organizational settings.

Another prominent cluster focuses on "sustainable development," interlinked with keywords such as "human resource," "government," "sustainability," and regional tags like "China." This indicates that strategic human capital management is increasingly discussed in relation to broader policy and sustainability agendas, particularly within national and international governance frameworks. Such connections suggest a growing awareness of the socio-political dimensions of organizational performance. Of particular significance is the keyword "innovation," which serves as a bridge across various clusters. Its central positioning and strong connections to other themes reflect its



pivotal role in driving transformation, fostering adaptability, and supporting organizational growth amid volatility. Innovation not only intersects with technological change but also with leadership and sustainability, highlighting its multifaceted influence.

Overall, the network structure in Figure 2 reveals a multidimensional and integrative research framework. Scholars are increasingly exploring how organizations can construct agile, innovative, and sustainable cultures that are capable of responding to VUCA challenges. The temporal color gradient indicates a notable shift in focus from foundational VUCA awareness toward more nuanced strategies involving digital transformation, continuous learning, and ethical leadership. These insights collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of how progressive strategies and organizational culture can elevate human resource performance in today's volatile world.

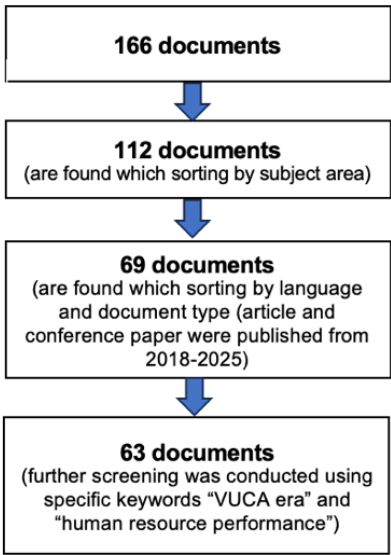


Figure 3. Article Selection Process

Benjathikul (2021) explores leadership in Thai organizations facing the VUCA environment and finds that adaptive leadership—capable of embracing uncertainty, learning from complexity, and fostering collaboration—is essential in guiding organizational culture. A progressive culture encourages such leaders to model agility and resilience, shaping the behavioral norms of the organization.

In VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) environments, adaptive leadership is crucial for steering organizational culture toward agility and resilience. Such leadership enables organizations to remain flexible in the face of disruption, fostering collaborative environments and learning-oriented mindsets. Recent studies underscore that leaders who demonstrate cultural adaptability—through openness, continuous learning, and responsiveness to environmental shifts—are more effective in cultivating progressive organizational norms (Jerab & Mabrok 2023; Khattak et.al 2025). These norms

serve as behavioral anchors that allow teams to navigate uncertainty with confidence. Moreover culturally adaptive leaders act as role models who promote values of inclusivity, shared purpose, and innovation. Their ability to align shifting strategic priorities with deeply embedded cultural values ensures that organizations remain mission-driven, even in volatile conditions.

The other studies highlight that adaptive leaders act not only as strategists but also as cultural architects, cultivating environments that support innovation and continuous learning (Ahsan, 2025; Sott & Bender, 2025). These leaders model behaviors that promote psychological safety, enabling teams to navigate ambiguity with greater confidence and creativity. Moreover, leaders play a vital role in shaping psychological safety within teams, which is essential for promoting openness and trust. When employees feel secure in expressing their ideas, especially in high-risk or ambiguous situations, innovation flourishes.

Progressive cultures reinforce this by embedding inclusive decision-making and flattening hierarchies. As a result, the development of human capital becomes a shared responsibility, aligned with broader organizational goals. Research by Baah (2024) suggests that in turbulent times, leadership becomes a cultural transmitter, translating abstract values into concrete practices. This “cultural scaffolding” helps organizations stay mission-aligned even when structural or strategic pivots occur. By investing in culturally intelligent leadership, organizations lay the foundation for high-performing teams that remain engaged and resilient across change cycles.

The previous research stated that a transition toward agile performance management approaches that prioritize continuous feedback, personalized goal alignment, and coaching for development (Darino et.al 2019; Steegh et.al 2025). These agile models are well-suited to progressive organizational cultures that emphasize adaptability, innovation, and the cultivation of long-term capabilities. Rather than merely assessing past performance, human capital strategies aligned with such cultures focus on unlocking future potential. In periods of organizational change, these systems are designed not to penalize shortfalls but to diagnose skill gaps and foster targeted upskilling initiatives.

When performance evaluation is embedded within a cultural framework that values employee growth and learning, it encourages individuals to embrace ambiguity and contribute creatively. This cultural alignment transforms performance systems into strategic tools that reinforce organizational agility and transformation goals. Furthermore, when appraisal mechanisms reflect the organization's

cultural values, they foster deeper employee engagement and intrinsic motivation. Recent work by Snell et.al (2023) highlights the importance of HR professionals in designing performance ecosystems that reward not only individual achievement, but also collective learning and collaboration. In such environments, human capital development becomes a shared responsibility, embedding resilience and future-readiness across the organization.

Expanding on this perspective, progressive organizational cultures serve as the foundation that reinforces agile performance systems. These cultures actively promote transparency, continuous learning, and psychological safety—enabling employees to perceive performance feedback not as judgment, but as a pathway for growth. When appraisal systems are situated within such cultural environments, employees are more likely to engage with performance processes constructively and remain motivated to improve (Mone & Mone, 2018). Moreover, a progressive culture fosters mutual accountability between employees and leadership, creating a sense of shared purpose and ownership over development outcomes (Ahsan, 2025).

This cultural alignment transforms human capital strategy into a dynamic, participatory process. Rather than viewing performance improvement as an isolated HR initiative, it becomes a core element of the organization's adaptive capacity. According to Biswakarma & Subaedi (2025), organizations that embed performance management within a learning-oriented culture see higher levels of employee innovation, engagement, and retention. The result is a workforce that is not only high-performing but also resilient and future-ready—critical attributes in environments marked by volatility and continuous change. In essence, a progressive culture acts as the strategic enabler that bridges agile performance appraisal and sustainable human capital development.

Bhanumathi & Hemavathi (2025) highlight that nations and firms embracing digital geopolitics also reimagine their internal cultures to remain competitive. For organizations, this means redefining values around speed, accessibility, transparency, and inclusivity to sustain digital momentum and workforce agility. A progressive culture fosters continuous learning through digital upskilling, reskilling, and the integration of digital tools into day-to-day workflows. When cultural readiness meets technological advancement, the workforce becomes more adaptive to emerging trends like AI, automation, and hybrid work.

A progressive organizational culture supports this shift by embedding continuous digital learning, including upskilling, reskilling, and day-to-day integration of digital technologies

into workflows. This ensures that employees are not only technologically competent but also behaviorally aligned with the fast-paced, innovation-driven demands of digital ecosystems. Ononiwu et al. (2024) demonstrate that digital maturity, when underpinned by a strong, adaptive culture, significantly enhances both innovation capacity and operational agility. Crucially, resistance to digital change is often rooted in culture rather than technology. Organizations may invest in cutting-edge systems yet fail to achieve transformation due to a lack of behavioral readiness.

Alakas (2024) argue that leadership commitment to modeling digital behaviors—such as openness to experimentation, virtual collaboration, and iterative learning—is essential to fostering a supportive cultural environment. In progressive organizations, digital transformation is not seen as a temporary project but as a shared ethos embedded across all functions (Zhou and Li, 2023). This strategic integration of digital values into organizational culture aligns directly with efforts to improve human resource performance. In a VUCA landscape, where adaptability and responsiveness are critical, a progressive culture empowers employees to engage with change proactively rather than defensively. Consequently, such a culture serves as a catalyst for HR transformation—shifting the focus from control and compliance to innovation, agility, and sustainable performance outcomes.

In response to VUCA conditions, organizations must continuously reassess and reconfigure their value propositions, market strategies, and operational mechanisms. Recent studies emphasize that a progressive organizational culture—characterized by adaptability, continuous learning, and global responsiveness—plays a critical role in facilitating this transformation. For instance, Troise et.al (2022) assert that such a culture instills a mindset of curiosity and strategic agility, enabling employees to respond proactively to volatility and change. These embedded cultural traits not only foster innovation but also enhance employees' confidence in ideating and iterating under pressure.

Furthermore, business model innovation thrives in environments that encourage cross-functional collaboration, where HR is not a support function but a strategic driver. A progressive culture empowers HR to align human capital strategies with organizational change initiatives, fostering diversity of thought and a tolerance for experimentation. Garrido et al. (2024) find that organizational cultures emphasizing openness, feedback, and experimentation contribute significantly to developing dynamic capabilities, such as sensing new opportunities and rapidly reconfiguring

resources to seize them—capabilities essential for thriving in turbulent contexts.

Moreover, global adaptability in today's interconnected economy requires cultural agility—an understanding of local nuances, workforce expectations, and varying institutional conditions. Evan et.al (2025) highlight that culturally intelligent organizations integrate global-local perspectives into their strategy and workforce management practices. Within this framework, a progressive organizational culture acts as a strategic compass, ensuring that while business models evolve across geographies, the core values of collaboration, learning, and inclusivity remain intact. This cultural continuity enhances not only strategic coherence but also HR performance, as employees across diverse contexts are empowered to contribute meaningfully to the organizational goals (Lengnick-Hall et.al, 2011; Singha, 2024).

In essence, a progressive organizational culture serves as the invisible infrastructure that links agility, innovation, and HR effectiveness. It enables organizations to remain resilient and competitive amid the uncertainties of the VUCA era by positioning human resources as adaptive, empowered, and future-ready.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study affirm that a progressive organizational culture constitutes a strategic pillar in enhancing human resource performance within the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) era. Characterized by adaptability, innovation, continuous learning, and collaborative leadership, such a culture fosters organizational agility and empowers employees to navigate uncertainty with confidence. Progressive cultures encourage psychological safety, support digital transformation, and align individual development with organizational resilience. Consequently, culture functions not merely as a background variable but as a dynamic enabler of sustainable human capital performance.

This research underscores that aligning HR strategies with progressive cultural values transforms traditional performance systems into adaptive and developmental ecosystems. These systems prioritize real-time feedback, personalized coaching, and cross-functional collaboration—elements crucial for thriving in unpredictable environments. A strong cultural foundation ensures that talent development, innovation, and strategic responsiveness are not isolated efforts but embedded within the organizational fabric.

Based on the findings, organizations are encouraged to institutionalize progressive cultural values that emphasize adaptability, collaboration, and continuous learning as a strategic approach to

enhancing human resource performance in the VUCA era. Human Resource departments should be redefined as strategic drivers of transformation, fostering agile performance systems and promoting digital and behavioral readiness across all levels of the workforce. For future research is recommended to empirically validate these findings through longitudinal or cross-sectoral studies, particularly focusing on how cultural agility interacts with digital transformation, leadership styles, and global workforce dynamics. Investigating the mediating effects of psychological safety, hybrid work models, and knowledge-sharing behaviors would provide valuable insights into the mechanisms through which progressive cultures sustain high performance in complex and uncertain environments.

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