ABSTRACT

This study conceptualised the construct of Frontline Employee (FLE) Adaptability through a qualitative study using Grounded theory. Subsequently, a conceptual model of antecedents and consequences of FLE adaptability were developed. Consequently, the 41 item instrument (FLEADAPT SCALE) was developed to measure the seven dimensions of FLE Adaptability and tested in line with extant literature on scale development. The conceptual model developed was tested using Structural Equation Modelling. Three gaps in literature have given rise to this study: the need for conceptualizing and exploring the dimensions of adaptability among frontline employees, the need to develop a tool to measure frontline employee adaptability, and the need for a study that examine the antecedents and consequences of FLE Adaptability. The context of interest in this study is the frontline employee’s working in the power sector. A major contribution from this work is the conceptualization of the Frontline Employee Adaptability Construct and development of its measurement scale. Besides, the study also examined the antecedents like a) individual related factors and b) organization factors on FLE adaptability construct and also the consequences of FLE Adaptability Construct like Job Satisfaction and Job performance are also studied.

Among Individual related factors,

- Service Orientation was found to be positively related to FLE adaptability, specifically to Interpersonal, Social and Group adaptability.
- This study suggested a positive relationship between Tolerance for Ambiguity and FLE adaptability, Further, Tolerance for Ambiguity is found to be positively related to Service Offering Adaptability and Physical Adaptability.
This study also found a positive relationship between self efficacy and FLE adaptability, particularly to Service Offering Adaptability.

This study suggested a positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and FLE adaptability, mainly Self Emotional Appraisal is found to be positively related to Interpersonal Adaptability. Also, Others Emotional Appraisal found to be positively related to Interpersonal, Service Offering, Social, Political and Group Adaptability. Besides, Regulation of Emotion was positively related to Interpersonal, Political and Group Adaptability. While Use of Emotion, was positively related to Interpersonal and Political Adaptability.

Employee Spirituality was found to be positively related to FLE adaptability, predominantly positive relationship between meaningful work and Interpersonal, Service offering, Group and Social Adaptability were encountered. Compassion was also found to be positively related to Interpersonal and Social adaptability. Besides, Mindfulness positively affected Service Offering, Group and Organization adaptability.

Among Organization factors;

- Formalization was found to have a positive relationship with FLE Adaptability, particularly; it showed positive relationship with Service Offering adaptability, Group adaptability and Organization adaptability.

- The research finds a significant relationship between Centralization and FLE Adaptability, particularly, Centralization was found to be positively related to Political, Group and Social Adaptability.

- Perceived Organizational Support was found to be positively related to FLE Adaptability, mainly with Service Offering Adaptability, Political Adaptability, Group Adaptability and Organizational Adaptability.
Perceived supervisor support was positively related to FLE Adaptability, favorably with Service Offering Adaptability, Political Adaptability, Group Adaptability and Organizational Adaptability.

This study finds a positive relationship between Servicescape and FLE Adaptability. Specifically, positive relationship was found between Convenience of Servicescape and Physical Adaptability. Safety was positively related to Physical Adaptability and Pleasantness of Servicescape was positively related to Physical Adaptability and Interpersonal Adaptability.

The influence of FLE adaptability construct on consequences such as Job Satisfaction and Job Performance is also discussed. This research showed a positive relationship of FLE Adaptability construct with Job Satisfaction and Job Performance. This study did not find any relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance and vice versa. The FLE adaptability construct is also tested for mediation and it is found to fully mediate between the proposed antecedents and consequences. The study concludes with a discussion and implications of the study.

**Keywords:** Frontline Employee Adaptability, Scale Development, Grounded Theory, Structural Equation Modelling, FLEADAPT Scale.