

THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL CULTURE ON JOB SATISFACTION WITH SELF-REWARD AS A MODERATING VARIABLE

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Abstract

The massive digital transformation in the Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 eras has fundamentally changed the global work landscape, requiring organizations to adopt a digital culture to maintain competitive advantage. This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of digital culture on employee job satisfaction and evaluate the role of self-reward as a moderating variable that strengthens or weakens this relationship. This research approach uses an explanatory quantitative method based on empirical research in the creative industry and modern technology sectors. Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was tested using the Structural Equation Modeling method based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The test results indicate that digital culture has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, the self-reward variable is proven to significantly act as a pure moderator that strengthens the positive influence of digital culture on employee job satisfaction levels. These findings provide a theoretical contribution to the literature on Human Resource Management (HRM) and organizational behavior by integrating the concept of self-reward in the dynamics of digital work. Practically, organizational leaders are advised to not only focus on providing technological infrastructure, but also on building a culture of self-appreciation and a work ecosystem that supports employee mental well-being.

Keywords: Digital Culture, Job Satisfaction, Self-Reward, Moderating Variable, Human Resource Management.

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INTRODUCTION

The exponential development of information and communication technology has drastically changed the competitive landscape of modern business (Schwab, 2017). This transformation not only demands automation of operational processes but also directs organizations to revolutionize the values, norms, and work habits adopted by

their members (Al-Nuaimi et al., 2022). This systemic shift from conventional work patterns to a fully connected, transparent, and data-driven environment is known as the formation of a digital *culture*. In the 21st-century business ecosystem, an organization's ability to survive and thrive depends heavily on how effectively this digital culture is internalized into the daily behavior of employees (Verhoef et al., 2021). Therefore, a deep understanding of how the digital climate impacts the psychological dimensions and employee satisfaction has become a strategic issue in the discipline of Human Resource Management (HRM).

Conceptually, *digital culture* refers to a pattern of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that drive the use of technology to enhance interaction, collaboration, and performance within an organization (Duerr et al., 2018). This culture is characterized by openness to innovation, work flexibility, responsive horizontal communication, and data -*driven* decision-making (Martinez-Caro et al., 2020). When digital culture is comprehensively implemented, employees are given the autonomous freedom to complete tasks without being constrained by geographic boundaries or rigid bureaucratic hierarchies. However, this paradigm shift also leads to the emergence of new challenges, such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life (*work-life blur*), the potential for digital fatigue (*technostress*), and very high demands for adaptability (Strohmeier, 2020).

On the other hand, *job satisfaction* remains one of the most crucial evaluation indicators in measuring the effectiveness of human resource management (Locke, 1976; Spector, 2022). Job satisfaction reflects an individual's perceptions, feelings, and affective attitudes toward their work and the environment in which they work (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Employees with high job satisfaction tend to demonstrate strong levels of organizational commitment, superior productivity, and relatively low *turnover intentions* (Judge et al., 2020). Conversely, low levels of job satisfaction can trigger decreased performance, accumulated emotional exhaustion, and even disrupted the organization's operational stability (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Therefore,

identifying factors that can increase job satisfaction in the era of technological disruption is a crucial agenda for researchers and management practitioners.

The relationship between *digital culture* and *job satisfaction* has attracted significant attention in recent management literature, but the results remain mixed (Kane et al., 2019). On the one hand, a well- implemented *digital culture has been shown to increase job satisfaction* by providing easy access to information, efficient communication, and flexible schedules that support work-life balance (Ammirato et al., 2023). Employees feel more empowered *when* digital tools allow them to complete responsibilities more independently and measurably (Turban et al., 2018). However, on the other hand, several studies suggest that intensive technology penetration without mature cultural alignment can actually decrease *job satisfaction* due to the emergence of cognitive overload, social isolation, and expectations of 24/7 availability (*an always-on culture*) (Venkatesh et al., 2019). This inconsistency in results indicates a research gap, indicating that the influence of *digital culture* on *job satisfaction* is not direct or absolutely linear, but rather influenced by contextual variables or individual psychological mechanisms (Hair et al., 2021).

One individual psychological variable thought to play a significant role in moderating this relationship is *self-reward*. *Self-reward* is defined as a self-regulatory mechanism in which individuals consciously provide internal and external rewards for accomplishments or efforts (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Within the framework of *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT), *self-rewarding* serves as a means of fulfilling basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). When working in a *digital culture environment that demands high speed and independence, employees cannot always rely on real-time* feedback or formal recognition from superiors (Bandura, 1997). Under these conditions, an individual's ability to *self-reward* becomes an effective coping tool for maintaining the stability of intrinsic motivation and protecting themselves from the stress of digital fatigue (Mitchell et al., 2021).

The importance of *self-reward* as a moderating variable is based on the argument that an individual's perception of their work environment is largely determined by their subjective evaluation and self-regulation mechanisms (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2019). Employees with a high *self-reward tendency* are expected to strengthen the positive influence of digital culture on job satisfaction. Employees in this group are able to translate the flexibility and speed of the digital work environment into a pleasant experience, as each target achievement is enjoyed through a proportional form of self-appreciation (Luthans et al., 2015). Conversely, for employees with a low *self-reward tendency*, the positive benefits of digital culture may not be maximally extracted, so that changes in technology-based work culture are perceived as a regular burden without adequate emotional satisfaction (Saks, 2019).

The integration of *self-reward* variables as moderators also addresses the literature's call to combine organizational - level approaches, such as *digital culture*, with individual -level psychological mechanisms to explain job satisfaction (Johns, 2018). Most previous research tends to position *rewards* solely as extrinsic intervening variables provided by leaders or companies (*organizational rewards*) (Miao et al., 2020). However, in the flexible and *remote/hybrid* work landscape facilitated by digital culture, formal extrinsic rewards are often hampered by spatial distance and the limitations of asynchronous communication (Galanti et al., 2021). Therefore, examining *self-reward* as a moderating variable offers significant theoretical novelty in mapping the dynamics of modern industrial psychology.

Based on the background description above, the phenomenon of digital disruption occurring in organizational environments requires a comprehensive analysis that focuses not only on technological aspects but also on the psychological conditions of workers. The existence of a research gap related to the inconsistency of the impact of digital culture on job satisfaction strengthens the urgency to include *self-reward* as a limiting or reinforcing variable (*moderator*). This research was conducted to address this empirical need by analyzing in depth how *digital culture* influences job

satisfaction, and how *self-reward* moderates the relationship between these variables. It is hoped that the results of this study will be able to provide substantive contributions to the development of human resource management science while providing practical guidelines for organizations in designing humanistic, inclusive, and sustainable digital work policies.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory *research* design aimed at analyzing causal relationships and examining the interplay between variables within the model (Hair et al., 2021; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The population included employees working in companies or corporations that are currently implementing or have implemented digital transformation in their work environments. Sampling was conducted using a *purposive sampling* technique, with inclusion criteria of employees with a minimum of one year of service and intensive use of digital communication platforms in their daily activities (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Primary data were collected through a structured online survey, measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (scale 1) to "Strongly Agree" (scale 5) to accurately capture respondents' perceptions (Spector, 2021).

The measurement instrument for each variable was adapted from standard indicators whose validity and reliability have been tested in previous literature. The *digital culture* variable was measured using indicators of openness to innovation, virtual collaboration, and data utilization adapted from Duerr et al. (2018). The *job satisfaction* variable was measured using the dimensions of satisfaction with the job itself, the work environment, and autonomy developed by Spector (2021). Meanwhile, the *self-reward* variable was measured using the dimensions of intrinsic self-appreciation and personal incentives adapted from Neck and Manz (2018). Empirical data analysis was tested using the *Partial Least Squares* -based *Structural Equation*

Modeling (SEM-PLS) method through two evaluation stages: evaluation of the measurement model (*outer model*) for validity and reliability testing, and evaluation of the structural model (*inner model*) to test the significance of inter-variable relationships and moderating effects (Hair et al., 2021).

Statistical testing in this structural model aims to prove a series of theoretical assumptions formulated into research hypotheses (Sarstedt et al., 2020). Based on the literature review and the conceptual framework presented, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows: 1). H1: *Digital culture* has a positive and significant effect on employee *job satisfaction*. 2). H2: *Self-reward* has a positive and significant effect on employee *job satisfaction*. 3). H3: *Self-reward* significantly moderates (strengthens) the positive influence of *digital culture* on employee *job satisfaction*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Respondent Profile and Outer Model Evaluation

Empirical data collection successfully captured 240 respondents who met the inclusion criteria: active employees at companies implementing a digital work culture with a minimum tenure of one year. Based on demographic characteristics, the majority of respondents were in the productive age range of 25–38 years (68.3%), had a bachelor's degree (78.8%), and worked with a *hybrid* or *remote work* system (71.25%). Prior to hypothesis testing, an evaluation of the measurement model (*outer model*) was conducted to ensure that all indicators used met the requirements for construct validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2021). This evaluation included convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests.

The convergent validity test results show that all indicators for the variables *Digital Culture* (DC1–DC6), *Self-Reward* (SR1–SR5), and *Job Satisfaction* (JS1–JS6) have

outer loading values above the threshold of 0.700 (ranging from 0.742 to 0.891) with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct exceeding 0.500 (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, reliability testing indicates a very high level of internal consistency, where the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all variables are above 0.800. Discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criteria and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) also confirms that each construct is statistically significantly different from the other constructs (HTMT < 0.850) (Sarstedt et al., 2020).

Table 1

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (*Outer Model*)

Construct / Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Digital Culture (X)	DC1 – DC6	0.758 – 0.874	0.642	0.887	0.915
Self-Reward (Z)	SR1 – SR5	0.742 – 0.891	0.658	0.870	0.906
Job Satisfaction (Y)	JS1 – JS6	0.765 – 0.882	0.671	0.902	0.925
Construct / Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability

Inner Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

After the measurement model is proven valid and reliable, the next step is to evaluate the structural model (*inner model*) to test the path coefficient, significance level (*t*-statistics and *p*-value), as well as the explanatory power of the model through the coefficient of determination (R^2). Evaluation R^2 showed a value of 0.584 for the *Job Satisfaction* variable. This indicates that 58.4% of the variance in job satisfaction can be

explained jointly by *digital culture*, *self-reward*, and the moderating interaction between the two, while the remaining 41.6% is influenced by other factors outside the research model (Hair et al., 2021).

Hypothesis testing was conducted using *bootstrapping* techniques with 5,000 resamples to obtain stable estimates (Sarstedt et al., 2020). A summary of the hypothesis testing is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Results of Structural and Moderation Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship between Variables	Original Sample (β)	t-Statistics	p-Values	Information
H1	Digital Culture→Job Satisfaction	0.412	6,845	0,000	Accepted
H2	Self-Reward→Job Satisfaction	0.285	4,512	0,000	Accepted
H3	DC×SR (Moderation)→Job Satisfaction	0.198	3,214	0.001	Accepted

Based on the results of the statistical analysis in Table 2, testing Hypothesis 1 (H1) produces a path coefficient (β) of 0.412 with *t*-statistic of 6,845 ($p < 0.001$). Because *t*-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and *p*-value is below 0.05, then H1 is accepted. This means that *digital culture* has a positive and significant effect on *job satisfaction*. For Hypothesis 2 (H2), the value obtained is $\beta = 0.285$ with *t*-statistic 4,512 ($p < 0.001$), which proves that *self-reward* has a direct positive and significant effect on *job satisfaction*.

Testing the moderation effect on Hypothesis 3 (H3) which tests the interaction between *Digital Culture* and *Self-Reward* ($DC \times SR$) on *Job Satisfaction* produces a positive interaction coefficient of 0.198 with t -statistic 3,214 ($p= 0.001$). These results confirm that H3 is accepted. This moderation characteristic is classified as a *pure moderator*, where *self-reward* not only has a direct effect but also significantly strengthens the positive influence of *digital culture* on employee job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Digital Culture on Job Satisfaction

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that *digital culture* contributes positively and significantly to employee job satisfaction. These results confirm the theoretical argument that when organizations successfully instill digital values such as information transparency, work flexibility, technology-based collaboration, and an orientation toward innovation—employees experience a more empowering work environment (Duerr et al., 2018; Martinez-Caro et al., 2020). A digital infrastructure integrated with an adaptive culture reduces rigid bureaucracy, enabling employees to complete their responsibilities more efficiently and independently (Teng et al., 2022).

Specifically, the dimensions of flexibility and autonomy in *digital culture* are key drivers of increased *job satisfaction*. In the digital ecosystem, the measure of work success shifts from physical presence (*presenteeism*) to *output-based performance* (Al-Syaibani et al., 2023). Employees feel in full control of their workspace and time, ultimately improving work-life balance (Ammirato et al., 2023). This perception of autonomy triggers feelings of appreciation and trust from management, which, according to *Self-Determination Theory*, fulfills basic psychological needs for achieving emotional satisfaction at work (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

However, discussions about *digital culture* cannot be separated from the potential dark side of technology. As stated by Tarafdar et al. (2019) and Stich (2020), digital culture that is not managed wisely can trigger *technostress* due to the demands

of non-stop connectivity (*always-on culture*). The findings of this study indicate that the positive influence of *digital culture* on job satisfaction can only be created if the digital culture is built on a foundation of healthy communication and clear work expectations. When digital culture is implemented humanely, potential negative impacts such as mental fatigue can be minimized, so that the advantages of technological flexibility are truly converted into real job satisfaction (Spector, 2021).

The Influence of Self-Reward on Job Satisfaction

The statistical analysis also shows that *self-reward* has a positive and significant effect on *job satisfaction*. This finding reinforces the concept of *Self-Leadership Theory* developed by Neck and Manz (2018), where individuals with good self-regulation skills are able to create internal motivational drives without having to constantly rely on external recognition from the organization. Providing self-reward whether in the form of quality breaks, purchasing small personal gifts, or positive recognition for personal achievements functions as an emotional incentive that increases feelings of self -*worth* (Eisenberger et al., 2019).

In the context of organizational psychology, *self-reward* acts as a buffering mechanism *against* cognitive and emotional exhaustion (Luthans et al., 2021). Modern work often involves complex projects with long feedback cycles from management. Employees who practice regular *self-reward* are able to break down large goals into small achievements (*micro-wins*) that are celebrated independently (Bandura, 1997). This procedure activates feelings of competence (*perceived competence*), which directly boosts individuals' subjective satisfaction with the work process (Deci et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the presence of *self-rewards* reflects a high level of psychological independence *in* employees. Employees who rely solely on extrinsic company *rewards* (such as bonuses or praise from their superiors) for their job satisfaction tend to be more vulnerable to disappointment when these expectations are not met on time (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Conversely, individuals who practice *self-rewards* have more

stable control over their emotional state, so their job satisfaction levels are relatively more consistent and less susceptible to fluctuations due to external organizational dynamics (Spector, 2021).

The Role of Self-Reward as a Moderating Variable

The most important finding and the main novelty *in* this study is the proven role of *self-reward* as a moderating variable *that* strengthens the positive influence of *digital culture* on *job satisfaction*. The positive and significant interaction coefficient ($\beta = 0.198; p = 0.001$) indicates that the benefits of the existence of *digital culture* in increasing job satisfaction will be felt much more optimally by employees who have a high *self-reward tendency*.

Figure 1

Model



This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of combining the organizational (*macro-level*) and individual (*micro-level*) levels (Johns, 2018). The work environment shaped by *digital culture* provides resources, flexibility, and a fast-paced work pace. However, the effectiveness of these external resources in generating emotional satisfaction depends heavily on how individuals process and respond to the environment (Hair et al., 2021). Employees with high *self-reward* utilize the speed and autonomy of *digital culture* as a platform to pursue efficiency, and each time that

efficiency is achieved, they immediately provide themselves with positive reinforcement (Bandura, 1997; Mitchell et al., 2021). This synergy between a flexible work environment and emotional self-regulation is what multiplies their sense of job satisfaction.

Conversely, for employees with low levels of *self-reward*, the existence of a *digital culture* may simply be perceived as a change in routine operational systems or even an additional workload without any positive emotional uplifting effects (Saks, 2019). Without the ability to appreciate one's own achievements, the demands of flexibility and speed in a digital culture are at high risk of being translated into regular, tedious pressure (Tarafdar et al., 2019). Thus, *self-reward* has been shown to be a psychological catalyst that transforms the potential of an organization's digital facilities into a personally satisfying work experience for employees (Kooij et al., 2020; Sartori et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study has empirically proven that *digital culture* and *self-reward* have a positive and significant influence on increasing employee *job satisfaction*, where the implementation of flexible digital work values and emotional self-regulation have been proven to create an empowering and satisfying work experience (Duerr et al., 2018; Neck & Manz, 2018; Spector, 2021). The most important theoretical finding in this study shows that *self-reward* acts as a moderating variable (*pure moderator*) that significantly strengthens the positive influence of *digital culture* on *job satisfaction*; this indicates that the flexibility and efficiency of an organization's digital ecosystem will produce much more optimal emotional satisfaction when employees have a mechanism for self-appreciation for their work achievements (Hair et al., 2021; Mitchell et al., 2021). Practical implications for human resource management emphasize the importance of balancing technology infrastructure investment with the

development of a culture of *self-leadership* and employee mental well-being, to ensure that digital transformation is aligned with the achievement of satisfaction and sustainable organizational performance (Kane et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2020).

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