



The Impact of Digital Transformation and Leadership Behaviour on Achieving Organizational Strategic Goals

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v8i9.2970>

Abstract

This study investigates the Impact of Digital Transformation and Leadership Behaviour on Achieving Organizational Strategic Goals. As digital technologies reshape business environments, leadership approaches must evolve to remain effective. The research employs descriptive statistics and regression analysis on data collected from 337 respondents across various industries. Findings reveal that digital transformation significantly influences leadership behaviour, promoting innovation, adaptability, and data-driven decision-making. Specifically, transformational leadership is shown to play a vital role in aligning digital initiatives with organizational goals, enhancing employee motivation, and fostering innovation and growth. The regression analysis confirms a strong positive relationship between digital transformation, leadership style, and the achievement of strategic objectives. The study concludes that adopting innovative leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, is essential for organizations undergoing digital change. It recommends that leaders embrace digital tools and strategies to enhance performance and sustain competitive advantage. Suggestions for future research include sectoral comparisons and broader industry analysis.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Innovation Management; Leadership Behaviour; Organizational Strategic Goals; Transformational Leadership

1.0 Introduction

In today's fast-paced and competitive corporate environment, organizations are increasingly adopting digital technologies to enhance operational efficiency, streamline processes, and support strategic decision-making. These technologies, ranging from automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to big data analytics and cloud computing, enable firms to be more agile, customer-responsive, and innovation-driven (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou, & Venkatraman, 2013; Davenport, 2018). Cloud

computing, for instance, fosters collaboration while reducing IT costs and enabling real-time resource access, scalability, and flexibility (Marston et al., 2011).

Digital transformation refers to the comprehensive integration of digital technologies into all areas of business operations. It drives fundamental shifts in how organizations operate, create value, and engage with stakeholders (Westerman et al., 2011). This transformation has evolved beyond a technical upgrade into a strategic imperative that affects organizational culture, structure, and leadership. The rapid advancement of digital tools compels organizations to rethink traditional business models and adopt innovative strategies for long-term success.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping how digital transformation is initiated, managed, and sustained. Specifically, transformational leadership has gained prominence for its capacity to inspire and align employees toward a shared vision, support innovation, and encourage adaptability in times of change (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2018). Transformational leaders foster a culture that embraces creativity and continuous learning, essential for navigating technological disruptions (Avolio, 2011). In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on task structure and performance rewards, may be insufficient in fostering the agility and innovation needed in a rapidly evolving digital environment (Bass, 1985).

Strategic goals, such as growth, innovation, and long-term sustainability, are increasingly shaped by digital realities. Achieving these goals now requires leadership that can integrate technology with organizational vision, foster engagement, and drive performance in a constantly changing environment (Kane et al., 2015). Thus, leadership behaviour becomes not only a facilitator of digital initiatives but a determining factor in whether strategic goals are effectively realized.

Despite recognition of the importance of leadership in digital contexts, existing research often treats leadership styles and digital transformation as separate domains. Limited empirical studies explore how leadership behaviour, especially transformational leadership, influences the success of digital initiatives and the achievement of strategic objectives (Vial, 2019). Additionally, many organizations struggle to align their leadership approach with the evolving demands of digital transformation, resulting in missed opportunities or failed implementations (Kraus et al., 2021).

This study seeks to address this gap by examining how digital transformation affects leadership behaviour and, in turn, how different leadership styles impact the achievement of strategic goals. By exploring this intersection, the research aims to provide insights into how organizations can leverage leadership as a strategic asset in digital transformation efforts.

Therefore, while digital tools are crucial, it is leadership, especially transformational leadership, that determines whether digital transformation translates into meaningful strategic outcomes. Understanding this relationship is vital for organizations striving for long-term success in the digital age.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does digital transformation influence leadership behaviour and the adoption of innovative leadership styles within organizations?
2. What is the relationship between transformational leadership and the achievement of organizational strategic goals during digital transformation?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of digital transformation on leadership behaviour and the adoption of innovative leadership styles within organizations.
2. To explore the relationship between transformational leadership and the achievement of organizational strategic goals in the digital transformation context.

1.4 Hypotheses

1. **H₀₁**: Digital transformation has no significant influence on leadership behaviour and the adoption of innovative leadership styles.
2. **H₀₂**: Transformational leadership has no significant effect on achieving organizational strategic goals in the context of digital transformation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Digital Transformation

Digital transformation (DT) refers to the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of an organization's operations, leading to profound shifts in business models, strategies, and culture (Westerman et al., 2011). It extends beyond the deployment of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, cloud computing, and process automation, fundamentally reshaping organizational workflows and stakeholder interactions (Paul et al., 2024; Gažová et al., 2022).

The transformation process impacts various departments, including operations, marketing, and human resources. For instance, AI and automation enhance efficiency and decision-making, while data analytics provides real-time insights that improve customer targeting and performance (Davenport, 2018; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Additionally, flexible digital tools enable remote collaboration and agile team structures, promoting adaptability in fast-changing markets (Sia et al., 2016).

However, the success of digital transformation is contingent not only on the adoption of technologies but also on the behaviour and orientation of leadership. Leaders play a central role in managing change, promoting innovation, and aligning digital initiatives with broader organizational goals (Ford et al., 2021). Each stage of transformation, from early adoption to innovation, requires different leadership strategies that foster cross-functional collaboration and a culture of continuous learning (Westerman et al., 2011).

Moreover, drivers such as technological advancements, market pressures, and evolving customer expectations compel firms to undergo digital transformation to achieve strategic objectives like growth, efficiency, and competitive advantage (Bughin et al., 2018; Kraus et al., 2021; Porter & Heppelmann, 2014). Thus, leadership behaviour becomes a critical determinant in shaping the extent to which digital transformation translates into the achievement of long-term strategic goals.

2.1.2 Concept of Leadership Styles

Leadership styles refer to the behaviours and approaches leaders adopt to guide, influence, and manage individuals and teams within organizations. These styles significantly shape employee motivation, communication, performance, and the overall organizational culture. Effective leadership creates a positive work environment characterized by trust, innovation, and alignment with strategic goals (Northouse, 2018). Conversely, poor leadership can hinder employee morale, reduce performance, and impede organizational progress.

Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership is particularly impactful in dynamic environments such as those shaped by digital transformation. Transformational leaders inspire followers through a compelling vision, stimulate intellectual growth, and provide individualized support, encouraging employees to exceed expectations and embrace change (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Bass, 2004). This style fosters a culture of continuous learning and innovation, which is essential when organizations are navigating technological disruption and pursuing strategic advancement.

Transactional leadership, by contrast, emphasizes structure, discipline, and performance-based rewards. While it ensures stability and efficiency, it may be less effective in environments requiring rapid adaptation and creativity (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990).

Other styles, such as servant leadership, democratic leadership, and autocratic leadership, also play roles in shaping behaviour and outcomes, but transformational leadership stands out in facilitating digital change and achieving long-term strategic goals (Greenleaf, 1977; Gastil, 1994; Lewin et al., 1939). Therefore, understanding leadership behaviour is essential in aligning digital initiatives with organizational success.

2.1.3 Digital Transformation, Leadership, and Strategic Goals

Digital transformation (DT) has reshaped leadership, demanding adaptability, innovation, and vision. As organizations increasingly adopt technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data analytics, leaders must shift from traditional, stability-focused roles to transformational and adaptive styles (Kraus et al., 2021). Transformational leaders inspire innovation and align teams with a shared vision, making them especially effective in navigating digital change (Schiuma et al., 2024; Müller et al., 2024). Adaptive leadership complements this by helping organizations respond flexibly to technological disruptions (Heifetz et al., 2009; Oyedele et al., 2024).

Strategic goals, such as growth, profitability, innovation, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency, guide organizational success (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Porter, 2023; Christensen, 2013). Leaders play a central role in defining and achieving these goals. While transformational leadership supports long-term objectives and fosters innovation and shared ownership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Bass, 1993), transactional leaders emphasize structure and performance to meet short-term goals (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Servant leadership fosters customer-centricity and employee development (Saleem et al., 2020).

DT acts as a critical enabler of these goals by streamlining operations, enhancing decision-making, and improving customer experiences (Westerman et al., 2014; Vial, 2019; Gartner, 2021). However, challenges such as resistance to change, skill gaps, and organizational inertia must be addressed (Weber et al., 2022; Nguyen Hai et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the synergy between leadership and digital transformation is essential. Effective leaders drive strategic alignment, empower teams, and harness digital tools to ensure long-term competitiveness and organizational success.

2.2 Theoretical Review - Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and later expanded by Bernard Bass in the 1980s. The theory emphasizes how leaders can inspire, motivate, and develop followers to exceed expectations by aligning individual goals with organizational vision. Unlike traditional leadership, which focuses primarily on control and efficiency, transformational leadership emphasizes personal growth, innovation, and cultural change.

The theory is built on four core components: idealized influence, where leaders act as ethical role models; inspirational motivation, through which leaders articulate a compelling vision; intellectual stimulation, which encourages innovation and critical thinking; and individualized consideration, where leaders offer tailored support to followers. These traits foster trust, creativity, and high performance within teams.

Transformational Leadership is especially relevant to the current study, which explores the intersection of leadership and digital transformation. As organizations adopt technologies like AI, cloud computing, and analytics, they face not just technical shifts but also cultural and behavioural change.

Transformational leaders help manage this transition by guiding employees through uncertainty, motivating them with a vision of technological progress, and ensuring alignment with strategic goals.

For instance, leaders who visibly engage with new digital tools model the behaviour they expect, increasing trust and adoption among staff. They also address concerns by linking digital change to personal development opportunities, such as skill acquisition and career growth. This motivational approach is crucial for fostering employee engagement during digital transitions.

In summary, Transformational Leadership Theory offers a robust framework for understanding how leaders can effectively drive digital innovation and align it with organizational strategy. It highlights the vital role of leadership in inspiring adaptive cultures, overcoming resistance, and achieving long-term success in an era of digital disruption.

2.3 Empirical Reviews

Sacavém et al. (2025) investigated leadership's role in managing digital transformation (DT), emphasizing that effective leaders must guide organizations through technological, market, and regulatory changes. Using an integrative review, the study highlights leaders' need to skillfully use digital tools to maintain team cohesion, foster innovation, and cultivate a culture of continuous learning. Emotional intelligence and human-centered management are crucial to prevent negative impacts on staff morale.

Boikanyo (2025) focused on adaptive leadership in digital contexts, highlighting its importance for handling complex and uncertain environments created by technologies like AI and IoT. The study links adaptive leadership with situational and complexity leadership theories, emphasizing flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving. It identifies common challenges such as skill gaps and resistance, offering practical strategies for leadership in digital disruption.

Müller et al. (2024) addressed the specific skills leaders need to drive digital transformation. Using the Competing Values Framework, they identified four leadership archetypes: challenger, bricoleur, organizer, and competitor, each embodying different competencies. They advocate a contingency approach, showing that leadership skills must align with transformation goals and contexts.

Raković et al. (2024) conceptualized digital transformation as an ongoing process requiring proactive leadership combining human and technical skills. Based on a comprehensive literature review, the study provides a digital leadership framework integrating vision, communication, flexibility, and technical competencies to guide successful transformation management.

Sundowo et al. (2024) explored combining transformational and adaptive leadership to enhance organizational resilience amid digital disruption. Their systematic review stresses balancing visionary motivation with adaptability to manage employee resistance and technological change, offering practical guidance for leaders in volatile digital environments.

Groves et al. (2024) examined how digital transformation affects worker dignity, emphasizing leadership's role in protecting and promoting employee well-being during technological change. They propose proactive leadership practices and organizational policies to balance technological progress with human-centered values.

Paul et al. (2024) provided a multidisciplinary analysis of digital transformation phases and their organizational impacts. Highlighting leadership's critical role, the study discusses the challenges of evolving strategies, competition, and customer behavior, calling for strong digital leadership and organizational preparedness.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a correlational research design to examine the relationships between leadership behaviour, organizational strategic goals, and digital transformation. A quantitative approach is utilized to assess the strength, direction, and significance of these relationships through statistical analysis. The study uses a cross-sectional survey to collect data at a single point in time, offering a snapshot of digital transformation's impact on leadership and organizational outcomes.

The target population includes managers, leaders, and employees actively involved in digital transformation projects across diverse industries such as manufacturing, technology, finance, healthcare, and retail. This diversity allows for a comprehensive understanding of how leadership behaviour and digital transformation affect organizations of various sizes and sectors, including multinational firms and SMEs. Participants come from multiple geographic locations, including Nigeria and other countries, ensuring global relevance.

A sample size of approximately 400–500 respondents is targeted, derived from an estimated population of 1,000 eligible individuals, to ensure statistical power and account for non-responses. A stratified random sampling technique is used, dividing respondents into three strata: senior management (CEOs, CTOs), middle management (directors, department heads), and employees. This ensures balanced representation and enables comparison across organizational roles.

Data collection is conducted through a structured, self-administered online survey distributed via Google Forms through email and WhatsApp. The questionnaire measures digital transformation extent, leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire), and organizational strategic goals using Likert-scale items. Ethical standards are maintained through informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Data analysis involves descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis to explore relationships and predictive effects between variables. Validity and reliability are ensured through expert review, pilot testing, Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency, and test-retest reliability assessment.

4.0 Presentation and Analysis of Results

This chapter analyzes data collected through a structured questionnaire to examine the impact of digital transformation on leadership behaviour and organizational strategic goals. Data was analyzed using SPSS with descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

4.1 Demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics of respondents reveal the sample's composition:

- Gender: The majority were male (64.4%) compared to females (35.6%).
- Age: Most respondents were aged between 35-54 years, with 37.4% between 45-54 and 30.6% between 35-44, indicating a mature, experienced workforce.
- Education: The majority held advanced degrees, with 43.3% having a master's degree, 26.2% a bachelor's, and 20.2% a doctorate.
- Industry: Respondents came from various sectors, with 75.1% from other unspecified industries, followed by education (8%), technology (6.2%), healthcare (4.2%), and manufacturing (3.6%).
- Experience: Most respondents (67.4%) had over seven years of work experience, indicating seasoned professionals.
- Position: The majority were middle management (56.4%), with 13.1% in top management and 25.4% in operational roles.

This demographic distribution ensures a broad perspective on how digital transformation affects different leadership roles and organizational levels.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 Analysis of the Respondents' Views on the impact of digital transformation on leadership behaviour within organizations.

Table 1

Question	SD	D	A	SA	TOTAL
The adoption of digital technologies has led to a noticeable shift in leadership styles in my organization		7(2.1%)	171(50.7%)	159(47.2%)	337(100%)
Digital transformation in my organization has made leaders more focused on innovation and creativity		1(0.3%)	139(41.2%)	197(58.5%)	337(100%)
The leadership in my organization encourages employees to embrace technological changes to improve efficiency and performance		3(0.9%)	141(41.8%)	193(57.3%)	337(100%)
Leadership in my organization has become more collaborative due to the adoption of digital tools		9(2.7%)	182(54%)	146(43.3%)	337(100%)
Digital transformation has made leadership in my organization more data-driven in decision-making		10(3%)	167(49.6%)	160(47.5%)	337(100%)

Source: Research survey 2025

The results in Table 4.1 show that a majority of respondents agree that digital transformation has significantly influenced leadership behaviour. Specifically, 50.7% agreed and 47.2% strongly agreed that digital technologies have shifted leadership approaches. Similarly, 58.5% strongly agreed that leaders are more innovation-focused due to digital transformation. Moreover, 49.6% agreed and 47.5% strongly agreed that leadership has become more data-driven in decision-making, illustrating the profound impact digital transformation has on leadership dynamics.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Respondents' Views on the relationship between transformational leadership and the achievement of organizational strategic goals in the digital transformation context.

Table 2

Questions	SD	D	A	SA	TOTAL
Transformational leadership in my organization is crucial for achieving strategic goals in the context of digital transformation		6(1.8%)	183(54.3%)	148(43.9%)	337(100%)
Leaders who inspire and motivate employees play a significant role in driving digital transformation efforts within my organization		4(1.2%)	159(47.2%)	174(51.6%)	337(100%)
Transformational leadership has enhanced employee commitment to achieving strategic goals related to innovation and growth in the digital era		8(2.4%)	190(56.4%)	139(41.2%)	337(100%)

My organization's leadership encourages risk-taking and experimentation, which are critical for achieving success in the digital transformation process	1(0.3%)	60(17.8%)	197(58.5%)	79(23.4%)	337(100%)
Transformational leadership is aligned with the digital transformation goals of improving efficiency, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage		2(0.6%)	182(54%)	153(45.4%)	337(100%)

Source: Research survey 2025

Table 2 reveals strong agreement on the importance of transformational leadership for achieving strategic goals during digital transformation. A combined 98.2% agreed or strongly agreed on its crucial role. Similarly, 56.4% agreed and 41.2% strongly agreed that transformational leadership enhances employee commitment to innovation and growth. The data also shows that 47.2% agreed and 51.6% strongly agreed that inspiring leaders significantly drive digital transformation efforts. These results indicate that transformational leadership substantially influences the achievement of organizational strategic goals in the digital era.

4.3 Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.202	0.284			4.227
LS (Leadership Behaviour)	2.235	0.061	1.002		36.874
DT (Digital Transformation)	0.841	0.095	0.240		8.814
Dependent Variable: Organizational Strategic Goal (OSG)					

The regression analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable (organizational strategic goal) and the explanatory variables (leadership behaviour and digital transformation). A one-unit increase in leadership behaviour is associated with a 2.235 increase (223%) in organizational strategic goal achievement, while a one-unit increase in digital transformation corresponds to a 0.841 increase (84%). The p-values for both predictors are 0.000, indicating significance at the 0.05 level.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

Objective 1: Influence of Digital Transformation on Leadership Behaviour

This study confirms that digital transformation significantly impacts leadership behaviour, with over 98% of respondents agreeing that adopting digital technologies has shifted leadership styles toward greater innovation and creativity. This aligns closely with Sacavém et al. (2025), who emphasize that effective leadership in digital transformation requires guiding organizations through technological and market changes while fostering innovation and continuous learning. Similarly, Boikanyo (2025) highlights the importance of adaptive leadership that is flexible and creative in responding to complex digital environments, a notion supported by our finding that leaders must adapt to manage teams effectively amid evolving technologies.

Moreover, Müller et al. (2024) advocate a contingency approach where leadership competencies must align with the goals and context of digital transformation, supporting our conclusion that leadership styles evolve to meet digital demands. Raković et al. (2024) further reinforce this by proposing that

successful digital leadership integrates both human and technical skills, resonating with our findings on the need for leaders to embrace innovative and technology-driven approaches.

Objective 2: Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Strategic Goals

Our findings reveal a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and the achievement of strategic goals in digital transformation contexts, with over 98% agreement that transformational leaders inspire innovation, employee commitment, and growth. This supports Sundowo et al. (2024), who found that combining transformational and adaptive leadership enhances organizational resilience during digital disruption by motivating employees and managing resistance effectively.

Groves et al. (2024) underscore the importance of leadership that protects employee well-being during technological change, a vital aspect of transformational leadership's human-centered focus found in our study. Additionally, Paul et al. (2024) highlight the critical role of digital leadership in navigating evolving strategies and competition, reinforcing the significant influence of transformational leadership on organizational success in digital eras as identified in this study.

5.0 Conclusion, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that digital transformation significantly influences leadership styles and the achievement of organizational strategic goals. Transformational leadership, characterized by innovation, employee motivation, and alignment with organizational vision, emerges as particularly effective in supporting digital adoption and driving strategic outcomes such as profitability, innovation, and growth. As digital transformation reshapes industries, leadership approaches must evolve accordingly to remain relevant and impactful.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Adopt Digital Tools Effectively:** Organizational leaders should ensure the efficient adoption and use of digital tools and processes to support innovative leadership behaviors.
2. **Promote Transformational Leadership:** Leaders should embrace transformational leadership to inspire staff, promote innovation, and foster a culture of adaptability.
3. **Adapt Leadership Strategies:** Leaders must continuously adapt their leadership styles in response to technological change.
4. **Integrate Digital Technologies Strategically:** Leadership should guide the integration of digital tools to enhance innovation, profitability, and sustainable growth.
5. **Align Digital Initiatives with Goals:** Leaders should align digital transformation efforts with organizational goals to improve competitiveness and adaptability.
6. **Enhance Operational Efficiency:** Integrating digital technologies can improve operational processes and increase the organization's ability to meet strategic objectives.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future research could:

- Examine the effect of digital transformation on leadership styles in other sectors of the Nigerian economy not covered in this study.
- Conduct comparative analyses across different industries to assess variations in the impact of digital transformation on leadership practices.

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