

# Strategic Leadership and Organizational Innovation in the Digital Business Environment

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## ABSTRACT

In today's business environments, the quick development of digital technologies has changed leadership styles, organisational operations, and innovation processes. Organizations are increasingly required to adopt strategic approaches that support adaptability, technological readiness, and innovation capability to remain competitive. In the context of digital business, the current study investigated the connection between organisational innovation and strategic leadership. A structured questionnaire was distributed to managers and employees of digitally active companies as part of a quantitative research design. A total of 80 respondents participated in the study through convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics, the independent sample t-test, the Chi-square test, correlation analysis, and regression analysis using Microsoft Excel were used to analyse the data. The findings indicated that respondents generally expressed favorable perceptions regarding strategic leadership practices, organizational innovation, and digital business readiness. The independent sample t-test revealed significant gender-based differences in perceptions of organizational innovation. Regression and correlation analyses, however, showed that organisational innovation and strategic leadership had weak and statistically insignificant relationships. The results imply that a variety of organisational and environmental factors, in addition to leadership practices, may have an impact on organisational innovation. The study highlights the importance of digital adaptability, innovation-oriented organizational culture, and integrated strategic approaches for sustaining organizational competitiveness in digitally evolving business environments.

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## 1. Introduction

Digital technologies are part and parcel of the modern business world and have an effect on how businesses are managed, the leadership model to be adopted in the business and the business processes to be implemented. Digital transformation is an organization's top priority in today's rapidly evolving digital era, as businesses incorporate the latest technology, such as AI, cloud computing, digital communication systems, and data-driven decision systems. All this has led to greater competition and the need for constant innovation and flexibility of the organisation. Inadequate response to technological advances can result in loss of competitiveness and inefficiency in organizations. For the longer-term sustainability of organizations, being able to navigate the business world on a digital path has become a necessity, something highlighted by Ruel et al. (2021). Similarly, Kovalenko and Kovalenko (2020) said that leadership in the digital era should be more flexible, tech-savvy, and solution-oriented to organizational issues.

Strategic leadership is an important factor that influences the performance of an organization and its innovation potential, particularly in the business world that is undergoing a transformation in the digital age. Strategic leadership is the capacity of an organisation's leader or leaders to develop long-term goals, manage uncertainty, and guide the organisation towards sustainable growth via creativity and sound judgement. It is important for leaders of digitally-inclined organisations to encourage flexible thinking, embrace technology and establish team-based cultures. Davis (2024) states that strategic leadership is one of the essential components in cultivating an organization's culture that is creative and innovative. Similarly, Kurzhals et al. (2020) emphasized the strategic leadership's role in technological innovation, which helps to define the organizational priorities, optimize resource allocation, and foster innovative thinking among employees.

With the growing significance of digital transformation, the concept of leadership has

been extended to digital leadership, with organizational leaders required to lead digital transformation initiatives and promote digital innovation. The study by Malik et al. (2025) suggested that digital leadership can facilitate the organizational transformation process by ensuring alignment between the organizational strategy and technological advancements and an innovation-based approach. Fang (2023) also identified that the organizational innovation performance is positively correlated with the

digital readiness and technological capability of leadership strategies. Moreover, Wang et al (2022) found that the impact of digital leadership and organizational culture on organizational exploratory innovation and strategic adaptability is a mutual influence. The results indicate a tendency to increase the coupling between leadership practices and organizational innovation and digital transformation processes.

In the contemporary business world, organization innovation is one of the key factors for sustainability and organizational success in the long run. The innovation allows organisations to identify ways to optimise their operation, develop new products and services, streamline organisational processes and effectively manage markets. Organizations that are better to innovate are more likely to be able to deal with the technological disruption and sustain competitive edge. Cortes and Herrmann (2021) suggested that strategic leadership is involved in innovation development by creating the organisation's context to support experimentation, learning and strategic manoeuvrability. In the same study, Kılıç (2022) discovered that strategic leadership practices increase the innovative performance positively, including by motivating employees and enabling innovative organizational behaviors.

Another study of previous research has also highlighted the linkage between strategic leadership and organising innovation in digitally active organisations. Ashkevari and Ghasemi (2023) found organizational innovation is a vital tool to improve organizational performance via

strategic leadership in practice. Moreover, Pasaribu et al. (2021) revealed that strategic leadership and strategic innovation are significant factors which influence strategic management, particularly with the presence of information technology skills. In addition, Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024) revealed that organizational culture and strategic leadership are co-determinants of innovation practices in organizations. As cited above, several studies have shown that leadership behavior, innovation capacity and digital transformation are interwoven and interconnected components of an organisation's development.

While there have been several published works that have explored the concept of strategic leadership and innovation, very little empirical work has been conducted to better understand the relationship between strategic leadership and innovation in digitally transforming business contexts. There are many studies that have addressed conceptual descriptions or specific studies of a sector, but fewer studies where quantitative survey-based approaches have been used to examine employee perceptions of leadership and the use of innovation in the workplace. Furthermore, the extent to which the concepts of leadership and innovation are related has not been consistent in previous studies leaving more empirical studies required.

Therefore, this research employs the quantitative approach with questionnaires as the data collection technique to explore the relationship between organisational innovation and strategic leadership in digital business. The aim of the present study is to uncover employees' perceptions of leadership practices, innovation capacity and digital readiness in the context of modern organizations.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To inspect the influence of strategic leadership on organizational innovation within digitally active organizations.
- To analyze employee perceptions regarding strategic leadership, organizational innovation, and the digital business environment.
- To assess how organisational innovation and strategic leadership interact in the context of digital transformation.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1 Research Design*

The research methodology employed was explanatory research, and the research design was quantitative research with a type of cross-sectional survey. The quantitative approach was deemed to be appropriate for analyzing relationships between variables by application of statistical methods.

### *2.2 Target Population and Sample Size*

The target audience consisted of managers and employees of companies that are digitally active. In the study 80 individuals with various departments and organizational status responded.

### *2.3 Sampling Technique*

A convenient sampling was used for the respondents. This is a non-probability sampling method since participants were accessible, available and willing to complete the survey questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used so as to reduce the time and resources needed to collect the data and to also get the participation of the employees who are involved in digital organizational practices and activities related to innovations.

### *2.4 Data Collection Method*

Questionnaire was used in collecting primary data and distributed using Google Forms which is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was created based on the literature studied and published in the area of strategic leadership, innovation in organizations and digital business practices.

### *2.5 Questionnaire Structure*

A questionnaire was divided into four sections. The general information gathered in the first section included gender, age, education and work experience. The second part was dedicated to practices of strategic leadership. The third part analysed organizational innovation and the fourth part analysed the digital business environment in the organization.

### *2.6 Statistical Analysis Techniques*

Data collected was analysed using Microsoft Excel. The data were summarised using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages). The differences, association and relationship are explored with the

independent sample t-test, Chi-square and Pearson correlation analysis while the impact of strategic leadership to organisational innovation is explored using regression analysis.

### 2.7 Ethical Considerations

The participants were briefed about the educational aims of the study and the participation was totally voluntary. The confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants was preserved.

## 3. Results

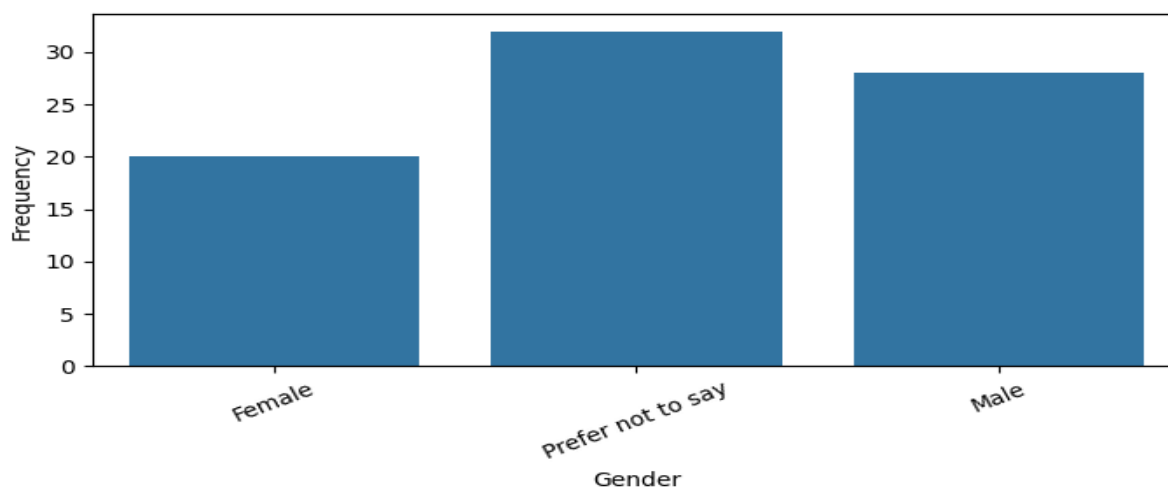
### 3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic analysis was conducted to obtain more information about the background characteristics of the subjects of the study. Gender, age, educational qualification, work experience and job position were analyzed. We found that the respondents had a wide range of experiences in their professional and academic careers that led them to have extensive knowledge about strategic leadership and organizational innovation in digitally active organizations. Table 1 shows that the respondents are distributed among the various demographic variables.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| Demographic Variable      | Category           | n (%)      |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Gender                    | Male               | 28 (35.0)  |
|                           | Female             | 20 (25.0)  |
|                           | Prefer not to say  | 32 (40.0)  |
| Age Group                 | 20–30 years        | 17 (21.25) |
|                           | 31–40 years        | 20 (25.00) |
|                           | 41–50 years        | 21 (26.25) |
|                           | Above 50 years     | 22 (27.50) |
| Educational Qualification | Diploma            | 13 (16.25) |
|                           | Bachelor's Degree  | 29 (36.25) |
|                           | Master's Degree    | 17 (21.25) |
|                           | Doctorate          | 21 (26.25) |
| Work Experience           | Less than 2 years  | 11 (13.75) |
|                           | 2–5 years          | 19 (23.75) |
|                           | 6–10 years         | 22 (27.50) |
|                           | More than 10 years | 28 (35.00) |
| Job Position              | Employee           | 20 (25.0)  |
|                           | Supervisor         | 16 (20.0)  |
|                           | Manager            | 20 (25.0)  |
|                           | Senior Management  | 24 (30.0)  |

Table 1 shows that fairly equal numbers of respondents were in each of a number of demographic categories. This information is graphically presented by gender in figure 1.



**Figure 1. Dispersal of Respondents by Gender**

As can be seen from the outcomes presented in figure 1, the respondents were evenly distributed among the three categories: male, female and “prefer not to say”.

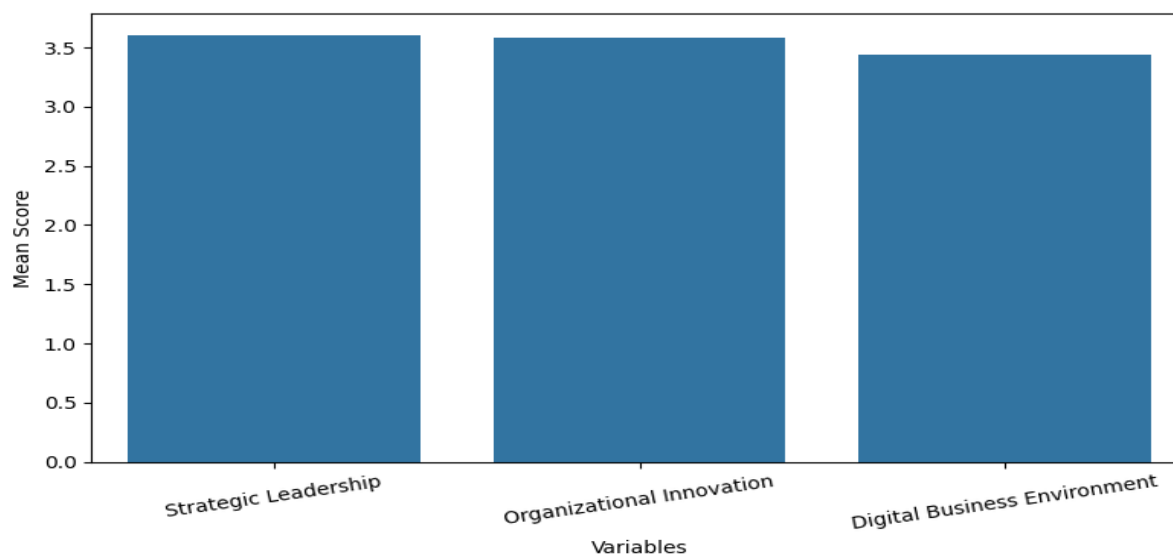
### 3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was done to understand the overall perceptions of respondents about strategic leadership, organizational innovation and digital business environment. An overview of the central tendency and variation of the main research variables was given by the analysis. These descriptive statistical results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables**

| Variable                     | Mean  | SD    | Min.  | Max.  |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Strategic Leadership         | 3.605 | 0.559 | 2.200 | 4.800 |
| Organizational Innovation    | 3.588 | 0.493 | 2.200 | 4.600 |
| Digital Business Environment | 3.438 | 0.467 | 2.400 | 4.600 |

As shown in Table 2, the overall satisfaction of respondents was positive with respect to strategic leadership practices, organizational innovation, and readiness for digital business in their organizations. Figure 2 shows the mean values of the results.



**Figure 2. Major Study Variable Mean Scores**

As can be observed in Figure 2, the two strategic variables (Strategic Leadership and Organizational

Innovation) had comparable average scores, and the Digital Business Environment variable had a slightly lower score.

### 3.3 Gender-Based Differences in Organizational Innovation

To ascertain whether respondents' perceptions of organisational innovation differed between males and females, an independent sample t-test was employed. Table 3 displays the independent sample t-test results.

**Table 3. t-Test Results**

| Test                      | Variables Compared                   | t-value | p-value | Interpretation         |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|------------------------|
| Independent Sample t-Test | Gender and Organizational Innovation | -2.526  | 0.015   | Significant Difference |

Table 3 demonstrates that perceptions of organisational innovation differed statistically significantly between the sexes. The results show gender differences in perception of innovation practices and adaptability of the organizations in a digitally active context.

### 3.4 Association Between Gender and Job Position

A chi-square cross tabulation was carried out to find out if there was any link between the respondents' gender and job position. Table 4 displays the cross-tabulation results. Table 4 displays the cross-tabulation results.

**Table 4. Cross-Tabulation Between Gender and Job Position**

| Gender            | Employee | Manager | Senior Management | Supervisor |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------------------|------------|
| Female            | 7        | 3       | 6                 | 4          |
| Male              | 4        | 9       | 9                 | 6          |
| Prefer not to say | 9        | 8       | 9                 | 6          |

The Chi-square test results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Chi-Square Test Results**

| Statistical Measure  | Result                                    |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Analytical Method    | Pearson Chi-Square                        |
| Variables Examined   | Gender × Job Position                     |
| Chi-Square Statistic | 3.716                                     |
| Degrees of Freedom   | 6                                         |
| Significance Level   | 0.715                                     |
| Statistical Outcome  | Association Not Statistically Significant |

Table 5 indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between job position and gender. The findings show that there was no gender-based grouping of the jobs in the organisations under study.

### 3.5 Relationship Among Major Study Variables

The relationship between organisational innovation, strategic leadership, and the digital business environment was examined using Pearson correlation analysis. The correlation matrix is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Correlation Matrix**

| Variables            | Strategic Leadership | Organizational Innovation | Digital Business Environment |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Strategic Leadership | 1.000                | -0.002                    | -0.080                       |

|                              |        |        |        |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Organizational Innovation    | -0.002 | 1.000  | -0.062 |
| Digital Business Environment | -0.080 | -0.062 | 1.000  |

The correlation between the main study variables was generally low as illustrated in Table 6. The visualisation of the correlation coefficients between SL, OI and DBE is displayed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Correlation Matrix of Major Study Variables**

### 3.6 Impact of Strategic Leadership on Organizational Innovation

Regression analysis was used to examine how strategic leadership affected organisational innovation. Table 7 displays the summary of the regression model.

**Table 7. Regression Model Summary**

| R-Squared | Adjusted R-Squared | F-statistic | Model p-value |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 0.000     | -0.013             | 0.000       | 0.989         |

Table 8 displays the regression coefficients.

**Table 8. Regression Coefficients**

| Variable             | Coefficient | p-value |
|----------------------|-------------|---------|
| Constant             | 3.593       | 0.000   |
| Strategic Leadership | -0.001      | 0.989   |

As shown in the tables 7 and 8, the regression model was not statistically significant. The findings demonstrate that the strategic leadership had no discernible impact on the sample organisations' ability to predict innovation. Additionally, the very low coefficient value shows that there is no meaningful predictive relationship between the two variables in this study.

## 4. Discussion

In the context of digital business, the current study examined the connection between

organisational innovation and strategic leadership. The findings demonstrate that respondents'

perceptions of digital business readiness, organisational innovation, and strategic leadership practices in their own organisations are favourable. The descriptive analysis indicates that there is an increasing awareness of organizations that the role of leadership and innovation are crucial in order to adjust to the changing technological environment. The results also highlight an attempt by organizations in a digital environment to enhance their innovation capacity through the support of their leaders and the implementation of digital transformation programs.

The correlation and regression analyses showed weak connections between strategic leadership and organisational innovation, despite the positive descriptive responses. Strategic leadership was not statistically significant for predicting organisational innovation in the sampled organisations specifically, according to the regression analysis. These results indicate that while leadership practice can have an impact on the organization's functioning, other variables at the organizational, technological or environmental level can be more powerful in shaping the organization's innovation capabilities. According to Fuertes et al., (2020), the role of strategic management outcomes is not only dependent on leadership aspects but also dependent on other organizational variables that are interrelated and interconnected. In a similar vein, Tushman and Anderson (2018) asserted that technological disruption and environmental uncertainty often disrupt the organizational innovation process from the normal management level.

The answers also revealed that the digital business environment is crucial for adaptability of the organization and operational readiness. Overall, the respondents indicated that there was digital infrastructure and technological adaptation in their organizations. The results show, however, that weak linkage between the digital business environment and organizational innovation indicates that digital readiness does not necessarily lead to innovation outcomes. As explained by Ismail et al. (2017), a digital transformation is not only a technological investment but also an organizational alignment, strategic integration and cultural adaptation. Furthermore, The importance of collaborative processes, organisational agility, and knowledge sharing in innovation in digital

business environments was highlighted by Scuotto et al. (2017).

The results also show that leadership roles in regards to innovation culture might vary from one organization to another, and from the perceptions of employees. Although respondents acknowledged that leadership plays a role in digital transformation efforts, the statistical results showed a low predictive power with regard to the innovation outcomes. Yet, Alblooshi et al., (2021) noted that different leadership styles have different effects on organizational innovation depending on the structure of an organization, employee practices, and strategic direction. Similarly, de Araujo et al. (2021) noted that digital leadership demands up-to-date knowledge and readiness to adapt to technological advancements and employee expectations to help drive innovation and change within the organization.

The findings of the current study are contrary to several earlier studies which found positive strong relationships between strategic leadership and organizational innovation. For example, Ashkevari and Ghasemi (2023) found that the strategic leadership had a positive relationship with performance of the organization in the dimension of innovation-related practices. However, the present study revealed that there is a non-significant relationship between strategic leadership and organizational innovation. This difference may relate to the organisations digital maturity and characteristics of the respondents in the study or organisational settings.

Likewise, Malik et al (2025) emphasized that digital leadership positively contributes to business model innovation and organizational transformation in digitally transforming organizations. The present results, however, indicate that leadership is not enough to account for innovation performance in organizations. There is no significant regression outcomes, which suggests that innovation capability may be influenced by other organizational resources, technological infrastructure, employees' capabilities and market conditions.

The findings also run counter to Wang et al. (2022), who found a positive correlation between exploratory innovation and organisational culture and digital leadership. The relationships between the major variables were weak in the present

study, suggesting that organizational culture and environmental factors could mediate the relationship between leadership and innovation capability. Song et al. (2023) also proposed that technological, organizational and environmental variables are not independent, but rather their combination affects the outcomes of digital innovation.

Concurrently, some of the study's findings are somewhat consistent with the literature that emphasises the intricacy of innovation and digital transformation processes. Mihardjo et al. (2019) stated that digital leadership can play a role in developing the organizational capability only if it is accompanied by market orientation and strategic alliances. Additionally, Bogers et al. (2019) pointed out that embedded in the process of open innovation and dynamic organizational capabilities is the need for collaborative systems and external knowledge integration, which go beyond the influence of traditional leadership.

The study's findings have a number of ramifications for digital business environments. First, there is a need for organizations to continue to invest in leadership development to further increase their digital competency, strategic decision making and innovation management skills. Good leadership is still essential to navigate an organisation through technological and operational change. Secondly, the innovation-oriented organizational culture is to stimulate and cultivate employees' creativity, cooperation, continuous learning and development ability. As digital business ecosystems foster innovation and value creation, Aksoy (2023) pointed out that it requires collaborating and technology-supported working environments. Likewise, Xie et al. (2023) found that organizational readiness has a significant impact on digital innovation and adaptation of business models.

Thirdly, the organizations should embrace the integrated digital transformation approach, which involves both technological investments and the development of employees and organizational adaptability. Xiao and Su (2022) have observed that technological innovation and organizational innovation together help to achieve long-term sustainability and the effectiveness of the organization. Hence, organizations should not solely depend on leadership initiatives, but also encourage wider organization strategies which

foster innovation and digital readiness.

The current study has a number of limitations that should be mentioned. Due to the study's small sample size, the findings may not be as applicable in other organisational contexts. Second, the study has a cross-sectional research design, which means that it cannot reveal the changes in leadership practices and innovation skills. The third is that a limited number of organisations were included in the study in digitally active contexts, which might not be representative of different industrial sectors, or of industrial organisations. This work expands on the increasing volume of research on strategic leadership, organizational innovation and digital business environments by offering empirical research on employee perceptions and business adaptation in the digital landscape.

## 5. Conclusion

The quantitative survey method perspective was used to analyze the influence of strategic leadership on innovation in an organization in terms of a digital business. The results indicated that participants' overall attitudes were positive towards strategic, innovative practices in their organizations and towards readiness for digital business in their organizations. The study also highlighted the importance of leadership capabilities and technological agility in the fast-changing business landscape that is undergoing digital transformation. The major variables of the study, however, were not highly correlated, as indicated by the statistical analysis. Based on the regression analysis, the results show that strategic leadership was not significant in predicting organizational innovation in the sampled organizations. Similarly, a moderately low linkage was found between strategic leadership and organizational innovation and the digital business climate. This research indicates that there are factors other than leadership practices that may influence organizational innovation as well. This research shows that besides leadership factors, there are several organizational, technological and environmental factors that can impact organizational innovation. Despite the lack of correlation between the two variables, strategic leadership plays an important role in helping organizations to be agile and develop digital transformation projects. The study highlights the importance of an innovative culture, of

strengthening Digital competences and of a general approach to technological innovation. Further studies in the future will need to involve more participants and organizational settings to

provide more insight into the complex relationship between leadership and innovation in the digital transformation of business contexts..

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