

Role of E-leadership on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

Evolution in technology is changing the functionality of organizations as companies are digitally transforming their services with the intent of improving delivery, efficiency and revenue. This transformation requires an E-leader who can lead effectively through electronic and digital medium.

The influence of E-leaders on employee engagement is an emerging phenomenon. Based on the relationship between technology advancement and leadership practices, the study examines the independent variables of E-leadership and its effect on employee engagement. The result from the study shows digital transformation, organizational commitment, new methods of communication and organizational agility influence E-leadership in the form of emerging technologies, organizational learning and knowledge management, communicating through digital medium, agile technological tools and human resource strategies.

The findings from the study can be used by the management of organizations while setting their hiring and training agenda as well as guidelines for E-leadership practices.

The research provides theoretical and practical implications for organizations to enhance employee engagement initiatives by encouraging the role of E-leaders and understanding their importance while planning their digital transformation journey.

Future research is recommended by exploring additional factors and expanding the research to case study methodology or use of primary data through survey or interview approach.

Keywords: E-Leadership, Digitalization Transformation, Organizational Commitment, New Methods of Communication, Organizational Agility, Employee Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing business scenario, characterized by smart working environment further enhanced by the COVID-19 pandemic, has made the role of E-leaders

dominant (Grobman & Joia-luiz, 2022). E-leadership, referred as leadership in electronic and virtual environment, plays an integral role in facilitating a work environment that motivates employees to achieve desired goals, where work is facilitated through digital platforms (Avolio et al., 2000). Thus, it is essential to investigate how the role of E-leaders is perceived and implemented by organizations.

In the digital age, E-leadership is becoming increasingly important as it facilitates leaders to effectively lead and motivate employees in technology dependent organizations (Mustajab et al., 2020). E-leadership, unlike traditional leadership requires unique capabilities such as competence to communicate effectively by digital channels and create unity among employees virtually spread across locations. Effective E-leaders help organizations gain competitive advantage by fostering knowledge-sharing and collaboration among employees. By use of technology, E-leaders inculcate a flexible and dynamic work environment promoting innovation. However, to achieve these benefits, E-leadership should be effectively implemented in organizations to adapt to changes occurring within the environment. The capability to benefit from adaptability and flexibility is a key trait of an E-leader in order to deal with ambiguity while managing organizations in a volatile environment (Shah and Patki, 2020). However, there is lack of literature on clear understanding of the role of E-leaders and their effect on employee engagement. This research gap will be achieved by the study through this paper. Factors like digital transformation, organizational commitment, new methods of communication and organizational agility have a significant impact in influencing the role of E-leaders.

This research sought to address the need to understand the role of E-leaders on employee engagement. As organizations adapt to smart mode of working, the significance of the role of E-leaders in managing teams needs to be addressed. The research aimed to bridge the gap of our understanding of the role of E-leaders on employee engagement.

The paper is a study of structured literature review on the topic of E-Leadership in addressing research problems derived from research gaps towards promoting employee engagement within organizations. The study aimed to provide valuable insights for both academia and practice, guiding them to develop the effectiveness of employees and adapt to the changes emerging in the digital age.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

There is prevailing literature that examines the role of E-leadership on employee engagement. The study is organized with reference to variables outlined in the research. The dependent variable is E-leadership and the various independent variables are:

Digital Transformation

- a. Organizational Commitment
- b. New Methods of Communication
- c. Organization Agility

The section below illustrates the review of literature on the research topic. The value addition of the research paper helps to provide greater comprehension of varied aspects of the role of E-leadership.

Digital Transformation

Digital Transformation is a change promoted by digital technologies and business models influencing organization performance (Wade et al., 2019). It brings about an improvement in organizations by inculcating significant changes through computing, information and connectivity of technologies (Vial, 2019).

Digital Transformation has taken over business landscape and leaders recognize its power and understand that action is needed to seize opportunities from the changes brought about by digital age (Hermeling et al., 2018). Digital technologies like mobile, analytics, cloud and Internet of Things [IoT] have been presenting both opportunities as well as existential threats to old and established companies (Shah and Patki, 2020). Leaders of organizations have come to recognize that their leadership positions can be retained by leveraging their existing strengths and by building on new capabilities offered by digital technologies (Sebastian et al., 2017).

Digital transformation has led to influencing the work environment and decrease in employees undergoing manual tasks (Szabó-Szentgróti et al. 2021), while it is also increasing the need for digitally trained leaders (Kozanoglu and Abedin, 2020). Thus, role of leadership is becoming crucial for digital transformation.

A research area that has gained popularity among scholars is leadership and digitalization. Terms like 'electronic leadership' or "digital leadership" are used to define new challenges to leaders from digital transformation of organizations (de Araujo et al., 2021).

Organizational Commitment

Commitment is an expectation of belonging to an organization to maximize the skills possessed, have confidence and work towards an organizational goal (Roy, 2018). Noe (2017) stated commitment as a benchmark for employees to distinguish the organization they are employed and willing to give their best to the maximum of their abilities. Thus,

organizational commitment is an attitude in employees to give their best (faithfulness and totality) for the organization.

Organization commitment is an employees bond with the organization (Tomazzoni, Costa, Antonello & Rodrigues, 2020). Scholars (Meyer and Allen, 1991) define commitment as involvement and identification with the team and it is composed of a three-component model i.e. Firstly, affective commitment represented by individuals desire to remain in the organization due to feeling of attachment; Secondly, instrumental commitment portrayed by the assessment of cost of staying or leaving the organization, in which the employee perceives specific investment in the organization and thus has no alternative to change; Finally, normative commitment characterized as binding by obligation, in which an employee morally feels obligated to remain in the organization.

Studies state the significance of the role of leaders' in developing organizational commitment (Berkovich & Hassam, 2023). Leaders help teams form a common identity and increase individuals' commitment to team goals, which retain employees and keep them satisfied (Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2009). In addition, scholars have suggested that organizational commitment will positively influence the functioning of teams and, more specifically, its performance (Joshi, Lazarova & Liao, 2009).

Previous studies suggest commitment led by E-leaders positively affect the performance of virtual teams (Eseryel, Crowston & Heckman, 2020). Organizational commitment is essential for virtual teams to overcome physical distance and achieve organizational goals (Rosen & Mathieu, 2009).

Studies have found E-leadership has a positive relationship with organizational commitment in various organizational settings (Asif et al., 2014). When E-leaders provide clear, well defined and measurable goals to virtual team members, the level of interpersonal trust and organizational commitment amongst team members increased (Politis, 2014).

New Methods of Communication

Communication is transfer of information and is claimed to be fundamental for employees to collaborate and achieve organizational objectives (Berry, 2011). Use of technology for communication and dissemination of information and knowledge has led to a change in work environment and necessity to lead teams through electronic medium (Darics, 2020). Technologies promote virtual work measures like telework, teleconference and video-conference (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003) to foster communication effectively across time and space.

Web-based communication across globally dispersed employees, has led to the concept of virtual teams (Torre & Sarti, 2020). Forming virtual teams has overcome

geographical challenge and helped to override cost of office space, travel and time (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003). Virtual teams has led to unifying employees across an organization, integrating teams which have been employed due to mergers or acquisitions and also provide an increase in work opportunities at undesirable locations thereby facilitating hiring of resources who have the desired skillset but unable to relocate (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003).

Research states that it has become imperative to investigate how employees effectively achieve planned goals within specified timelines relying on communication mediated through technology. It is recommended that to overcome continuous changes and to be effective, organizations need defined leadership strategies (Kelly et al., 2018). Thus, it is important to investigate the role of E-leadership in virtual environments. These leaders primarily use electronic communication to lead teams across locations and time zones (Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003). Subsequently, role of E-leadership refers to leaders who communicate, collect and disseminate information by use of information technology (Avolio & Kahai, 2003).

Literature suggests that there is limited research on how technology and new methods of communication impact leadership (Purvanova & Bono, 2009) and thereby, influence the success of virtual teams and employee engagement.

Organizational Agility

Agility is ability to react quickly to evolving needs and external factors without sacrificing the quality of a product or service (Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018). Change in environment requires firms to adjust their structure according to new processes and resources (Ferraris et al., 2022).

Menon and Suresh (2021) state eight determinants of organizational agility i.e. environment sensing capability, organization structure, adoption of ICT, human resource practices, organization learning, leadership, flexibility and commitment of stakeholders. Organizations can increase their agility by data analytics to effectively assess employee competencies and organizational goals (Ghasemaghaei et al., 2017). On the other hand, to improve agility, organizations should focus on technical capabilities (Nguyen et al., 2020; Rane et al., 2020).

Organizational agility includes functionality and competency. It requires certain skills to identify if an organization is agile. Nwanzu & Babalola (2019) state four fundamental skills of organizational agility namely Responsiveness, Flexibility, Speed and Competence which are detailed below:

- i. Responsiveness: An initial capability of organizational agility (Mohammadi et al., 2015) is responsiveness. Technological and environmental changes drive consumer preferences and needs. Organizations must be flexible and adaptive to react to changes. This can be inculcated by having a vast product portfolio and being vigilant to challenges by keeping a watch on marketing function (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019). It implies encouraging the capability of understanding changes in the market and reacting proactively. Companies will thereby be able to achieve a competitive advantage.
- ii. Flexibility: The term flexibility refers to responsiveness to environmental changes with best possible solution and react proactively to unpredictable changes (Kundi & Sharma, 2015). It may be noted that flexibility provides organizations a pathway for adjusting their framework and capital to respond to changes. This is promoted by increasing their market share or developing new goods and technologies. In fact, organizations should be adaptable by changing their internal resources (employees, infrastructure etc.) to meet customer needs. This can be encouraged by flexibility and openness to alternate resources, innovative opinions and ways of solving problems.
- iii. Speed: There is a strong relationship between responsiveness and speed (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019). Researchers state that organizations should be responsive to changes by promptly enforcing decisions (Jain et al., 2008). This refers to the ability to effectively carry out activities to proactively respond to changes in the business environment (Shahaei, 2008). Speed is referred as the time taken in decision-making process. It has a critical role in developing new ideas and enhancing knowledge for change towards innovation capabilities. Speed is defined as an organization's ability to effectively and quickly offer a product or service to customers.
- iv. Competence: The aspect of competence is described as the capability to use the three organizational agility abilities like responsiveness, flexibility and speed. The capacity of an organization to achieve a milestone depends on the ability to use its capabilities. Competency requires the capacity to utilize current or future skills in order to adapt to environmental changes (Ahammad et al., 2020) or the capacity to meet business objectives efficiently and successfully (Wanasida et al., 2020).

Leaders of organizations help to enhance commitment towards organization agility (Raeisi & Amirnejad, 2017). Studies define role of E-leader as critical for managing institutional transformations. Literature identifies E-leader as transformational leaders who help to shape the attitudes, emotions, and values of their followers (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Organizational agility is increased by these leaders by encouraging employees to think beyond immediate requirements and perform effectively in volatile environments. E-leaders prepare themselves and their teams to react effectively when faced with challenges and come up with potential probabilities to work in a digital environment (Veisheh & Eghbali, 2014).

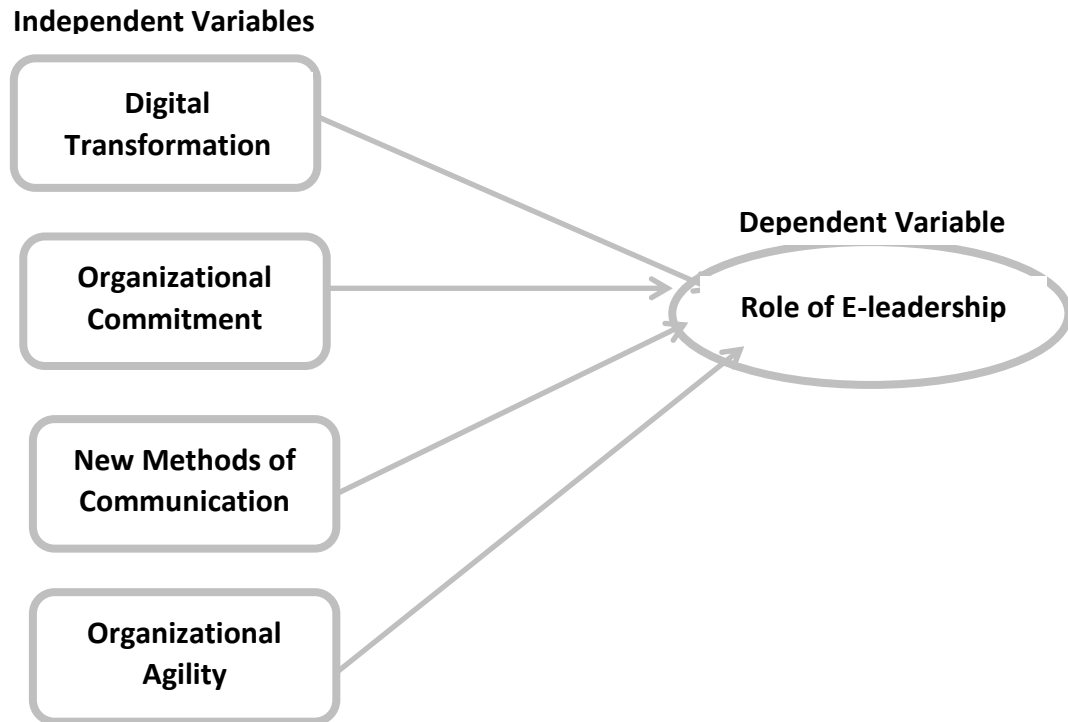
Studies indicate that organizations can be agile by employing leaders with technical capability to lead in the digital age (Rane et al., 2020). As a result, organizations will adapt to changes by adhering to structural adjustments. Thus, role of E-leaders can be expected to influence agility (Ahammad et al., 2020). To improve agility organizations should be adjustable to encourage the role of E-leaders to influence employee engagement. However, the research literature provides limited explanation or measure of level of interdependence between these factors (Wanasida et al., 2020).

The current study found that E-leadership enhances organizational agility (Wanasida et al., 2020). In addition, E-leaders contribute to innovation (Pirayesh & Pourrezay, 2019) and employee engagement (Veisheh & Eghbali, 2014). This capability may help organizations in enhancing their learning orientation, thus increasing competitiveness, which leads to organizational agility (Ojha et al., 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is based on existing core variables which were identified through systematic analysis of literature review. A simple direct relationship between the four core variables like digitalization transformation, organizational commitment, new methods of communication, organizational agility and their influence on the role of E-leadership has been positioned in the research model.

The information for research has been gathered from secondary source of data which was collected from databases like 'ProQuest', 'EBSCO' and 'DOAJ' and referring to the time frame of 2017-2024. This helped to develop the research framework as depicted in Picture 1. The impact of the role of E-leadership is the dependent variable. The scope of the research is limited to understanding the impact of the role of E-leaders on employee engagement. The research aims to examine emerging role of E-leadership in organizations.



Picture 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

The discussion, analysis and results from the various independent variables playing a significant impact on the role of E-Leadership are outlined below:

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is the use of digital technologies in all functionalities of an organization (Cortellaza et al., 2019). To lead transformation successfully in the digital era, leaders must transition from traditional management approach to innovation fostering environment along-with data-driven decision-making and employee engagement.

In an era of technological advancement, digital transformation has become essential for organization competitiveness and sustainability (Hendrik, 2017). As organizations embrace new technologies to enhance their efficiency, the role of leadership has undergone an evolution (Gruia et al., 2020).

Leaders need to leverage data-driven insights for strategic decisions, while focusing on promoting a culture of innovation that encourages employees to explore new possibilities (Gartner, 2016). Flexibility and adaptability are crucial aspects as technological

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advancements can disrupt markets as well as create new opportunities (Yli-Viitala et al., 2020).

Effective technology driven leaders ensure organization's digital assets are well utilized in an interconnected world. By embracing curiosity and a commitment for continuous learning, leaders can drive growth, enhance customer experience, and be competitive in an ever-evolving digital environment (Jabkubik & Berzhny, 2017).

The result from the studies reviewed on digitalization transformation proposed the following leadership traits to be adopted by E-leaders in the digital age:

- Cultivate visionary thinking to align with organization's long-term goals.
- Embrace agility and adaptability to new technologies.
- Possess knowledge of emerging technologies i.e. digital literacy for effective collaboration.
- Foster a culture of innovation where creative thinking is encouraged.
- Leverage data analytics for informed decisions.
- Ensure collaboration for seamless integration of technology across the organization.

Outcome: Leaders play a vital role in digital transformation of organizations where E-leadership is the driving force behind a successful transformation. E-leaders inspire the organization with a clear vision. They enhance a culture of change and adaptability along with promoting innovation. By investing in skill development, encouraging collaboration and embracing data-driven decision-making, E-leaders empower employees to embrace the digital journey and initiate meaningful transformation.

As organizations face the pace of digital change, the role of E-leaders is essential for successful transformation that ensures sustained growth and employee engagement in the digital age (Van Outvorst et al., 2017).

Proposition 1: Digital transformation positively influences the role of E-leaders by adoption of emerging technologies that help to embrace change as an opportunity.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the level of attachment an employee has towards the organization. It is an important aspect of employee engagement that plays a crucial impact on organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance and retention which is driven by effective leadership.

E-leadership plays a significant role in promoting organisational commitment. E-leaders help to drive organisation's vision, and make employees feel encouraged and motivated (Eberl & Drews, 2021).

The result from the studies reviewed on organizational commitment proposed E-leaders can utilize the following digital capabilities to connect with employees:

- Use of digital tools for effective communication, helps to strengthen affective commitment by inculcating trust and employee engagement. It helps to empower employees and provide opportunities to leverage technology for effective work. (Singh & Hess, 2017).
- Acknowledging the importance of digital transformation can increase employees' intent to stay (Lee et al., 2021) in a purpose driven organization and thus influence normative commitment.
- Recognizing and acknowledging accomplishments by rewarding employees with the perspective of digital transformation e.g. success of projects or initiatives can enhance continuance commitment.

Outcome: Organizations by embracing and fostering a culture encouraging digital solutions and opportunities can help E-leaders develop digital capabilities within employees.

By investing in training E-leaders, essential characteristics like transparency and employee awareness of changes in the organization can be covered which will facilitate organizational commitment. Thus, E-leader can effectively demonstrate the intent to positively influence employees' desire to stay (Schrage et al., 2021). Subsequently, E-leader by addressing and mitigating employees' prospective fears which arise by the thought of being replaced by technologies can enhance organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002) and employee engagement.

Organizations can create structures to enhance organizational commitment where digital skills are encouraged by emphasizing the importance of E-leaders and a continuous learning environment (Mueller & Renken, 2017).

Feedback mechanism and recognition should be made readily available to employees through digital portal to enhance employees' loyalty towards the firm (Osmundsen, 2020). Such mechanism portals help employees to virtually witness their own achievements. Organizations should encourage employees to take ownership through individual learning paths like buddy or mentorship programs (Eberl & Drews, 2021). This will help companies successfully build a sustainable workforce dedicated to the organization.

Proposition 2: Organizational commitment has a significant relationship with E-leaders who effectively motivate and engage employees promoting their well-being and a culture of continuous learning.

New Methods of Communication

Communication helps to connect employees within the organization. It is interchange of information and ideas to bring together diversely spread employees and align them with organizational goals. Effective communication is built on trust. With trustworthy leaders, employees are open, receptive and collaborative (Bednar & Welch, 2017). Trust is thereby built through reliable, transparent, and direct communication. Trustworthy leaders promote an environment where employees can freely express their opinions and take risks (Iannotta et al., 2020).

In a remote work environment, effective communication is a vital aspect to be prioritized by leaders among team members. Thus, e-communication is essential using tools like email and video conferencing for communication and overall productivity (Roman et al., 2019). Studies by Cortellazzo et al. (2019) indicate effective communication by E-leaders using suitable digital tools should be implemented. This encourages employees to present ideas freely and thereby contribute to the decision-making process. Communication using technology makes information transparent and easily shareable, thus improving employees' independence and engagement (Schwarz Müller et al., 2018).

The result from the studies reviewed on communication proposed E-leaders can utilize the following channels and tools to connect with employees:

- E-communication: Use of video conferences in order to build trust and rapport with team members.
- Email and Messaging: For transparent, brief and written communication.
- Collaboration Platforms: Use of tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or project management software for collaboration and information sharing. Collaborative tools such as instant messaging or video conferencing help E-leaders communicate with their teams irrespective of location or time zone.
- Feedback Surveys: Regular surveys for insights of team satisfaction and areas of improvement.
- Social Media: Use of platforms like LinkedIn or Twitter to share market/ industry news, insights and organizational updates.

Outcome: Communication is the base for trust and collaboration within teams. When E-leaders focus on open and transparent communication, it fosters a collaborative work

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environment. In an era of rapid change and remote work induced by technology, E-leaders build effective communication by use of new methods and channels of communication. Leaders who leverage this competence can empower their teams to achieve success and thereby overcome challenges of the digital age with unity.

This will drive an effective and flexible work environment, providing employees a sense of belongingness to the organization and thus improve productivity and employee engagement.

Proposition 3: New methods of communication have a significant influence on the role of E-Leaders through communication channels and tools leading to seamless working among employees spread across locations.

Organizational Agility

Globalization and technology advancement require new age leaders competent to drive organizations towards their goals. These leaders promote new ideas, empower and encourage employees and take advantage of sustainability. They are dynamic and willing to respond in a volatile and challenging environment. These leaders take accountability and are a part of organizational agility. Such leaders are referred to as E-leaders, who encompass many forms of management and change. E-leaders have strategic decision and innovative capability to lead their firms through rapidly changing business scenario. This is closely related to organizational agility.

Organizational agility can help strengthen the positive effects of technological capability while considering the aspect of innovation within firms (Zhou & Wu, 2010). In a dynamic environment, companies need E-leaders to lead and encourage employees towards innovation. Thus, one of the major factors in achieving organizational agility is E-leadership.

The result from the studies reviewed on organizational agility proposed E-leaders in assessing the work performance of employees by assessing the following:

- Evaluate technology ability and firm performance.
- Use Human Resource digital tools & strategies focusing on people, performance and information for better practices.

Outcome: Organizations must adapt and upgrade their management system to maintain productivity and innovation capacities which can be achieved by organizational agility. Thus, understanding the relation between organizational agility and creativity is becoming relevant. Knowledge management is also an important factor in both agility and leadership. Thus, E-leaders can improve organizational agility through motivation, encouragement and

performance. E-leaders need to assess innovative competencies to develop business strategies. It is important for leaders to evaluate creative capabilities and decide appropriate skills needed to effectively implement business strategies within the organization.

E-leaders improve organizational agility by maintaining relationships with employees and encourage them to take measured risks when encountered with either challenges or opportunities (Veisesh & Eghbali, 2014). Along-with enhancing organizational agility, this helps organizations to operate in the digital age (Wanasida et al., 2020) and contribute towards employee engagement.

Proposition 4: Organizational agility positively influences E-leadership by maintaining employee productivity and innovation capacities.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

E-leaders help to enhance employee engagement, which has an implication for organization's well-being and sustainability (Sunarsi et al., 2020). While earlier studies have primarily contributed towards traditional leadership styles such as transformational, servant and transactional leadership and their impact on employee outcome (Maheshwari, 2021); however the topic of E-leadership has relatively attained less attention (Mutha and Srivastava, 2021). This knowledge gap offers an opportunity for theoretical development in the area of leadership studies. By conducting the structured literature review on the topic of E-leadership and its impact on employee engagement, this study added to the research area of the emerging role of leaders in the evolving digital age. The study explores E-leadership by investigating the factors influencing the role of E-leaders and effect on employee engagement. The theoretical implications of the study present widening the understanding of leadership theories to combine the emerging role of E-leaders.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings from the study provide practical implications for leaders, managers and organizations. As technology advancement present constant challenges, the role of leaders should be adaptive to environmental, strategic and work-driven changes. Successful organizations are those who have leaders capable of effectively navigating through complex scenarios and responding to changes (Samsoondar, 2021).

The research implications of the study bring about the importance of the changing role of leaders, who constantly interact with technology.

Leaders should focus on the concept of E-leadership

- An understanding of E-leadership should be developed, wherein leaders encourage digital communication, and E-leadership thinking within the organization.
- Use of emerging information technology for strengthening interaction with employees should be encouraged by leaders.
- For employee engagement, the use of digital management platform should be launched for best possible allocation of resources. This will help deploy promptly and effectively the need for resources by the platform.

Leaders should focus on psychological aspect of employees and their effect on work attitude and behavior

- Leaders in their leadership practices should prioritise on the psychological aspects of their workforce. Employee's attitude and behaviour at the workplace is significantly influenced by the psychological and emotional commitment received from their leaders. Thus, leaders should use digital channels for ensuring open lines of communication with their employees.
- Use of electronic platforms help address employee needs which will ensure employees that their superiors as well as the organization are concerned about their well-being. Thus, enhancing employee perception of support and recognition received from the organization.
- A pleasant and seamless work environment for effective communication should be built through digital medium to enhance employee engagement and make employees willing to work hard, stay vigilant and focused.

Leaders should focus on team orientation and integration of virtual employees

- Virtual team orientation and integration is a critical parameter for the effect of E-leadership on employee engagement. Thus, for open and transparent communication with employees, leaders should make use of digital medium in their everyday operations. It is essential to encourage employees to express their opinions freely in order to use their creativity to promote innovation.
- Open communication in the workplace should be encouraged to increase employee productivity and for strengthening the beneficial effects of E-leadership on employees engagement and innovative behaviour.

The study focuses on the role of E-leadership, and it is crucial for organizations to adopt the future mode of working. The insights from the study will equip leaders in understanding the factors influencing the role of E-leadership. This will guide and assist organizations in effectively managing their employees through digital transformation and

ensuring organizational success. The study also emphasizes the importance of the role of leaders in motivating employees and positively impacting their well-being. Leaders should focus on promoting a positive work environment. By implementing E-leadership approach, organizations can effectively engage their employees in a virtual work environment, promote well-being and enhance overall organizational performance.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is based on secondary research and limited to review of select articles. Thus, there is future scope for research to investigate on the topic of E-leadership.

The study is confined to four independent variables; thus, future studies may be undertaken to identify new variables and expand the research to either case study or explore the topic through primary data made available by surveys or interviews. This will help to consider and corroborate the papers conclusion for more credible and rigorous results.

It is observed that there may be other factors impacting employee engagement. Future research can investigate the factors influencing the relation between E-leadership and employee engagement from varied lenses in order to develop and enrich the E-leadership model.

The role of E-leadership is continuously evolving to keep up with the advancements in technology. Also, more and more organizations irrespective of their size or structure will follow E-leadership practices for organizational sustainability and competitiveness. Thus, there is a scope for future research on the topic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study evaluated understanding the relationship between digital transformation, organizational commitment, new methods of communication and organizational agility influencing the role of E-leaders in organizations. The outcome from the study is consistent with existing research and literature by scholars, indicating E-leaders to be well equipped for managing organizational change in the digital era (De Waal et al., 2016). Hence, for competitiveness and sustainability, organizations should consider leaders who can drive digital transformation of their operations (Porfirio et al., 2021) to influence employee engagement.

E-leaders should focus on emerging technologies that help in digital transformation initiatives and embrace change as an opportunity. Also, encouraging organizational learning and knowledge management will help to ensure organizational commitment and effectively motivate and engage employees by promoting their wellbeing (Menon & Suresh, 2021).

Organizations operating in remote work environments need technically savvy leaders to lead through digital medium (Contreras et al., 2020) and focus on employee aspects such as engagement and motivation through effective communication and trust (Wolor et al., 2021). E-leaders adopting new methods of communication i.e. channels and technologies will help collaboration and seamless working of employees spread across locations. Organizations should embrace agile technologies and human resource strategies to be competitive in a digital landscape. The study confirms prior research that E-leaders enhance organizational agility through maintaining employee relationships and encouraging them to take risks when faced with either opportunities or challenges (Veisheh & Eghbali, 2014).

Mutha and Srivastava (2021) state E-leaders play a positive impact on employee engagement. Motivating employees helps to enhance a better working environment and improve learning outcomes (Waheed and Ahmad-Shah, 2017).

Our study sheds light that the role of E-leadership in an evolving work landscape will continue to be dominant in the future as well. Thus, the findings of the study will guide leaders in managing remote or geographically spread employees and in handling different working scenarios.

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