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Leadership, Communication, and Employee Commitment in Digital Transformation: An Integrated Review

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Abstract:

Digital transformation has become a defining organisational imperative, reshaping leadership practices, communication processes, and employee commitment across sectors. This study presents a systematic literature review examining how leadership, communication, organisational culture, and human factors collectively influence digital transformation outcomes. The study is based on 83 peer-reviewed articles. The findings reveal that digital transformation is a socio-technical, capability-building process rather than a purely technological shift. Transformational and participatory leadership styles, clear and transparent communication, and cultures characterised by trust and learning emerged as critical enablers of employee engagement and commitment. Human resource management plays a strategic role in developing digital readiness, addressing skills gaps, and supporting wellbeing. The review also highlights the importance of organisational trust, knowledge management, and adaptive work models in sustaining performance during digital change. Based on these insights, the study recommends strengthening leadership capability, enhancing strategic communication, integrating HRM into transformation governance, cultivating supportive cultures, prioritising commitment-building practices, formalising knowledge management systems, and adopting human-centric principles that align with emerging Industry 5.0 paradigms. These recommendations offer a holistic and practical roadmap for organisations seeking to navigate the complexities of digital transformation effectively.

Keywords:

Digital Transformation, Organisational Leadership, Communication, Employee Commitment, Organisational Culture

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Introduction

The accelerating pace of technological advancement, combined with global economic volatility, shifting workforce expectations, and the rise of hybrid and remote work models, has compelled organisations to rethink their strategies, structures, and cultures (Gonçalves et al., 2023; Tripathi et al., 2023). Far from being a one-off technological upgrade, digital transformation is now widely recognised as a holistic and iterative process that requires the integration of technology, strategy, leadership, and human capital development to achieve sustainable performance outcomes (Rakovic et al., 2024). The imperative for transformation is further intensified by the pressures of sustainability, stakeholder expectations, and the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0. Industry 4.0 focused primarily on automation and cyber-physical systems, delivering unprecedented gains in efficiency and connectivity, but often at the expense of workforce displacement concerns and social disconnection (Xu et al., 2021). Industry 5.0 reframes this narrative by placing human-centricity, resilience, and sustainability at the heart of organisational change, calling for new models of leadership, employee engagement, and innovation that create shared value for all stakeholders (Demir et al., 2023; Longo et al., 2022). Leadership and culture are consistently highlighted in the literature as decisive enablers of successful organisational change. Transformational and distributed leadership styles inspire psychological safety and collective commitment, mobilising employees to engage actively with change programmes (Mulligan et al., 2021; Tsekouropoulos et al., 2025). Organisational culture provides the contextual foundation upon which transformation efforts either flourish or falter, with cultures of openness, trust, and learning accelerating digital adoption and knowledge sharing (Dang & Nguyen, 2024). Conversely, bureaucratic or risk-averse cultures can exacerbate employee resistance, leading to stalled initiatives and wasted investments (Beniušis, 2023).

Human resource management (HRM) has evolved from a primarily administrative function to a strategic driver of digital readiness and talent development, particularly in sectors like healthcare where workforce agility is crucial for adopting healthcare 4.0 solutions (Al-Mansoori et al., 2023; de Villiers & Nieuwenhuizen, 2023). Digital HR systems, continuous professional development, and data-driven workforce planning enable organisations to anticipate skills gaps, enhance employee confidence, and align workforce capabilities with innovation agendas (Chatterjee et al., 2023). Importantly, employee wellbeing and engagement remain central, organisations that invest in psychological safety, flexible work design, and supportive leadership report lower turnover, stronger affective commitment, and more successful technology adoption (Reddy et al., 2023; Giauque et al., 2024). Commitment, trust, and communication function as the social glue that links leadership efforts to performance outcomes. High-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships foster trust, knowledge sharing, and creative risk-taking, while mindfulness practices buffer employees against the stress of rapid change (Liang et al., 2023; Kersemaekers et al., 2020). Organisational trust both cognitive and affective underpins

commitment, encouraging employees to take ownership of transformation outcomes and contribute to innovation (McAllister, 1995; Katou et al., 2021). Communication, especially in hybrid and public sector contexts, plays a strategic role in building transparency, inclusion, and legitimacy, thereby sustaining employee engagement in distributed work environments (Bryson et al., 2021; Ranchod et al., 2023).

Methodology

This study adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to synthesise contemporary evidence on leadership, communication, and employee commitment in the context of digital transformation. The SLR method was chosen because it provides a transparent, rigorous, and replicable process for identifying, selecting, and analysing scholarly work relevant to complex organisational phenomena such as digital transformation and change management. The review followed a structured multi-stage process. The initial search generated 1 257 papers using a comprehensive combination of keywords relating to leadership, organisational communication, digital transformation, commitment, and new ways of working. To focus the review on literature relevant to the study's conceptual scope, subject area filtering was applied first, reducing the dataset to 813 papers. A further filter limiting the results to journal articles only decreased the number of studies to 493. Keyword refinement was then applied to improve conceptual specificity, resulting in 179 papers. To enhance accessibility and ensure methodological consistency, the review was restricted to English-language, open-access, peer-reviewed publications. This stage narrowed the dataset to 118 articles. Titles and abstracts were subsequently screened to determine thematic relevance, reducing the pool to 110 papers. Of these, 96 articles were available for full download and detailed assessment. A final round of screening involved evaluating the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical contribution of each article to the review's aims. Papers that lacked sufficient relevance or did not contribute meaningfully to the emerging themes were removed. The Final synthesis was therefore based on 83 high-quality articles, which collectively shaped the thematic categories and analytical insights presented in this study. The selected studies were analysed using an inductive thematic approach, allowing patterns, relationships, and conceptual linkages to emerge organically from the data. This approach enabled the integration of diverse perspectives and ensured that the review captured the multifaceted nature of digital transformation as both a technological and socio-organisational process.

Findings

Digital Transformation as a Strategic and Organisational Phenomenon

Digital transformation is increasingly understood as a multi-level, portfolio-orchestrated change process, aligning strategy, governance, and delivery through integrated portfolios, programmes, and projects to address technological disruption and market volatility (Gonçalves et al., 2023). Studies suggest that

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digital transformation initiatives are most successful when supported by hybrid management logics that combine agile flexibility with traditional project controls, enabling organisations to respond to uncertainty while safeguarding value delivery (Ebrahimi et al., 2023). Evidence highlights that digital transformation is not simply a technical upgrade but a strategic journey requiring leadership agility, cultural alignment, and ethical governance, particularly in public and healthcare systems where resources are constrained and stakeholder expectations are high (Tsekouropoulos et al., 2025). At the organisational level, digital transformation entails redesigning structures, workflows, and decision-making processes so that technology adoption is accompanied by capability development and behavioural change (Dang & Nguyen, 2024). Research in healthcare shows that transformation outcomes depend heavily on the positioning and competence of HR professionals, with weak HR anchoring and overreliance on line managers undermining readiness for healthcare 4.0 adoption (Buchelt et al., 2020). Successful transformation further requires creating a learning organisation environment, where employees are empowered to experiment with digital tools and co-create value in data-driven service ecosystems (Nursyamsi et al., 2023). Knowledge creation is identified as a critical mechanism linking DT to performance outcomes. Organisational knowledge creation (OKC) and PKM processes transform tacit insights into explicit, shareable assets, enabling organisations to reduce redundancy, close knowledge gaps, and accelerate delivery precision (Arunima & Thekkat, 2025). Embedding PKM into digital project portfolios allows for systematic lesson-learning, facilitating more effective sequencing of initiatives and informed capability investments (Gonçalves et al., 2023).

DT also increasingly incorporates a sustainability and human-centric orientation, reflecting the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0. Scholars emphasise that the future of transformation lies in combining technological sophistication with human creativity and social responsibility, integrating circular economy principles and sustainable supply chain management into digital strategies (Tripathi et al., 2023). This demands significant workforce reskilling, inclusive planning, and ethical leadership to maintain trust and engagement in a context of automation and AI adoption (Sihombing & Gunawan, 2023). Research suggests that organisations strengthen DT capability when they treat digital platforms as knowledge and learning infrastructures, enabling cross-functional collaboration, lowering transaction costs, and informing strategic decisions with analytics (Ebrahimi et al., 2023). However, several studies warn that data visibility alone is insufficient; without leadership action, organisations risk “informed passivity,” where insights are generated but not acted upon (Norrman & Näslund, 2025). Collectively, these findings reframe DT as a socio-technical capability-building journey, requiring coordinated investment in technology, people, culture, and sustainability to achieve enduring performance advantages (Rakovic et al., 2024).

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Leadership, Culture, and Human Factors as Core Enablers

Leadership, organisational culture, and human factors consistently emerge as critical enablers of successful organisational change and digital transformation (Rakovic et al., 2024). The literature highlights that leadership style plays a decisive role in shaping employees' readiness for change, commitment levels, and overall engagement with transformation initiatives. Transformational leadership, which inspires a shared vision and encourages intellectual stimulation, has been shown to create psychological safety, empowering employees to experiment and contribute innovative ideas without fear of failure (Mulligan et al., 2021). Similarly, participatory and distributed leadership models have been found to strengthen collective ownership of change processes, especially in complex digital environments where cross-functional collaboration is key (Tsekouropoulos et al., 2025). Organisational culture acts as the contextual substrate upon which digital transformation efforts either thrive or falter. Evidence suggests that cultures characterised by openness, trust, and continuous learning accelerate technology adoption and facilitate knowledge sharing across functional silos (Dang & Nguyen, 2024). Conversely, risk-averse or hierarchical cultures can intensify employee resistance and slow the pace of innovation (Beniušis, 2023). Cultural alignment is therefore not accidental but must be intentionally cultivated through deliberate communication strategies, reward systems that reinforce digital behaviours, and visible leadership support for innovation efforts (Al-Faouri et al., 2024). Human factors including employee wellbeing, motivation, and adaptability also strongly influence transformation outcomes. Studies show that employees who experience high job demands but low control are more likely to experience digital fatigue and disengagement, undermining change initiatives (AOSIS, 2024). Leadership behaviours that provide clarity, autonomy, and emotional support mitigate these risks and enhance engagement (Petrilli et al., 2024). Furthermore, person-environment fit research indicates that employees are more committed to transformation efforts when organisational values and goals align with their own (Giauque et al., 2024). This alignment strengthens affective commitment and reduces turnover intention, both of which are essential for sustaining change momentum.

Critically, leadership and culture interact as mutually reinforcing levers of change. Leaders shape culture through modelling, communication, and reward decisions, while culture legitimises and amplifies leadership messages (Ng et al., 2024). Organisations that intentionally integrate these levers for instance, by embedding cultural diagnostics into transformation roadmaps and equipping leaders with change management competencies report higher success rates in digital transformation initiatives (Rakovic et al., 2024). Scholars caution that the human element cannot be treated as a secondary consideration. Change efforts that prioritise technology over people risk creating "change fatigue" and eroding trust (Tanpipat et al., 2021). The evidence highlights that human-centred change strategies which combine effective leadership, supportive culture, and employee-focused policies are crucial for building resilient organisations capable of navigating ongoing disruption.

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Commitment and Digital Performance Outcomes

Organisational commitment is repeatedly highlighted in the literature as a critical mediator between leadership behaviours, communication practices, and the outcomes of digital transformation initiatives. Affective commitment the emotional attachment employees feel toward their organisation is strongly linked to proactive participation in change programmes, discretionary effort, and advocacy behaviours that accelerate digital adoption (Nugroho et al., 2023). Employees with strong affective commitment are more likely to experiment with new digital tools, share lessons learned with colleagues, and act as internal change champions, thereby multiplying the effects of formal training and communication campaigns (Karatepe et al., 2022). Normative commitment, which reflects a sense of moral obligation to remain with the organisation, plays a complementary role in sustaining participation through periods of uncertainty or technological turbulence. Research suggests that normative commitment is strengthened when organisations demonstrate fairness, transparency, and investment in employee development, signalling that reciprocation is appropriate (Abouraia & Othman, 2021). Continuance commitment based on the perceived costs of leaving also contributes to workforce stability but may not generate the enthusiasm or discretionary effort needed to drive innovation, highlighting the need for strategies that foster emotional rather than purely calculative attachment (Onyishi et al., 2023).

Empirical studies reveal that commitment significantly affects digital performance outcomes at both the individual and organisational levels. For instance, enterprises with high employee commitment report faster system adoption rates, higher utilisation of digital platforms, and better knowledge capture from digital projects (Le & Lei, 2019). At the organisational level, commitment has been associated with improved process efficiency, reduced error rates, and higher levels of service innovation, suggesting that it acts as a multiplier for the benefits of technology investments (Bhatnagar & Gopalaswamy, 2022). Several studies point to the interplay between commitment and employee engagement, noting that engaged employees display higher resilience in the face of digital disruption and are more likely to sustain performance under hybrid work conditions (Lee et al., 2023). This resilience is particularly valuable in long-term transformation programmes where change fatigue can otherwise erode momentum. Moreover, commitment fosters a sense of ownership over organisational outcomes, which enhances collaboration across teams and departments, breaking down silos that often impede digital projects (Babalola et al., 2021). Importantly, scholars caution that commitment must be nurtured through deliberate organisational practices. Overreliance on transactional incentives can lead to compliance-driven behaviours rather than genuine engagement, producing short-term performance gains but risking attrition once incentives are removed (Figueiredo et al., 2022). Instead, organisations are advised to cultivate commitment through meaningful work design, inclusive decision-making, and career development pathways that align employee aspirations with digital transformation goals (Xerri et al., 2022). Commitment serves as a strategic lever for amplifying the outcomes of digital transformation.

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When organisations invest in cultivating affective and normative commitment, they unlock not only higher levels of technology adoption but also the creativity, collaboration, and knowledge sharing required to transform digital investments into sustainable performance gains.

New Ways of Working, Engagement, and Person-Environment Fit

The adoption of new ways of working (NWW) including hybrid arrangements, flexible scheduling, and digitally mediated collaboration has redefined how employees engage with organisations. NWW represents more than a shift in work location, it is a fundamental reconfiguration of organisational processes, requiring trust-based management, restructured workflows, and investment in digital infrastructure (Chandra et al., 2022). Research indicates that NWW can enhance productivity, autonomy, and job satisfaction when properly supported, but it also introduces risks such as role ambiguity, work–life boundary blurring, and technostress if not carefully managed (Meijerink et al., 2023). Employee engagement plays a mediating role in determining whether NWW leads to positive or negative outcomes. Engaged employees are more likely to leverage flexible work to boost creativity and collaboration, whereas disengaged employees may experience isolation or reduced connection to organisational goals (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). The evidence suggests that clear communication of expectations, availability of managerial support, and equitable access to digital tools are key determinants of sustained engagement in hybrid settings (Choudhury et al., 2021). The literature highlights the importance of person-environment (P-E) fit as a driver of employee wellbeing and performance under NWW. Person-environment fit refers to the alignment between employee preferences, skills, and values, and the work environment. Studies demonstrate that when person-environment fit is high, employees report stronger psychological safety, higher engagement, and lower turnover intention in flexible work models (Luksyte et al., 2022). Conversely, poor fit for instance, when employees lack the digital literacy to thrive in remote setups can exacerbate stress and disengagement (Van Steenbergen et al., 2021). A critical insight from the literature is that NWW requires intentional organisational design to ensure fairness and inclusivity. Without deliberate effort, hybrid work models risk reinforcing proximity bias, disadvantaging remote employees in terms of visibility, career progression, and access to informal networks (Golden & Gajendran, 2019). Organisations that implement inclusive policies such as rotating meeting times, offering asynchronous collaboration channels, and measuring output rather than presence are better able to sustain employee engagement and cohesion (Mayo et al., 2023). Scholars highlight the need to view NWW as a dynamic capability rather than a one-off policy decision. Continuous monitoring of employee experiences, iterative redesign of workflows, and adaptive leadership are required to maintain alignment between organisational goals and employee needs (Jansen et al., 2022). This dynamic approach ensures that NWW remains a source of competitive advantage rather than a source of fragmentation or burnout.

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Organisational Trust, Commitment, and Performance

Organisational trust is increasingly recognised as a foundational element for achieving commitment and sustaining performance outcomes, especially during periods of digital transformation and organisational change. Trust functions as the psychological contract that shapes employees' willingness to share knowledge, accept risk, and invest discretionary effort in innovation and performance improvement initiatives (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Empirical studies consistently find that when employees perceive leadership as competent, fair, and benevolent, their organisational commitment strengthens, resulting in greater alignment with strategic goals and reduced resistance to change (Prado-Gascó et al., 2021). recent empirical studies show that cognition-based trust is more strongly associated with employees' willingness to rely on organisational processes and to comply with new systems, as it reinforces their confidence in the organisation's technical and procedural soundness (Tomlinson et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2024). Affect-based trust, on the other hand, contributes to a deeper sense of belonging and interpersonal warmth that helps sustain employee commitment even in demanding or uncertain environments. This relational trust encourages openness, emotional investment, and loyalty factors that are increasingly recognised as essential for engagement in fast-changing digital workplaces (Dirks & De Jong, 2022; Gill et al., 2024). Recent studies further affirm that when employees trust their leaders and the broader organisation, they demonstrate stronger affective and normative commitment and are less likely to withdraw or remain silent during organisational change efforts (Alomran et al., 2024; Rai, 2025).This dual pathway is particularly important in digital workplaces, where remote or hybrid arrangements may weaken informal relational ties if trust is not actively cultivated (Dirks et al., 2021).

Commitment itself acts as a mediator between trust and performance outcomes, transforming relational capital into measurable organisational benefits. Research shows that high-trust environments yield stronger affective and normative commitment, which in turn correlates with lower turnover intention, higher citizenship behaviours, and superior service quality (Katou et al., 2021). Moreover, employees in high-trust settings are more likely to take initiative in solving problems, contribute to continuous improvement, and collaborate across departmental boundaries, thereby amplifying the performance effects of digital transformation investments (De Jong et al., 2016). Importantly, trust is not static but must be continuously maintained through transparent communication, fair treatment, and consistent follow-through on organisational promises. Breaches of trust whether through opaque decision-making or poorly managed change can erode commitment rapidly and lead to cynicism, disengagement, and resistance (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). Scholars emphasise that recovery from trust violations requires acknowledgement, accountability, and demonstrable corrective action to restore psychological safety (Kim et al., 2020). Performance outcomes linked to trust and commitment extend beyond efficiency metrics to include innovation capability, adaptability, and resilience. High-trust organisations are better positioned to experiment with new technologies, respond quickly to environmental disruptions, and

maintain workforce morale during crises (Colquitt et al., 2011). Trust-rich environments also reduce monitoring costs and bureaucratic overhead, freeing up resources for value-creating activities and reinforcing a positive performance-commitment cycle. The evidence suggests that organisational trust is both a precondition and a performance driver, translating into sustainable competitive advantage when leveraged strategically. By intentionally cultivating trust and reinforcing commitment through fair policies, open dialogue, and supportive leadership, organisations create the social infrastructure necessary to convert technological and strategic investments into enduring performance gains.

Communication and Hybrid Work in the Public Sector

Effective communication has become a strategic pillar for sustaining employee engagement and organisational performance in public sector institutions transitioning to hybrid work models. Public organisations face unique challenges due to bureaucratic structures, complex stakeholder demands, and heightened public accountability, making clear and transparent communication even more critical (Hambleton, 2022). Research highlights that two-way communication channels where employees not only receive information but also provide feedback are vital for building trust and ensuring policy decisions are understood and accepted (Bryson et al., 2021). The shift to hybrid work has magnified the importance of digital communication platforms, which now serve as the primary conduit for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and decision-making. Studies indicate that the introduction of integrated communication technologies, such as collaborative suites and secure messaging tools, has enhanced the speed and inclusiveness of decision processes in government settings (Chen et al., 2023). However, the literature cautions that technology alone is insufficient; it must be complemented by clear communication protocols and training to prevent information overload and digital exclusion, particularly among employees with varying levels of digital literacy (Ranchod et al., 2023). Communication also plays a central role in shaping organisational culture during hybrid transitions. Public sector employees who perceive communication as timely, honest, and empathetic report higher levels of psychological safety and commitment to organisational objectives (de Vries et al., 2019). Conversely, inconsistent or top-down communication can reinforce perceptions of distance between leadership and staff, leading to disengagement and resistance to change (Mazzei & Butera, 2021). In hybrid settings, leaders are encouraged to adopt relational communication strategies, such as regular virtual town halls and one-on-one check-ins, to maintain connection and visibility.

Equity and inclusion are recurring themes in the literature on hybrid communication. Researchers note that without intentional design, hybrid work arrangements risk marginalising remote employees, who may receive less informal information and fewer opportunities for participation in decision-making (Gajendran et al., 2021). Public sector organisations that proactively implement inclusive communication practices such as rotating meeting facilitation, ensuring equal access to documents, and using

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asynchronous channels report higher levels of perceived fairness and organisational trust (Ospina et al., 2020). Effective communication in hybrid public sector contexts contributes to resilience and adaptability, enabling institutions to respond rapidly to crises and maintain service delivery continuity. Evidence from pandemic-related studies shows that agencies with robust internal communication frameworks were better able to coordinate distributed teams, disseminate policy updates, and manage citizen expectations (Christensen & Lægreid, 2022). This highlights that communication is not merely an operational function but a strategic capability that underpins governance, legitimacy, and public value creation.

Discussion

The collective evidence from the 83 studies reinforces the view that digital transformation (DT) is a complex socio-technical phenomenon that extends beyond the adoption of digital technologies to encompass fundamental changes in leadership practices, organisational culture, and employee behaviour. Across the reviewed literature, DT is consistently framed as an iterative capability-building process that requires alignment between technological initiatives, strategic intent, and human-centred change management. This finding supports the growing consensus that organisations risk underperformance when digital initiatives are pursued in isolation from broader organisational and behavioural considerations. A central insight emerging from the review is the decisive role of leadership in shaping employee engagement and commitment during digital transformation. Transformational, participatory, and distributed leadership styles are repeatedly associated with higher levels of psychological safety, trust, and employee willingness to engage with change initiatives. These leadership approaches enable employees to interpret digital transformation as a shared organisational journey rather than a top-down imposition, thereby reducing resistance and enhancing ownership. Importantly, the literature cautions that leadership support must extend beyond symbolic endorsement; leaders are expected to actively model digital behaviours, communicate consistently, and allocate resources in ways that signal genuine commitment to transformation efforts. Organisational culture emerges as a closely related and reinforcing factor. Cultures characterised by openness, trust, and learning are shown to accelerate digital adoption and knowledge sharing, while hierarchical and risk-averse cultures tend to slow transformation and intensify employee resistance. The findings suggest that culture should not be treated as a passive backdrop but as an active lever that requires deliberate shaping through leadership behaviour, communication practices, and aligned reward systems. Where culture and leadership are misaligned, transformation initiatives are more likely to stall or generate change fatigue. The discussion further highlights organisational commitment as a critical mediator linking leadership and communication to digital performance outcomes. Affective commitment, in particular, is associated with proactive engagement, discretionary effort, and sustained participation in

digital initiatives. Normative commitment plays a stabilising role during periods of uncertainty, while continuance commitment, although contributing to workforce retention, offers limited support for innovation and change. These findings underscore the importance of cultivating emotional and value-based connections with employees through meaningful work design, inclusive decision-making, and transparent communication, rather than relying solely on transactional incentives. New ways of working, particularly hybrid and flexible arrangements, have reshaped how employees experience and engage with digital transformation. The literature indicates that such arrangements can enhance autonomy and engagement when supported by trust-based leadership and clear communication, but may also introduce risks related to isolation, inequity, and role ambiguity if poorly managed. Person-environment fit emerges as a key explanatory mechanism, with employees reporting higher engagement and wellbeing when their digital competencies, preferences, and work arrangements are well aligned. This highlights the need for organisations to treat new ways of working as a dynamic capability that requires continuous monitoring and adjustment rather than as a one-off policy intervention. Trust is consistently identified as a foundational condition for sustaining commitment and performance during digital transformation. Both cognition-based and affect-based trust strengthen employees' willingness to engage with new systems, share knowledge, and invest discretionary effort. Trust-rich environments reduce resistance to change and enhance collaboration, thereby amplifying the benefits of digital investments. However, the literature also emphasises the fragility of trust, noting that perceived inconsistencies, opaque decision-making, or unmet expectations can rapidly erode commitment and engagement. This underscores the importance of transparent communication, fairness, and accountability in maintaining trust throughout the transformation process.Taken together, the discussion reinforces the argument that successful digital transformation is less about technological sophistication and more about how organisations lead, communicate, and support their people through change. Leadership, culture, communication, trust, and commitment operate as interdependent mechanisms that shape employees' experiences of transformation and ultimately determine whether digital initiatives translate into sustained performance improvements.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to synthesise contemporary evidence on the roles of leadership, communication, and employee commitment in enabling successful digital transformation. The review confirms that digital transformation is not merely a technological initiative, but a socio-organisational process that requires alignment between leadership practices, organisational culture, communication processes, and human behaviour. Organisations that approach digital transformation as a capability-building journey, rather than a narrow technology acquisition exercise, are more likely to achieve sustainable performance outcomes. Leadership emerges as a decisive enabler across the reviewed literature. Transformational, participatory, and distributed leadership styles foster psychological safety,

employee engagement, and openness to change, while symbolic or inconsistent leadership behaviours contribute to uncertainty, resistance, and change fatigue. Communication plays a central role in this process, with clear, transparent, and two-way communication supporting sense-making, trust, and sustained engagement, particularly in hybrid and digitally mediated work environments. Employee commitment acts as a key mediating mechanism linking leadership and communication to digital performance outcomes. Employees who feel valued, supported, and aligned with organisational goals are more willing to adopt new technologies, contribute to innovation, and engage in continuous improvement. Organisational culture further amplifies these effects, with cultures characterised by openness, trust, and learning creating conditions conducive to successful transformation. Overall, the findings reinforce the conclusion that the success of digital transformation depends less on technological sophistication and more on how organisations lead, communicate, and engage their people through ongoing change.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, several actionable recommendations are proposed to guide organisations and leaders seeking to strengthen digital transformation outcomes.

1. **Strengthen leadership capability for human-centred digital transformation:** Organisations should invest in leadership development initiatives that promote transformational, participatory, and digitally informed leadership behaviours. Leaders need to be equipped to communicate a clear vision, model adaptive and inclusive behaviours, and create psychologically safe environments in which employees feel supported to engage with change. Such leadership capability is critical for reducing resistance, sustaining engagement, and translating digital initiatives into meaningful organisational outcomes.
2. **Embed strategic and two-way communication into transformation initiatives:** Clear, transparent, and consistent communication should be treated as a core component of digital transformation programmes rather than a supporting activity. Organisations should establish two-way communication channels that enable employees to ask questions, provide feedback, and participate in sense-making around digital change. This approach enhances trust, reduces uncertainty, and supports employee commitment, particularly in hybrid and digitally mediated work environments.
3. **Position human resource management as a strategic enabler of transformation:** Human resource management should be integrated into digital transformation governance to ensure alignment between workforce development, organisational change, and strategic objectives. Targeted investment in digital skills development, reskilling initiatives, and employee wellbeing programmes can enhance digital readiness and reduce change fatigue.

HRM's involvement is essential for sustaining commitment and supporting employees through ongoing transformation.

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