

**ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: INSIGHTS FROM SELECTED
ORGANISATIONS IN NAIROBI**

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RS16M02/801

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

May, 2025



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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Declaration

I declare that this research project, titled “*Organisational Leadership Strategies for Employee Engagement in Digital Transformation: Insights from Selected Organizations in Nairobi*”, is my original work and has not been submitted for academic credit in any other institution. Any work and sources from others have been duly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with academic integrity standards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Beryl Chwadi', is written over a light blue grid background.

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Approval

This research project has been submitted with the approval of the undersigned supervisor as part of the requirements for the award of master degree in Organisational Leadership and Management of Uganda Christian University.



Joseph Jakisa Owor, PhD

May 2, 20254

Dedication

I dedicate this research thesis to my beloved family and friends for their support and love, and to organisations analysing leadership strategies for employee engagement in digital transformation, I hope this thesis will be useful to you. To my friends, acquaintances and all data respondents who participated in the data collection endeavours, I am indeed grateful for your contributions. To all aspiring researchers committed to advancing organizational leadership and employee engagement, may this work inspire further scholarly inquiry. Lastly to every individual and scholars seeking digital transformation, may this work serve as both a mirror and a map.

Acknowledgement

My profound appreciation goes out to my research supervisor, Dr. Joseph Owor and Dr. Erick Mwima, for their patience and support in organizing the research project and Uganda Christian University for providing an ideal learning environment for me to pursue my studies. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Development Associates International and African Women Scholarship for supporting me through my studies. I will always be grateful to my spiritual parents, the Wafula's, my family and my extended family for their sacrifices and moral support. I owe the Almighty God a great deal of gratitude for guiding me through all of my endeavours and enabling me to complete this task successfully.

Kampala, April 2025

Beryl Chwadi

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List of Acronyms

AI:	Artificial Intelligence
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
ERP:	Enterprise Resource Planning
IT:	Information Technology
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
SME:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
HR:	Human Resources
LMS:	Learning Management System
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CIO:	Chief Information Officer
CTO:	Chief Technology Officer
HOD:	Head of Department
SaaS:	Software as a service
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology System
CRM:	Customer Relationship Management System
eNPS:	Employee Net Promoter Score
ICX:	Institute of Customer Experience
EX:	Employee Experience
CX:	Customer Experience

Abstract

This action research set out to explore how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in the context of digital transformation within selected organizations in Nairobi. Drawing from interviews, surveys, and observation, the findings affirm that strategic communication, targeted training, inclusive decision-making, and employee recognition and inclusivity in the decision making are critical levers for successful digital transformation. While leaders often perceived themselves as supportive, the lived experiences of employees revealed gaps between intention and impact of digital tools. Furthermore, the underutilization of IT experts in strategic planning also signals a missed opportunity for bridging technical and the general workforce as elements of comprehensive change.

Considering these insights, it is recommended that organizations adopt a more participatory leadership approach, one that actively involves employees and technical experts in shaping the digital agenda. Regular feedback loops, combined with transparent communication and inclusivity of the workforce, should form the backbone of digital transformation efforts. Leaders must also recognize that trainings and workshops should not be a one-time achievement but a continuous process of alignment between the entire workforce and evolving systems. Also ensuring the organisation digital repository is stocked with digital content, including research papers, workshop materials, and other organizational documents that can be used by new employees and the general workforce for information reference.

By embedding empathy, clarity, and collaboration into their leadership practices, organizational leaders can foster a resilient, adaptable workforce equipped for ongoing digital evolution. This study underscores that sustainable transformation is not just about deploying new technologies, it is also fundamentally about how employees are led through change.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Definitions of the key words:

- *Digital Transformation*: -This refers to the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of an organization, fundamentally changing how businesses operate and deliver value to stakeholders. It involves adopting innovative processes, enhancing customer experiences, and leveraging data-driven decision-making (Vial, 2021).
- *Organizational Leadership*: -Is the process of guiding and influencing individuals within a company to achieve strategic goals while fostering a productive and adaptive work environment. It encompasses decision-making, communication, and motivation to drive organizational success (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007).
- *Organizational Culture*: -Organizational culture represents the shared values, beliefs, and behaviours that shape the social and psychological environment of a workplace. It influences employee interactions, decision-making, and overall organizational effectiveness (Costa, 2020).
- *Employee Engagement*: -Employee engagement is the level of commitment, enthusiasm, and involvement an employee has toward their organization and its goals. Engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction, contributing to organizational success (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).
- *Leadership Strategies*: -Leadership strategies refer to the approaches and techniques leaders use to inspire, guide, and manage teams effectively. These strategies may include transformational leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership, each tailored to organizational needs and goals (Maxwell, 2011).
- *Servant Leadership*: -Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that prioritizes serving others, emphasizing empathy, ethical decision-making, and the development of employees. Leaders who adopt this approach focus on empowering

their teams and fostering a culture of trust and collaboration (van Dierendonck, 2011).

1.1.2 Global, East African and Nairobi engagement in digital transformation

Globally, digital transformation has been a priority for both public and private sectors in adapting to volatile market conditions, technological disruption, and customer expectations (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). In Africa, however, digital transformation is still gaining traction, with regional disparities in digital infrastructure, leadership capacity, and workforce readiness. While nations like South Africa and Nigeria have made substantial investments in digital systems, a 2020 McKinsey report highlights that many African countries face challenges in digital maturity due to insufficient leadership capabilities and resistance to change among employees (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

In East Africa, efforts to digitize organisations and is steadily increasing, with countries such as Rwanda and Kenya taking a leading role, Rwigema (2020). Kenya's Vision 2030 has been instrumental in driving digital infrastructure and innovation hubs, especially in urban areas like Nairobi. Yet, digital transformation in Kenyan organizations still encounters structural and human capital limitations. These include limited IT training, poorly communicated change visions, and a gap in leadership capacity to drive employee engagement during such initiatives (Kenya Vision 2030, n.d.). Nairobi, as Kenya's commercial hub, provides a compelling case for examining how leadership practices affect employee participation in transformation initiatives.

In Nairobi, organizations across various sectors are increasingly adopting digital transformation initiative aimed to streamline operations, to enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and service delivery in order to stay relevant in the dynamic environment where new technologies emerge rapidly. The process often involves integrating advanced technologies such as automation, cloud computing, and data analytics into existing workflows. However, the success of these initiatives hinges on employee engagement, which remains a significant challenge. Employees in Nairobi, like in other regions, face uncertainties about job security, skill relevance, resistance

to change, adaptability to new technologies and uncertainty about the value of the transformation, often leading to resistance or low participation. Despite leaders introducing new digital platforms and outlining future benefits, employee adoption and involvement remain low. The local business environment, characterized by diverse organizational cultures, resource constraints, and a mix of traditional and modern management practices, further complicates leadership efforts to engage employees effectively (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014).

The intention of the leaders in these organisations is to engage their employees effectively in the digital transformation process by recognizing that their employees buy-in is crucial. This fosters an inclusive and collaborative environment where the employees feel motivated and empowered to embrace digital transformation. They also hope to inspire employees by demonstrating how digital transformation will enhance both their personal growth and the organization's success. Leaders also aim to enhance communication, provide relevant training, and build trust as a strategy tool that promotes employee's alignment with organizational goals (Kane et al., 2015). By doing so, they hope to overcome resistance, improve morale, create a culture of collaboration and enable employees to contribute actively to the adoption, optimization and success of new technologies. The ultimate objective is to create a digitally adept workforce that drives innovation and sustains competitive advantage.

Despite these intentions, the actual outcomes often fall short of what is expected as a result of many factors such as leaders underestimating the crucial aspect of addressing employee's reasons for resistance to changes that affect digital transformation. This is evidenced by employees who perceive the initiatives as disruptive rather than beneficial, caused by fear of redundancy and uncertainty about their career growth that often go unaddressed, creating an atmosphere of distrust (Kotter, 2014). Secondly, some employees express their concerns about lack of clear communication strategies, failure of regular updates, inadequate leadership support and misaligned expectations as a result of leadership failure to articulate the digital transformation's long-term vision.

Addressing these issues requires leaders to adopt adaptive strategies that prioritize employee empowerment, build trust through consistent communication, and

align resources with transformational goals. By doing so, organizations in Nairobi can bridge the gap between their aspirations and the reality of digital transformation. Therefore, my concern and action question driving this action research is; *How can leaders in Nairobi develop and optimize employee engagement strategies to enhance the success of digital transformation initiatives?*

1.2 Problem Statement

Digital transformation is fundamentally reshaping organizational operations, demanding a shift from traditional practices to technology-driven strategies. This transformation extends beyond adopting digital tools; it involves reconfiguring organizational culture and redefining the leadership-employee dynamic (Vial, 2021). In Nairobi's increasingly digital economy, aligning leadership strategies with employee engagement has become critical to organizational success. Yet, this alignment remains elusive, especially in resource-constrained environments where rapid technological advancement often outpaces workforce readiness.

Successful digital transformation depends on cohesive collaboration between leadership and employees. Leaders must articulate a clear vision, demonstrate adaptability, and remove barriers to change, while employees are expected to develop digital competencies and support new strategic directions. However, ineffective communication, insufficient support, and low emotional intelligence from leaders often result in employee resistance and disengagement (Kotter, 2012). This disconnection undermines digital initiatives, making them difficult to sustain and scale. In Nairobi, organizations such as Safaricom are investing heavily in digital transformation. Initiatives like the "1 More Skill" campaign have upskilled 98% of Safaricom's employees and trained over 800 leaders in transformational leadership (Safaricom, 2024). Despite such efforts, broader engagement challenges persist. The Institute of Customer Experience (2024) reported an employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) of just 23%, signaling widespread dissatisfaction across Kenyan industries. Resistance to change is further fueled by fear of redundancy, lack of trust in leadership, and cultural misalignment with digital imperatives (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Although some organizations have introduced leadership development programs and digital training initiatives, these alone have not fully bridged the engagement gap.

Many employees still perceive digital initiatives as disruptive rather than empowering, leading to inconsistent adoption, missed opportunities, and organizational inefficiencies. This persistent gap between leadership intentions and employee experience calls for a deeper understanding of what leadership strategies truly drive engagement in the digital era.

This study addresses this need by investigating how leadership approaches—particularly in communication, training, and culture - impact employee engagement during digital transformation in selected Nairobi organizations. By exploring this interplay, the research highlights that digital success is not solely technological but deeply human at its core.

1.3 Central Research Question

Why are Organisational leadership strategies not effective in fostering employee engagement for digital transformation in Nairobi?

1.4 Action Question

How can organisational leadership strategies be improved to foster employee engagement for digital transformation in Nairobi?

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To find out how leadership communication styles influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives.
2. To examine the role of employee training and upskilling in enhancing engagement during digital transformation.
3. To analyze how organizational culture effects of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation.
4. To assess the effect of digital literacy on employee engagement in digital transformation.

1.6 Research Questions

1. How do leadership communication styles influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives?

2. What role does employee training and upskilling play in enhancing engagement during digital transformation?
3. How does organizational culture impact the success of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation?
4. How digital literacy affect employee engagement in digital transformation?

1.7 Research Hypotheses

The researcher formulated verifiable hypotheses to investigate the correlation between organisational leadership strategies for employee engagement and digital transformation: insights from selected organisations in Nairobi. Based on a study of the literature, the researcher proposed the following null hypothesis to estimate the sign of the relationship between organisational leadership strategies for employee engagement and digital transformation: insights from selected organisations in Nairobi, using empirical data from a partial literature review. Null hypotheses are

statements or statistical hypotheses that are being tested (Brooks, 2008 p. 52). The following are illustrations of null hypotheses:

H₀: Leadership communication styles influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives.

H₁: Employee training and upskilling enhance engagement during digital transformation.

H₂: Organizational culture impacts the success of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation.

H₃: Digital literacy affects employee engagement in digital transformation.

1.8 Significance of the study

As organizations continue to integrate digital technologies into their core business operations, leadership strategies that enhance employee engagement have become key in ensuring the success of digital transformation initiatives (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). While previous studies have focused on the technological and infrastructural aspects of digital transformation, there is limited scholarship on how organisational leadership influences employee participation and commitment to digital

adoption, particularly in Nairobi's business environment (Kane et al., 2015). This study contributes to existing literature by examining leadership strategies that promote digital engagement, providing empirical insights into the role of leadership in addressing employee resistance, motivation, and adaptability into the digital transformation initiatives (Northouse, 2025).

The study has practical implications for business leaders, HR practitioners, and policymakers, offering evidence-based recommendations on leadership-driven employee engagement strategies. Organizational leaders can leverage the findings to develop effective training programs, participatory decision-making frameworks, and adaptive communication strategies to improve workforce alignment with digital transformation goals (Kotter, 2014). Policymakers can also utilize these insights to design workforce development policies that promote digital literacy, inclusion, and leadership capacity-building in Nairobi's corporate sector.

At a broader perspective, this study supports national digital transformation efforts by advocating for people centred change management approaches, ensuring that employees are equipped, engaged, and motivated to thrive in any digitally evolving work environments (Analytics, 2020). The study's findings will be valuable for organizations navigating the intersection of leadership, workforce engagement, and technological transformation, making it an indispensable contribution to both academic discourse and industry best practices (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to organizations actively undergoing digital transformation, focusing on how leadership influences employee participation, digital readiness, and resistance to technological change (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). By assessing leadership-driven engagement strategies, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for improving digital adoption rates in Nairobi's corporate sector (Analytics, 2020).

Geographically, the study is confined to Nairobi, Kenya's capital city which is a commercial hub where various industries both corporate and retail are implementing digital transformation initiatives. Nairobi city's diverse corporate environment makes

it an ideal setting for analysing how leadership approaches impact employee engagement across different organizational contexts (Duncan, 2020).

The study focuses on organizational leaders, 15 - 20 participants across 5 -7 organizations, IT and digital transformation experts, 10 - 15 participants, and employees 40 and above as respondents. The total participant pool is estimated to be between 65 and 125 individuals, ensuring a balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research will be conducted over a four-week period, encompassing data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This timeframe allows for a comprehensive examination of leadership strategies and their impact on digital transformation success.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review critically examines existing studies on leadership strategies for employee engagement in digital transformation, focusing on key themes such as leadership approaches, barriers to engagement, training and upskilling, and the role of communication in fostering a digitally ready workforce. It identifies methodological approaches, highlights gaps and sheds light to new opportunities for future studies.

Employee engagement is a critical factor in determining the success of digital transformation initiatives within organizations (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). The primary aim of this study is to critically examine the theoretical and empirical literature on leadership and employee engagement in the context of digital transformation. By reviewing relevant studies, this chapter seeks to establish a comprehensive framework that underscores the importance of effective leadership in driving employee participation during digital change initiatives.

The purpose of this literature review is not only to contextualize the study within the broader academic discourse but also to provide a solid theoretical foundation that informs the research design and data collection methods. Through this critical engagement with the literature, the study aims to contribute new insights into the intersection of leadership, employee engagement, and digital transformation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The foundation of this study is built on leadership theories that explain how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives. Various theoretical perspectives offer insights into how organizational leaders inspire, support, and guide employees to embrace digital transitions, addressing both technical and human challenges (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). This study is grounded in three key theories that provide a framework for understanding how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in digital transformation.

This section discusses

three primary theories that underpin this research: Transformational Leadership Theory, Servant Leadership Theory, and Change Management Theory. These theories provide a conceptual framework for analysing leadership strategies that drive employee participation, digital adoption, and organizational adaptability in the evolving business landscape of Nairobi.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was first introduced by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass and Riggio (2006), who describe how leaders inspire employees to achieve beyond their perceived capabilities by promoting a common vision, encouraging innovation, and offering support. This theory is highly relevant to digital transformation, as leaders must motivate employees to embrace new technologies and ways of working (Analytics, 2020).

In transformational leadership, effective leaders act as role models by setting an example in embracing digital tools and championing innovation (Northouse, 2025). They clearly communicate the vision for transformation, ensure that employees understand the long-term benefits of adopting new technologies (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders also stimulate intellectual curiosity that encourages employees to think critically, explore creative solutions, and take individual initiatives in learning new digital competencies (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). Additionally, they provide personalized support, recognizing that different employees have varying levels of digital literacy and require different forms of assistance to successfully adapt (Kane et al., 2015).

Research studies according to Analytics (2020), show that organizations with transformational leadership practices experience higher levels of employee engagement and smoother digital transformations. However, while transformational leadership style is effective in motivating and inspiring employees, it does not always address individual concerns or ensure that every employee receives the necessary support to thrive in a digital workplace. This highlights the need for complementary leadership approaches, such as Servant Leadership.

2.2.2 Servant Leadership Theory

Servant Leadership Theory, developed by Greenleaf (2013), takes a different approach that focuses on employee well-being, empowerment, and professional development. Rather than positioning themselves as authority heads in their organisations, servant leaders prioritize the needs of their employees, ensuring they feel valued and supported throughout the transformation process (Northouse, 2025).

In digital transformation, servant leaders create an open communication culture, where employees are encouraged to share their concerns, provide feedback, and actively participate in decision-making (Gartner, 2021). This leadership style nurtures psychological safety, allowing employees to experiment with digital tools without fear of failure (Kotter, 2014). Servant leaders also invest heavily in training and development of their employees because they recognize that digital transformation requires continuous upskilling (Kane et al., 2015).

Research according to Analytics (2020), suggests that organizations that embrace servant leadership experience higher levels of workforce adaptability, collaboration, and digital engagement. However, while servant leadership promotes inclusivity and employee participation, it lacks a structured framework for managing large-scale organizational change, necessitating a complementary approach such as Change Management Theory.

2.2.3 Change Management Theory

Digital transformation is not entirely about technology but also about organizational change and behavioural adaptation. Kotter's (2012) There's an eight-Step Change Model by Kotter (2014) that provides a structured approach for leading organizations through transitions, that minimizes employee resistance, and ensures sustainable digital transformation success.

This model emphasizes the need for creating a sense of urgency by clearly explaining why digital transformation is necessary and how it benefits employees (Westerman et al., 2014). It also highlights the importance of forming a leadership

partnership, where key stakeholders advocate for change and drive momentum (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). For effective change management to be evidenced it involves consistent communication, removing obstacles to digital adoption, and reinforcing digital behaviours through short-term wins and long-term cultural shifts (Gartner, 2021).

Research studies indicate that organizations that integrate structured change management practices with transformational and servant leadership approaches are more likely to achieve successful employee engagement and digital transformation outcomes (Analytics, 2020). Leaders who combine inspirational leadership, employee centred support, and structured change processes create an environment where employees are not only willing to adopt new technologies but also feel empowered and supported in the digital transformation transition (Kane et al., 2015).

2.2.4 Relevance to the Research Problem

By integrating transformational leadership, servant leadership, and change management approaches, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how leadership strategies impact employee engagement in digital transformation. Transformational leadership entails visionary leadership that promotes motivation and digital readiness, servant leadership highlights the importance of employee support and development, and change management provides a structured process for overcoming resistance and sustaining transformation success (Kotter, 2014; Analytics, 2020).

Despite extensive research on leadership and digital transformation, there is a limited focus on how these approaches apply to Nairobi's business context. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how leadership strategies influence employee engagement, digital readiness, and cultural adaptation in Nairobi-based organizations. By examining engagement strategies guided by leadership within the context of a structured change management framework, this study advances scholarly understanding of workforce adaptation in the context of digital transformation initiatives.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as the structural foundation that guides this research by defining key concepts and illustrating the relationship between leadership strategies, employee engagement, and digital transformation. It assists in exploring how leadership influences workforce participation in organizational change initiatives. The framework integrates transformational leadership, servant leadership, and change management principles to explain the mechanisms through which leaders can drive engagement, minimize resistance, and optimize digital adoption (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kotter, 2014).

2.3.1 Key Concepts and their relationships

2.3.2 Leadership Strategies

Leadership in organisations is fundamental when it comes to shaping, motivating and culturally aligning employee engagement in digital transformation goals by providing a clear vision, fostering trust, and ensuring workforce readiness. For strategic leadership to be effective it will entail incorporating transformational leadership, servant leadership and change management leadership approaches. Each of these leadership styles impacts employee engagement in different ways. Transformational leadership motivates employees to embrace digital change, servant leadership ensures inclusivity and workforce readiness, while change management leadership provides a structured approach to overcoming organizational resistance (Kane et al., 2015; Analytics, 2020).

Leadership further influences employee's engagement through four key mechanisms; communication, training, organizational culture and digital literacy. Effective communication ensures that employees understand the purpose and long-term benefits of digital transformation. Leaders who provide transparent messaging, open dialogue, and participatory decision-making processes create an environment where employees feel involved and less resistant to change (Kane et al., 2015). Conversely, when leadership communication is unclear or inconsistent, employees may experience uncertainty, leading to disengagement and resistance (Gartner, 2021).

Beyond communication, training and upskilling play a critical role in digital transformation. Many employees may not have the technical skills required to work with automation, data analytics, or cloud-based systems, making training a necessary component of engagement (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Leaders who invest in structured training programs, mentorship opportunities, and continuous learning initiatives help employees feel more confident in using digital tools (Westerman et al., 2014). However, when organizations provide one-time training rather than long-term upskilling, employees may struggle to retain knowledge, limiting the effectiveness of digital transformation efforts (Analytics, 2020).

Furthermore, organizational culture has a significant impact on the success of leadership-driven digital engagement strategies. Companies that promote collaboration, innovation, and adaptability tend to see higher levels of engagement in digital transformation efforts (Kotter, 2014). Employees in organizations with rigid structures and strict hierarchies may find it harder to embrace change, leading to resistance and slower adoption rates (Gartner, 2021). Leaders play a crucial role in shaping culture by encouraging a mindset of continuous learning and rewarding digital adoption efforts (Northouse, 2025).

Lastly, leadership strategies that prioritize digital literacy through structured onboarding, mentoring, and accessible learning platforms enable employees to feel competent and valued. When employees understand and can comfortably use digital systems, their participation and embrace of transformation initiatives increases significantly (Vuori, Helander, & Okkonen, 2019; Kane et al., 2019). Digital literacy is not just a technical skill set, but a foundational element of strategic engagement.

2.3.3 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement in digital transformation encompasses the degree of motivation, involvement, and commitment employees show toward digital initiatives (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering this engagement through effective communication strategies that clearly define the purpose, benefits, and long-term vision of digital transformation, thereby mitigating employee uncertainty and resistance (Kotter, 2014). Additionally, training and upskilling programs, including

digital literacy initiatives, enhance employee confidence and participation in the adoption of digital technologies (Analytics, 2020). A workplace culture rooted in collaboration, inclusion, adaptability, and knowledge-sharing further strengthens employees' willingness to engage in transformation efforts (Gartner, 2021). Engaged employees not only contribute proactively to innovation but also accelerate digital adoption rates and drive the overall success of transformation initiatives (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

2.3.4 Digital Transformation Success

The success of digital transformation efforts is evaluated through employee adoption rates, improvements in efficiency, and overall business performance. Leadership and employee engagement play critical roles in shaping these outcomes. The adoption of digital technologies, which directly influences the pace and effectiveness of integrating digital tools into workplace processes, is one such determinant (Kane et al., 2015). Workforce adaptability is another key factor, as strong leadership fosters resilience and promotes a culture of continuous learning among employees (Northouse, 2025). Furthermore, sustained organizational change is more likely to occur when transformation initiatives align with leadership-driven engagement strategies, ensuring longevity and consistency in their implementation (Kotter, 2014).

2.3.5 Conceptual Model

Kotter's 8 Step Change Model

mutomorro



Figure 1: Kotter's 8 Step Change Model

Source: Philip Kottler(2025)

This model aligns with leadership strategies for employee engagement. It will assist to analyse leadership influence on employee engagement in digital transformation by assessing how leaders create urgency, build coalitions, communicate vision, empower employees, and sustain momentum. Each step will be examined to determine its impact on engagement and the overall success and sustainability of digital transformation initiatives.

2.4 Review of Related Literature (Organized Based on the Sub-Research Questions)

This literature is reviewed in sections corresponding to the study's three sub-research questions as listed in Chapter 1 of this research study.

2.4.1 Influence of leadership communication styles on employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives.

Effective communication is a crucial driver of employee engagement in digital transformation, as it shapes how employees understand, accept, and integrate new technologies into their work processes (Kotter, 2014). Leadership communication styles influence employee motivation, resistance to change, and overall participation in digital initiatives (Kane et al., 2015). Studies suggest that transparent, two-way communication reduces uncertainty and fosters a culture of trust, which is essential for successful digital transformation adoption (Analytics, 2020).

Research shows that transformational leaders use visionary and inspirational communication to motivate employees during digital transitions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through clear articulation of organizational goals and personalized engagement strategies, transformational leaders help employees see the long-term value of digital initiatives, thereby reducing resistance (Northouse, 2025). Studies by Westerman, Bonnet, and McAfee (2014) found that organizations with transformational leadership-driven communication strategies experienced higher levels of employee commitment to digital transformation initiatives. However, a key gap in the literature is the lack of empirical studies focusing on how transformational leadership communication specifically impacts digital transformation efforts in Nairobi-based organizations.

Servant leadership in collaboration with communication emphasizes listening, empathy, and employee-centred communication, has been linked to higher employee engagement levels in transformation processes (Greenleaf, 2013). Organisational leaders who prioritize open dialogues, active listening, and participatory decision-making promote a psychologically safe work environment where employees feel empowered to adapt to digital changes (Kane et al., 2015).

Despite the importance of leadership communication in digital transformation, several challenges that pose gaps still exist. Studies according to Kotter (2014), suggest that inconsistent messaging, lack of leadership responsiveness, and failure to address employee concerns contribute to low digital adoption rates. Studies in emerging economies such as Nairobi have not sufficiently explored how cultural and

organizational factors impact the effectiveness of leadership communication strategies in digital transformation (Analytics, 2020). Addressing this gap is key for developing specific leadership communication frameworks that enhance employee engagement in evolving business environments such as Nairobi.

2.4.2 Influence of employee training and upskilling in digital transformation

Employee training and upskilling play a crucial role in enhancing workforce engagement and digital transformation success (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). As organizations adopt artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and automation, employees require new skills and competencies to integrate these technologies effectively (Kane et al., 2015). Studies by analytics (2020), suggests that organizations with well-structured training programs experience higher employee engagement, reduced resistance to change, and improved digital adoption rates.

In organisations in Nairobi the workforce's readiness and training Strategies is lacking thus making digital literacy a primary hinderance to successful digital transformation necessitating continuous learning initiatives, (Kotter, 2014). Effective training programs include formal workshops, e-learning modules, peer mentoring, and experiential learning (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Organizations that integrate hands-on training, case-based learning, and cross-functional digital upskilling have reported higher employee participation in digital transformation initiatives (Gartner, 2021).

Additionally, transformational and servant leadership styles play an important role in encouraging and enhancing employee's learning and career development (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Greenleaf, 2013). Leaders who promote continuous learning through structured training programs foster an organizational culture where employees are more adaptable and receptive to digital innovations (Northouse, 2025).

Another trend is the impact of upskilling on employee's engagement that promotes job security, career growth, and overall employee satisfaction, contribute to higher engagement levels in digital transformation efforts (Analytics, 2020). Studies

suggest that organizations that fail to provide ongoing training often experience workforce disengagement, increased resistance, and inefficiencies in digital transformation adoption (Kane et al., 2015). Westerman et al. (2014) argue that leaders who align upskilling programs with business transformation goals ensure long-term digital resilience.

2.4.2.1 Challenges and Research Gaps

Despite the acknowledged benefits of employee training, studies reveal research gaps such as inconsistencies in how organizations implement upskilling initiatives. Some organisations invest in one-time training programs rather than continuous learning strategies on digital transformation, which results in low knowledge retention and skill application (Gartner, 2021). Furthermore, limited research explores the effectiveness of training programs tailored to Nairobi's workforce needs, creating a gap in understanding how localized upskilling strategies can enhance employee engagement in Kenya's digital economy. By investigating employee's trainings and leadership-driven upskilling initiatives, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of workforce engagement strategies in digital transformation.

2.4.3 Impact of organizational culture on the success of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation.

Organizational culture plays an important part in shaping the effectiveness of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation (Kotter, 2014). Organizational cultures influence how employees perceive, adapt to, and participate in digital change, affecting the success or failure of transformation efforts (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). Existing studies suggest that organizations with a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning experience higher employee engagement levels and smoother digital adoption (Analytics, 2020). However, rigid, hierarchical, and change-resistant cultures in organizations are the main contributors to digital transformation failures, that create barriers to workforce alignment and digital readiness (Kane et al., 2015). Despite leadership-driven efforts and remedy interventions, cultural resistances remain a major setback in many organizations

undergoing digital transformation (Gartner, 2021). Some of the common cultural barriers experienced in organisations include fear of job displacement due to automation and AI integration (Analytics, 2020), lack of teamwork between departments, leading to slow digital adoption efforts (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014) and resistance to continuous learning, where employees struggle to adapt to emerging technologies (Kane et al., 2015). These barriers highlight the need for leadership strategies that align digital transformation goals with cultural change initiatives, to ensure that employees are motivated, informed, and engaged throughout the adoption.

2.4.4 Impact of digital literacy on employee engagement in digital transformation

Digital literacy has become an indispensable element in ensuring the success of digital transformation efforts. Employees who are digitally literate exhibit higher adaptability and innovation participate more actively and confidently in digital transformation processes (Vuori, Helander, & Okkonen, 2019). Conversely, a lack of digital literacy can contribute to frustration, resistance to change, and disengagement, especially when new technologies are introduced without adequate training or support (Bawany, 2020).

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' digital readiness by investing in structured learning opportunities such as digital training, mentorship, and accessible resources, leaders can close skill gaps while fostering a growth-oriented organizational culture. As Kane et al. (2015) note, organizations with leadership that integrates digital skills development into strategic planning tend to record better engagement outcomes and smoother transformation processes. Studies have shown that leadership who promote digital literacy not only enhances task efficiency but also boosts employee morale and innovation, as staff feel empowered to contribute to digital initiatives (Fitriana et al., 2024).

In Nairobi's rapidly digitizing organizations, addressing digital literacy gaps is essential for minimizing resistance and ensuring inclusive participation. Leaders who proactively promote digital competence foster stronger engagement, positioning

employees as co-drivers of digital transformation at the same time contributing to organizational agility and long-term sustainability.

Sub-research question	Key insight from literature	Supporting authors
How do leadership communication styles influence employee engagement?	Transparent, consistent communication builds trust and clarity.	Men & Stacks (2013); Bass & Riggio (2006)
What role does employee training and upskilling play in enhancing engagement?	Training increases confidence, reduces resistance, and improves digital adoption.	Kane et al. (2015); Davenport & Ronanki (2018)
How does organizational culture impact leadership-driven engagement strategies?	Cultures promoting openness, learning, and innovation support employee participation in transformation.	Schein & Schein (2017); Cameron & Green (2019)
How does digital literacy affect employee engagement in digital transformation?	Digital literacy increases participation, reduces resistance, and enhances empowerment in transformation efforts.	Vuori et al. (2019); Bawany (2020); Fitriana et al. (2024)

Table 1: Summary Matrix of Key Insight Questions and Literature

Source: Researcher (2025)

2.5 Summary and Research Gaps

2.5.1 Summary of Key Insights

The reviewed literature highlights that employee engagement plays a critical role in the success of digital transformation initiatives. Leadership communication, employee training and upskilling, organizational culture, and digital literacy are key variables that shape how employees respond to digital changes within their work environments. Communication strategies that are transparent, inclusive, and consistent improve employee alignment with transformation goals (Men & Stacks, 2013). Similarly, leadership-led training initiatives that focus on building digital competencies reduce resistance and build confidence among employees (Kane et al., 2015).

However, despite these insights, research on leadership-driven employee engagement in digital transformation remains largely concentrated in developed economies, with limited focus on emerging markets such as Nairobi (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). This study seeks to bridge that gap by exploring context-specific leadership strategies that enhance employee engagement in digital transformation efforts within Nairobi's corporate sector.

Most studies focus on top-down leadership approaches in organisations rather than employee centred approaches. Future research ought to explore co-creation models where employees actively contribute to digital transformation strategies (Denning, 2018). This way, factors such as employee resistance is mitigated since the employees are informed and actively involved in the transformation process.

There is need for iterative leadership strategies for digital transformation and Adaptive Research shows that existing studies often focus on static leadership models yet digital transformation requires ongoing adaptation. Further studies advocated by researchers such as Avison (1999) highlight that Action Research gives an opportunity for real-time strategy refinement, making it a valuable methodology for future studies. Thus, future studies will be impactful in exploring how organizational leaders can continually refine employee engagement strategies through iterative feedback loops. Many existing studies emphasize leadership behaviours but often overlook the impact of digital skill development as an engagement tool within organizations. Future

studies should further look into how organizational leaders can incorporate training, workshops and upskilling sessions with engagement strategies for all employees in the organizations.

2.5.2 Identified Research Gaps

2.5.2.1 Gap in Leadership Communication and Engagement

Most studies focus on top-down communication strategies but overlook how bidirectional communication and employee voice influence engagement during transformation, particularly in the Kenyan context (Northouse, 2025; Bass & Riggio, 2006). There is also limited insight into which specific communication styles and channels are most effective in Nairobi's corporate context as well (Gartner, 2021).

2.5.2.2 Gap in Training and Upskilling Approaches

While the importance of training is acknowledged, studies show evidence of insufficient exploration. Training and upskilling improve employee engagement, but few have examined the long-term impact of leadership-driven training models on digital adoption rates in Nairobi (Kotter, 2014).

2.5.2.3 Gap in Organizational Culture and Digital Readiness

Existing literature largely focuses on Western organizational models of culture, with minimal research on how local organizational cultures in Nairobi shape employee engagement during digital transitions (Schein & Schein, 2010). There is also insufficient research on how specific cultural factors influence digital transformation success in African markets, particularly in Nairobi (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

2.5.2.4 Gap in Digital Literacy and Employee Engagement

Although digital literacy is critical to digital transformation, there is limited research on how leadership-driven digital literacy initiatives influence employee engagement in emerging economies like Kenya. Most existing studies centre on higher education or IT sectors without exploring general organizational ecosystems (Vuori et al., 2019; Fitriana et al., 2021).

2.5.2.3 Contribution of this study

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to existing knowledge by providing practical insights into how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in digital transformation within Nairobi-based organizations. By examining leadership communication styles, training interventions, cultural alignment and employee digital literacy, the research will contribute towards; theoretical advancements by refining leadership engagement models in digital transformation for developing economies such as Nairobi, practical recommendations for business leaders on effective communication, employee skill development, cultural adaptation strategies, digital literacy and policy implications for organizations and stakeholders looking to enhance workforce engagement in digital transformation efforts.

By filling these knowledge gaps, the study will help organizations in Nairobi develop sustainable leadership-driven strategies that foster digital adoption, improve employee participation, and ensure long-term digital transformation success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in digital transformation within selected organizations in Nairobi. It provides a detailed account of the research design, data collection methods, target population, and analytical approach used to achieve the study's objectives. By employing a mixed-methods action research approach, this study ensures a comprehensive examination of leadership-driven engagement strategies, offering both quantitative insights and qualitative depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The methodology is designed to bridge the research gaps identified in the literature, providing context-specific insights into leadership's role in digital transformation.

3.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The primary objective of this study is to explore leadership strategies that enhance employee engagement in digital transformation efforts within Nairobi's corporate sector. The research Objectives and questions as seen in Chapter 1, Section 1.3 to 1.5.

3.3 Overview of the Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods action research approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data to provide an all-rounded understanding of leadership's role in digital transformation. The quantitative component involves structured surveys targeting employees, while the qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders, IT experts and employees. This methodological triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of findings by capturing both statistical trends and in-depth perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The research will be conducted within selected organizations in Nairobi that are actively undergoing digital transformation. The study targets three key respondent groups: organizational leaders, IT/digital transformation experts, and employees. This diverse sample ensures a balanced representation of leadership perspectives and

employee experiences, giving room for a rich comparative analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

3.4 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research to provide a comprehensive understanding of how leadership strategies influence employee engagement in digital transformation within selected organizations in Nairobi. This design ensures that the study captures both measurable trends in employee engagement and the nuanced leadership experiences fostering digital adoption (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

3.4.1 Overall Research Approach

A mixed-methods approach allows simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring that the study captures both measurable trends and deeper contextual insights (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The quantitative component consists of structured surveys distributed to all the respondents in the data collection categories. This enables the researcher to gather statistical data on employee engagement, perceptions of leadership effectiveness, and organizational readiness for digital transformation (Bryman, 2016).

The qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders, IT/digital transformation experts and employees. These methods allow for a deeper exploration of leadership decision-making processes, communication strategies, and cultural dynamics that influence employee engagement (Merriam & Tisdell, 2025). The combination of both data types ensures that the research provides both empirical evidence and rich narrative insights into the role of leadership in digital transformation.

3.4.2 Justification for the Mixed-Methods Approach

A quantitative only study would provide measurable trends but may fail to capture the complexities of leadership behaviour and employee experiences in digital transformation. On the contrary, a qualitative exclusive study would offer in-depth

insights but may lack the statistical validity needed to generalize findings across multiple organizations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). By integrating both methods, this study ensures that quantitative findings can be explained and expounded using qualitative data, leading to more robust conclusions (Yin, 2017).

This research also adopts an action research perspective, where findings will not only be analysed but also applied to improve leadership engagement strategies (Herr & Anderson, 2014). Action research is particularly useful in organizational settings, as it advocates for continuous learning and iterative improvement of leadership practices in digital transformation efforts (Reason & Bradbury, 2015).

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1 Target Population

The target population for this study consists of employees across all levels in the selected organizations. The employees were chosen because they play crucial roles in shaping, implementing, and experiencing digital transformation initiatives. The Organizational leaders are responsible for developing and executing leadership strategies that influence employee engagement whereas IT experts and digital transformation experts provide technical expertise and insights on digital adoption challenges and solutions (Kotter, 2014; Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014), these two categories will play the role of key informants in that they will supplement, confirm or refute data collected from the employees. This is because employees across all levels are directly impacted by digital transformation, because they provide first-hand accounts of engagement experiences, training effectiveness, and cultural shifts within their organizations (Analytics, 2020).

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

This study employs a non-probability purposive sampling technique, which ensures that participants are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives rather than through random selection (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Purposive sampling is particularly effective in action research and qualitative studies because it allows the

researcher to target individuals with specialized capacities such as expertise, experiences, or involvement in digital transformation initiatives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

For the quantitative component, a stratified sampling approach will be used to ensure representation across different organizational levels. Employees will be grouped based on their role within the organization whether leadership, IT, or general workforce, to ensure a balanced and comprehensive dataset. Stratified sampling enhances the reliability and credibility of the study by ensuring diverse perspectives are captured across hierarchical levels (Bryman, 2016).

3.5.3 Sample Size Determination

The sample size is determined based on the need for a representative dataset while ensuring practical feasibility within the study's scope. The study aims to recruit 15-20 organizational leaders, 10-20 IT/digital transformation experts, and 40-100 employees. This results in an estimated total sample size of 75-135 participants, which objectively will provide sufficient data for statistical analysis while maintaining depth in qualitative insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

For the quantitative survey, Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) Table will guide the determination of an adequate employee sample, ensuring statistical validity. The qualitative component will follow the principle of data saturation, meaning interviews will continue until no new themes emerge from the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2025). This approach ensures that the study scientifically derives sample sizes for a given population, ensuring statistical validity and representativeness.

The combination of purposive and stratified sampling techniques ensures that all stakeholder perspectives are included, providing a well-rounded understanding of leadership’s impact on employee engagement in digital transformation.

Respondent	Interviews	Questionnaire
Organizational Leaders	5	15 - 20
IT Experts	5	10 - 20

All Employees	20	40 - 100
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Table 2: Supplementary Figure/Proposed data to be collected from all respondent categories.

Source: Researcher (2025)

3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 Overview of Data Collection Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods data collection approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather comprehensive insights into leadership strategies for employee engagement in digital transformation. The primary data collection methods include surveys, interviews and observation to ensure a diverse and well-rounded dataset (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These methods were selected to capture both measurable trends and deeper contextual understanding, enhancing the study’s validity and applicability (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

3.6.2 Surveys

Surveys will be used as the quantitative data collection tool to assess employee perceptions of leadership effectiveness, engagement strategies, and digital transformation experiences. Structured questionnaires with closed-ended, Likert-scale, demographic and open-ended questions will be distributed to all respondents’ categories to gather statistical data on leadership communication, training adequacy, and workplace culture (Bryman, 2016). Surveys are particularly useful for quantifying engagement trends, identifying patterns, and ensuring generalizability across the sample population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

3.6.3 Interviews

To gain in-depth qualitative insights, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with all respondents’ categories including leaders, IT experts and employees. These

interviews will explore leadership decision-making processes, challenges in employee engagement, and strategies for overcoming digital adoption resistance (Merriam & Tisdell, 2025). A semi-structured format allows for flexibility in responses, enabling interviewees to provide rich narratives and practical experiences that complement survey findings (Yin, 2017).

3.6.4 Observation

Observation provides first-hand insights into leadership practices, employee engagement, and digital adoption behaviours that take place in organisations. Using non-participant observation, systematic monitoring of interactions and workplace dynamics will validate survey and interview data. Ethical compliance will be ensured, and findings will enhance data triangulation for greater research credibility (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.6.5 Justification for Data Collection Methods

The combination of surveys, interviews and observation ensures that the study captures both broad statistical trends and deep contextual insights, aligning with the mixed-methods action research approach. Surveys provide quantifiable evidence, and interviews offer rich qualitative perspectives, (Saunders et al., 2009). By employing these diverse data collection techniques, this study ensures a comprehensive investigation into leadership's role in employee engagement during digital transformation, leading to practical and evidence-based recommendations for organizations in Nairobi.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

3.7.1 Processing and Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data collected through structured surveys will be processed and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Google Forms and Zoom will be used for survey distribution and initial data collection, allowing automatic organization

and real-time data monitoring. Once the responses are gathered, the data will be cleaned up and sorted in readiness for preliminary analysis.

To analyse the data, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations will be used to summarize employee engagement levels, leadership effectiveness, and perceptions of digital transformation strategies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Additionally, inferential statistical techniques such as correlation analysis and chi-square tests will be applied to determine relationships between leadership strategies and employee engagement trends (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach ensures that patterns, trends, and significant relationships within the data are identified, leading to data-driven conclusions about leadership's role in digital transformation.

3.7.2 Processing and Analysis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews will undergo thematic analysis, a method used to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Since interviews will be conducted via Zoom, the platform's built-in recording and transcription features will be used to ensure accurate data capture and ease of analysis.

3.7.3 Software and Tools for Data Analysis

Several digital tools will be utilized to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of data analysis. Google Forms will facilitate the collection and organization of survey data, while Microsoft Excel will be used for basic statistical computations, data visualization, and trend analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). Zoom will support virtual interviews, ensuring seamless communication and high-quality audio-visual recordings for analysis.

The combination of statistical analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data will ensure a comprehensive evaluation of leadership engagement strategies in digital transformation, providing evidence-based insights for organizational leaders and policymakers.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Ensuring Reliability in Quantitative Measurement

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of measurement tools in producing accurate and repeatable results over time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In this study, structured surveys will be the primary quantitative data collection tool, and their reliability will be ensured through internal consistency checks and test-retest reliability assessments.

Additionally, test-retest reliability will be applied by administering the survey to a small subset of respondents at two different points in time. Consistency in responses between the two rounds will confirm the stability and reliability of the instrument (Saunders et al., 2009). If inconsistencies arise, adjustments will be made to refine ambiguous or unclear questions, ensuring clarity and precision in data collection.

3.8.2 Ensuring Validity in Quantitative Research

Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Yin, 2017). To enhance validity, this study will implement content validity, construct validity, and external validity measures. Content validity will be ensured through expert reviews, where specialists in leadership studies, organizational behaviour, and digital transformation will evaluate the survey questions to confirm that they align with the research objectives and theoretical framework (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Feedback from these experts will help refine questions to improve clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness.

Construct validity will be assessed by ensuring that survey items effectively represent theoretical concepts related to leadership engagement, training effectiveness, and employee participation in digital transformation (Saunders et al., 2009). Factor analysis techniques may be used to examine how well grouped variables align with expected theoretical constructs, strengthening the integrity of the study.

To enhance external validity, a pilot study will be conducted with a small sample of employees and leaders before the full-scale data collection. The pilot test will help

identify any ambiguities, misunderstandings, or technical issues with the survey instrument (Bryman, 2016). Any necessary revisions will be made to ensure that the final survey accurately measures employee engagement and leadership effectiveness in digital transformation.

By implementing these reliability and validity strategies, this study ensures that the quantitative data collected is accurate, consistent, and generalizable, providing a strong empirical foundation for analysing leadership's role in employee engagement within Nairobi's digital transformation landscape.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

This study upholds ethical research principles by ensuring that all participants provide informed consent before engaging in the research process. Participants will receive a detailed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). This process ensures that participants fully understand the research before agreeing to take part, aligning with ethical standards for human subject research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary, and no respondent will be coerced into taking part. Employees, organizational leaders, and IT/digital transformation experts will be given the choice to participate, and they may decline or withdraw at any stage without justification. This principle of voluntary participation ensures that the study is conducted with integrity and respect for individual autonomy (Bryman, 2016).

3.9.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

To protect participant privacy, all data collected will be treated with strict confidentiality. Personal identifiers, such as names, job titles, and specific workplace information, will not be disclosed in the final research report. Instead, data will be anonymized and aggregated, ensuring that individual responses cannot be traced back to any participant (Yin, 2017).

Additionally, data security measures will be implemented to prevent unauthorized access to research information. Survey responses collected through Google Forms will be password-protected, and interview transcripts stored on secure, encrypted digital platforms. Only the researcher and authorized supervisors will have access to raw data, ensuring compliance with ethical data management practices (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.9.3 Institutional Ethics Approval and Compliance

This research will adhere to the ethical guidelines and policies set by the Uganda Christian University's ethics review board. Before data collection, the study will undergo ethical approval processes to ensure that it aligns with academic research ethical standards (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). By adhering to these ethical considerations, this study ensures responsible and transparent research practices, upholding the integrity of academic inquiry while protecting the rights and privacy of respondents.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

3.10.1 Potential Challenges and Constraints

Despite the careful design of this research, certain limitations may impact the study's scope, data collection, and overall findings. One key limitation is the sample size and representation. Since the study focuses on selected organizations in Nairobi, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all organizations undergoing digital transformation across different regions or industries (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). While purposive and stratified sampling techniques will be used to enhance representation, the results may still be influenced by organizational-specific factors.

Another limitation relates to participant bias. Employees and leaders may provide responses that reflect socially desirable answers rather than their true experiences, especially in leadership effectiveness assessments (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This could lead to overly positive or guarded responses, affecting the reliability of the data. Additionally, some participants may be hesitant to share critical insights due to organizational policies or fear of repercussions (Yin, 2017).

Time constraints pose another potential challenge. Given that data collection will be conducted within two weeks, there may be limited opportunities for follow-up interviews, deeper engagement, or iterative data validation (Bryman, 2016). This may restrict the depth of qualitative insights, particularly in complex leadership dynamics and digital transformation challenges.

3.10.2 Mitigation Strategies

To address sample size limitations, the study will include diverse organizations from multiple industries to enhance comparability and broader applicability of the findings. This will ensure that insights are not restricted to a single organizational culture or sector.

To mitigate participant bias, confidentiality measures will be reinforced such as non-disclosure of respondents' emails to ensure that all responses remain anonymous and cannot be traced back to individual participants (Saunders et al., 2009). Emphasizing the academic and non-evaluative nature of the study will also encourage honest and open responses.

To manage time constraints, efficient scheduling of interviews will be exercised. Additionally, data collection tools such as Google Forms for surveys and Zoom for remote interviews will be leveraged to streamline participation and maximize data collection within the available time frame (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). By proactively addressing these challenges, this study aims to enhance the reliability, credibility, and applicability of its findings, providing valuable insights into leadership strategies for employee engagement in digital transformation.

3.11 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology, explaining the mixed-methods approach used to explore leadership strategies for employee engagement in digital transformation. It described the study population, sampling techniques, and data collection methods, which include surveys questionnaire that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data, interviews, and observation. The chapter also

discussed data analysis techniques, with statistical tools for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative insights.

Additionally, the study incorporates measures to ensure validity, reliability, ethical considerations, and study limitations, ensuring research credibility. Strategies such as pilot testing, expert reviews, and confidentiality measures were highlighted. Furthermore, the chapter concluded by identifying potential study limitations, including sample size constraints, participant bias, and time limitations, while also outlining strategies to mitigate these challenges. The next chapter will present the findings from the collected data, analysing findings, offering insights into how leadership strategies impact employee engagement in digital transformation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings that was gathered in relation to the Central Research Question and insight questions as presented in Chapter 1 of this study. The data collection approach was a mixed method that comprised of Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation. The data collection methods show a clear and objective summary of the data collected during the collection process that entailed the below primary data collection methods;

- Surveys (targeting employees and organizational leaders),
- Semi-structured interviews (with Organisational leaders, IT /Digital Transformation experts and employees), and
- Observations from organizational settings carried out incognito.

Contrary to the initial plan as shown in chapter 3.3.3 in Table 1, the response rates exceeded expectations, allowing a wider respondents' pool of respondents. The collection integrated semi-structured interviews and questionnaires both open-ended and close-ended questions that depicted a wide range of knowledge on how leadership strategies influence employee engagement during digital transformation.

A total of **192 participants** contributed to the study, categorized as follows:

- 55 Organizational Leaders
- 40 IT and Digital Transformation Experts
- 97 Employees

4.2 Respondent Demographics

The total summary of responses was collected and grouped in the below respondent categories;

Respondent	Interviews	Questionnaire
Organizational Leaders	27 (12+15)	28
IT Experts	22 (7+15)	18
All Employees	31 (16+15)	66

Table 3: Supplementary Figure/Data collected from all respondent categories.

Source: Researcher (2025)

4.2.1 Organizational Leaders

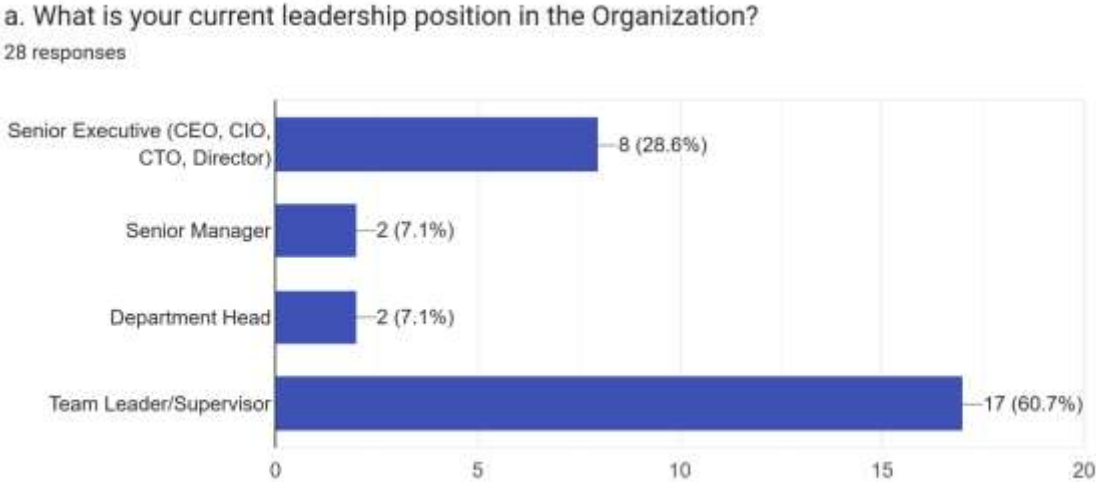


Figure 2: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 1

Source: Researcher (2025)

The data collected in figure 2 shows that 28.6% of the leaders belonged to the top tier level of leadership while the majority of the leaders at 60% of the respondents were either team leaders or supervisors. Whereas Senior managers and department heads were the lowest with each category tying at 7.1% of the respondents who responded through the questionnaires.

4.2.2 IT and Digital Transformation Experts

d. What is your organization's current stage of digital transformation?

18 responses

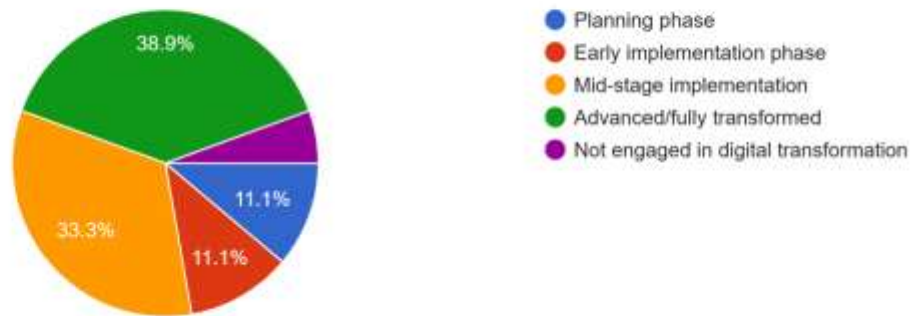


Figure 3: Supplementary Figure/ Pie Chart 1

Source: Researcher (2025)

Data collected through figure 3 shows that 38.9% of the Organizations under the IT experts' questionnaire are in the advanced stage of Digital transformation. Findings showed that most organizations in Nairobi are in the advanced phase of digital transformation. This fact is supported further by the second leading phase being middle stage of implementation categories by 33.3% of respondents. While less than 22.2% of the organizations are in the lower stages of digitization.

4.2.3 All Employees

b. How many years have you worked in your current organization?

66 responses

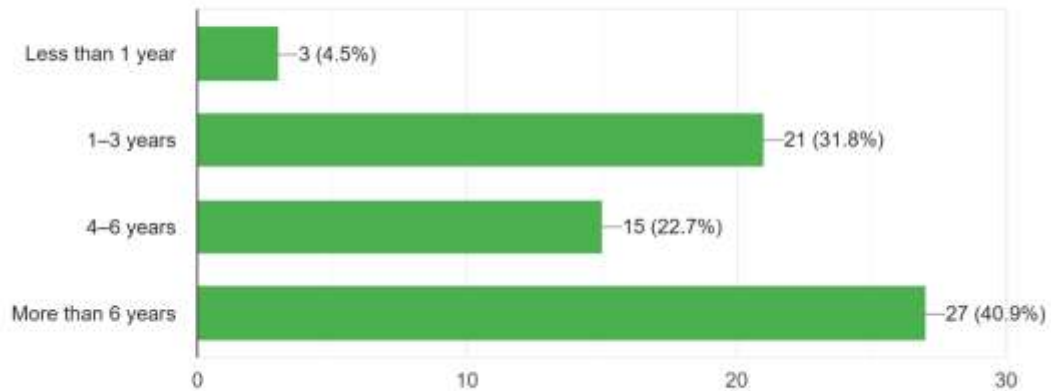


Figure 4: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 2

Source: Researcher (2025)

According to figure 4 above from the employees' questionnaires, it shows that 40.9% of the Employees had over 6 years of working experience. Findings show that majority of the employees who responded to this questionnaire were veterans in their respective organizations categorized by the 6 years and above experience that automatically disqualifies them as entry level employees.

4.3 Presentation of Key Themes

The qualitative data collected was structured and categorized based on the below recurring themes as evidenced through the charts as shown below;

4.3.1 Leadership Communication Styles and Employee Engagement

a. To what extent do you agree: "Leadership in my organization communicates a clear vision for digital transformation."

66 responses

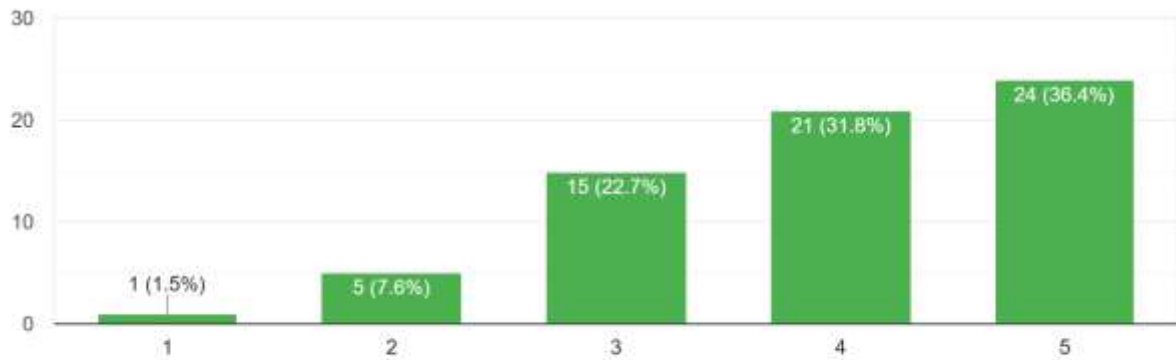


Figure 5: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 3

Source: Researcher (2025)

a. Leadership in my organization effectively communicate digital transformation goals to employees.

28 responses

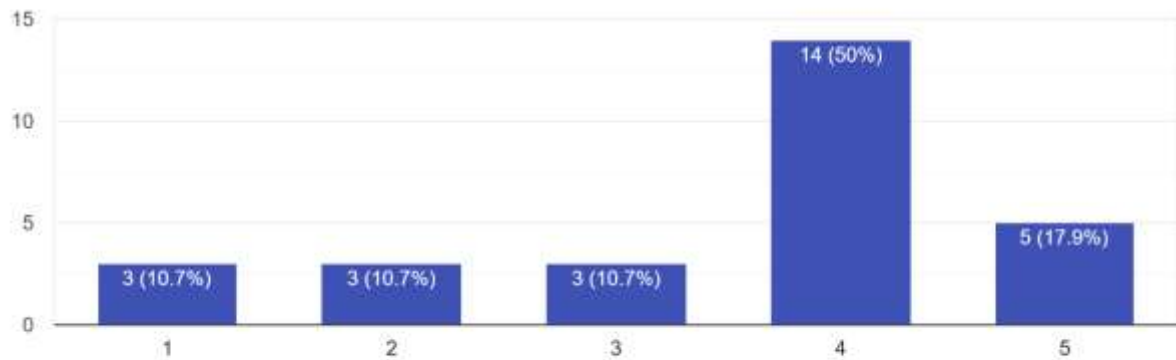


Figure 6: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 4

Source: Researcher (2025)

From both figure 5 and 6, over 30% of the respondents from the employee's category and Organisational leader's category agreed that communication of digital transformation goals was effectively communicated within their respective organizations. This can be seen by the 50% of the Organisational leaders and 67.2% of the employees agreed on the same fact that Leaders in their organizations effectively communicate a clear vision for digital transformation.

4.3.2 Role of Training and Upskilling

b. Employees are provided with adequate training and support to adapt to digital transformation changes.

28 responses

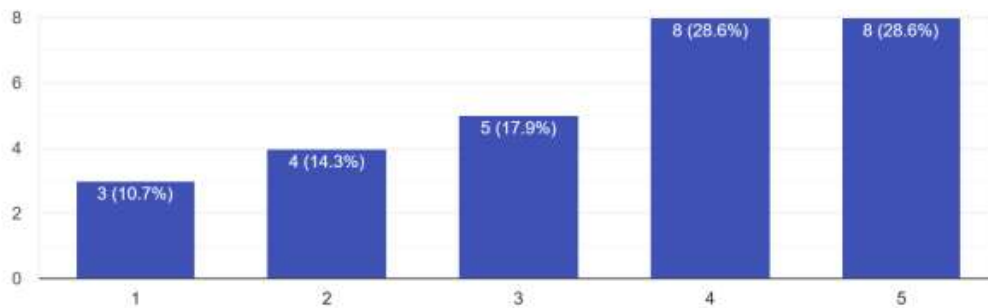


Figure 7: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 5

Source: Researcher (2025)

b. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My organization's leadership effectively supports employees in learning and adapting to new digital tools?"

66 responses

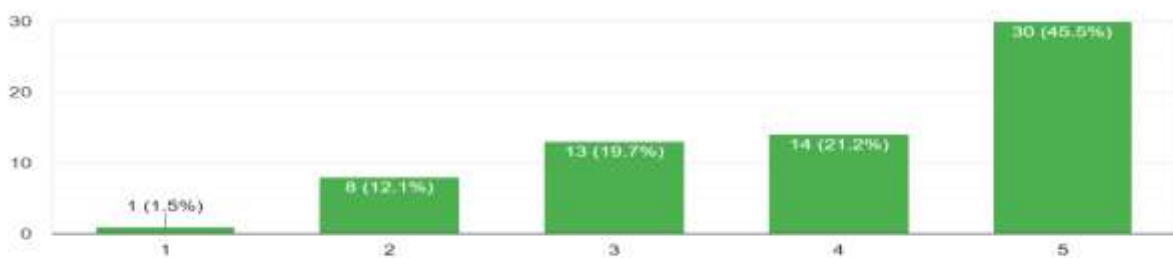


Figure 8: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 6

Source: Researcher (2025)

Training increases the participation of employees and increases their confidence as shown below. There's a tie of 28.6% in agreement from organisational leaders on the fact that employees are provided with adequate training and support to adapt in digital transformation. The same findings are depicted in the employees' questionnaire where the highest number employees signified by 45.5% of the total employee respondents agreeing that their leaders support them in learning and adapting to new digital tools.

4.3.3 Organizational Culture's Influence

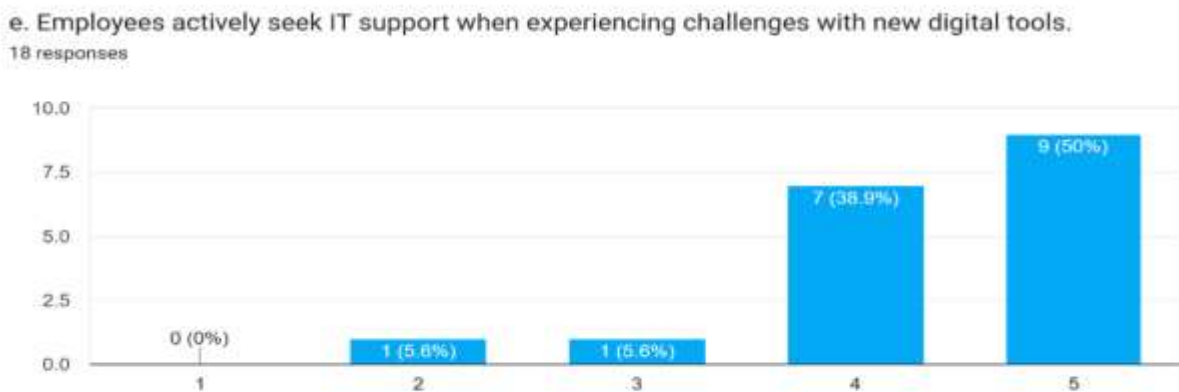


Figure 9: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 7

Source: Researcher (2025)

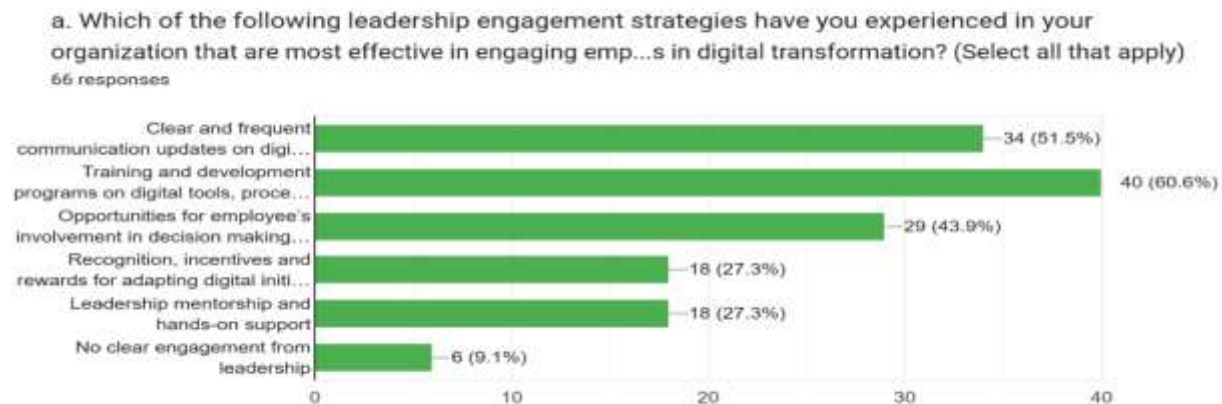


Figure 10: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 8

Source: Researcher (2025)

b. Employees are provided with adequate training and support to adapt to digital transformation changes.

28 responses

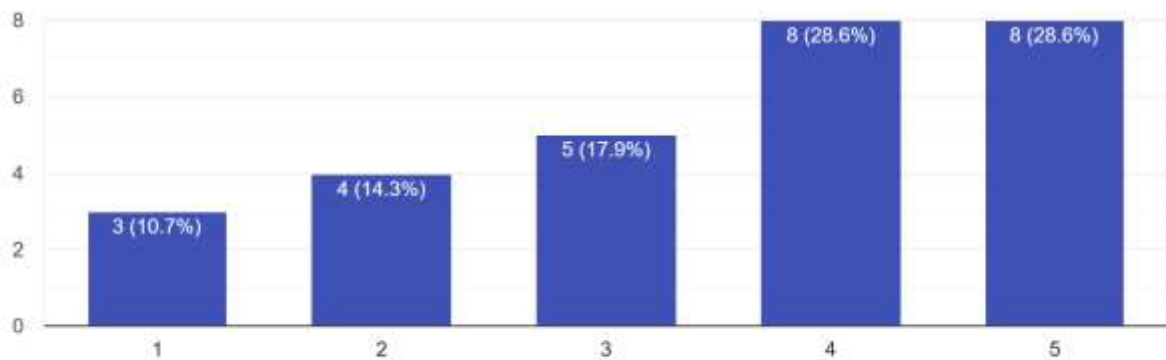


Figure 11: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 9

Source: Researcher (2025)

Different cultural factors in organisations impact the effectiveness of leadership strategies differently. For instance, in the above graphs the culture of seeking clarity and assistance from the IT experts is a good culture that enhances Digital adoption which can be seen across all the respondent categories as shown in all the respondent categories.

4.3.4 Digital literacy on employee engagement in digital transformation.

e. Which leadership strategies have you found most effective in engaging employees during digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

18 responses

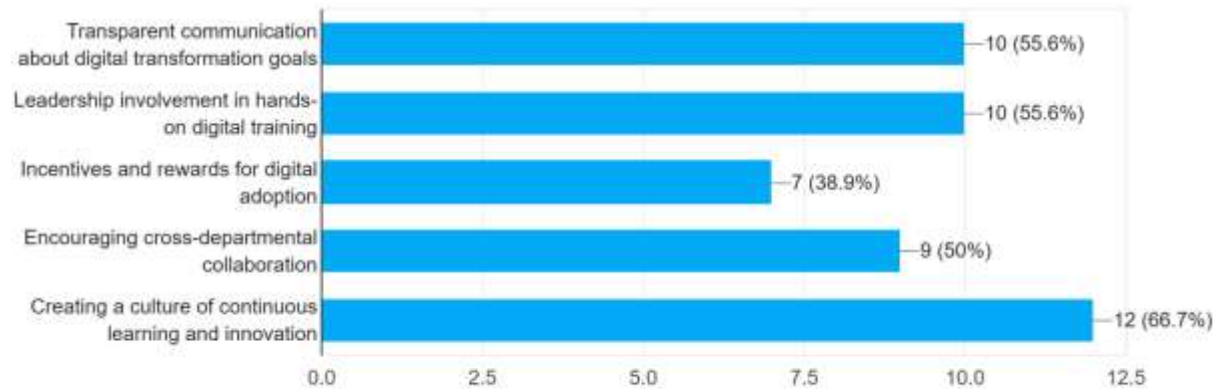


Figure 12: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 10

Source: Researcher (2025)

a. Which of the following leadership engagement strategies have you experienced in your organization that are most effective in engaging employees in digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

66 responses

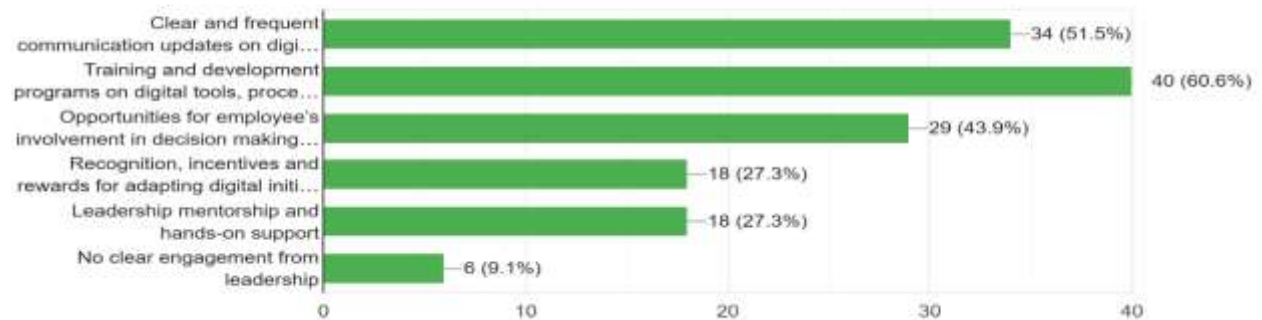


Figure 13: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 11

Source: Researcher(2025)

e. Based on your experience what is the most effective approach to overcoming employee resistance to digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

28 responses

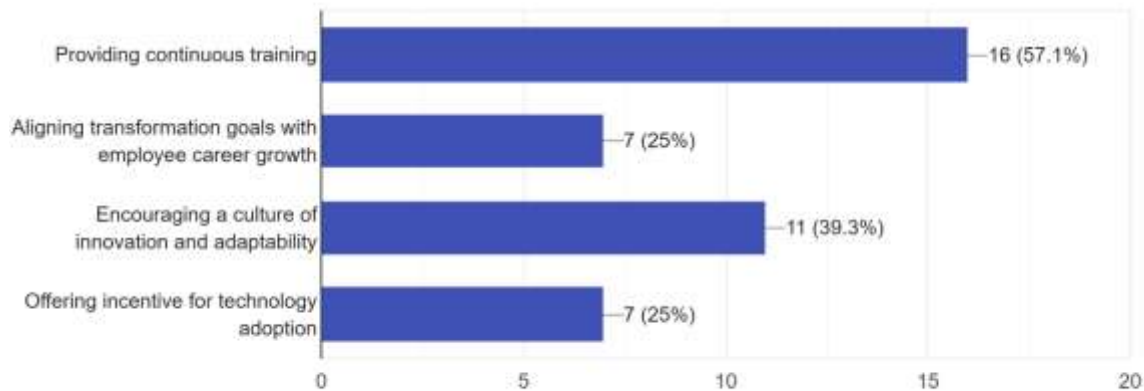


Figure 14: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 12

Source: Researcher (2025)

Based on figure 12 there is a 55.6% and 66.7% of Tech experts who support leadership hands-on involvement in digital literacy and creating a continuous learning and innovation culture respectively, whereas in the employees' questionnaire figure 13, 60.6% of the respondents endorse training and development programs of digital tools and lastly, figure 14 also has the highest percentage of respondents opting for provision of continuous training followed by the second highest respondents with a 39.3% of organisational leaders supporting a culture of innovation and adaptability which in a nutshell supports digital literacy.

These findings through the continuous trainings seen in all three figures followed by encouraging cultures of innovation and adaptability endorsed by majority of the respondents show that digital literacy is backbone concern to all respondents. In the same way cultivating a continuous culture of innovation and adaptability speaks puts more emphasis in digital literacy efforts among all employees as a key factor in successful digital transformation.

4.4 Additional Emerging Themes

b. What are the biggest challenges you face when adapting to digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

66 responses

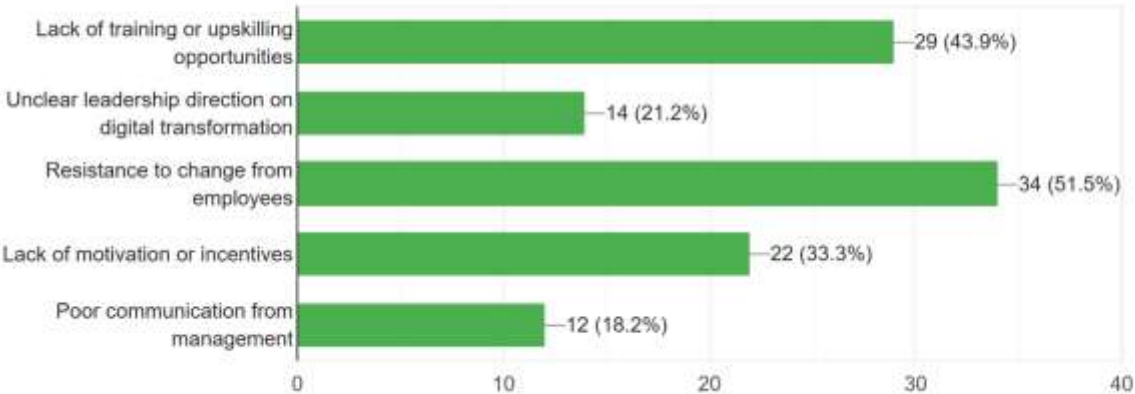


Figure 15: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 13

Source: Researcher (2025)

c. Employee resistance is a significant barrier to successful digital transformation in our organization.

28 responses

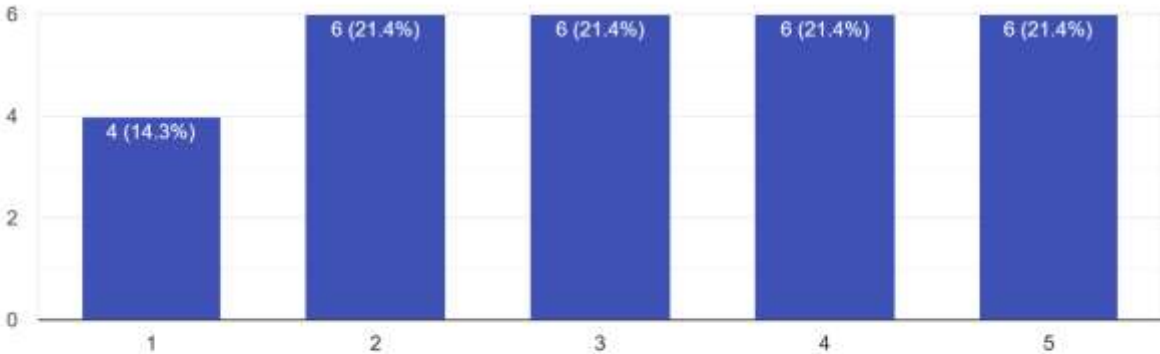


Figure 16: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 14

Source: Researcher (2025)

c. What are the primary challenges IT leaders face in engaging employees during digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

18 responses

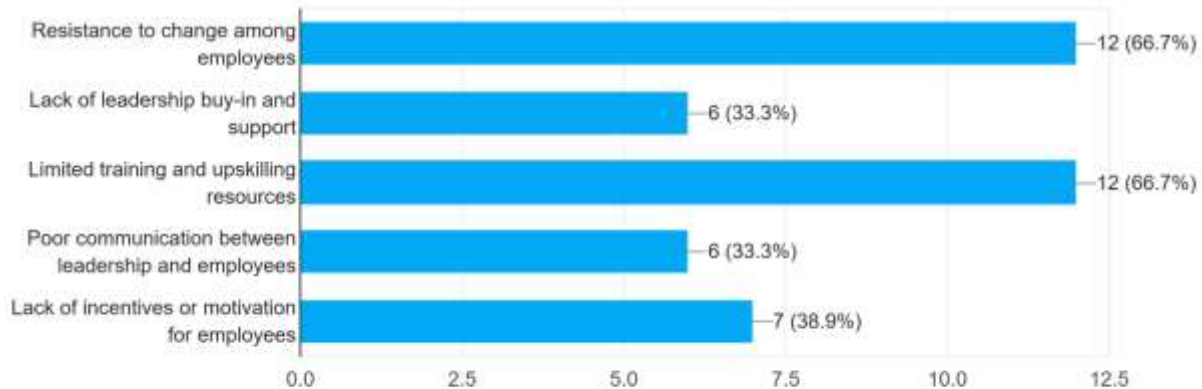


Figure 17: Supplementary Figure/ Bar graph 15

Source: Researcher (2025)

One pattern that emerged strongly in all respondent categories was of employees' resistance to change when it comes to adapting digital transformation. This can be seen the highest percentage of 51.5% as listed by employees as the biggest challenge when adapting digital transformation, by over 24 respondents out of 28 voting for employee resistance to change in the organisational leader's category and lastly 66.7% challenge as listed by IT experts as a primary challenge they face when it comes to engaging employees during digital transformation process. This is seen at a glance in figure 15, 16 and 17 all reflect that employees' resistance to digital transformation change is a major challenge in the success of digital adoption initiatives.

4.5 Summary of Findings

The key findings from the data collection process are summarised according to the study's research questions and major thematic areas that emerged from the field data. The following themes and patterns were observed across all the respondents' cartegories.

4.5.1 Leadership Communication and Engagement

- Employees responded positively to participatory, transparent, and regular communication from leaders.
- Lack of timely or inclusive communication contributed to feelings of uncertainty and disengagement.
- Communication effectiveness varied across departments and organizational levels.

4.5.2 Training and Upskilling as Engagement Drivers

- Training was recognized as a motivator and enabler of digital adoption.
- Staff who received regular training felt more confident and prepared for technological change.
- Inconsistent training access across units created disparities in engagement levels.

4.5.3 Role of Organizational Culture

- Cultures that encouraged collaboration, innovation, and openness to change were associated with higher engagement.
- Hierarchical and rigid cultures hindered employee involvement in digital initiatives.
- Resistance to change was more prevalent in organizations with traditional management styles.

4.5.4 Digital literacy on employee engagement

- Enhanced Confidence in Digital Tasks evidenced through feedback from employees with higher digital literacy levels exhibited greater confidence and autonomy.
- Reduced Resistance to digital transformation as a result of positive correlation between digital literacy and openness to adopting new technologies.

- digital competency and employee empowerment resulting in increased job satisfaction as employees can efficiently perform their tasks.

4.5.5 Emerging Themes

- Fear of job loss due to digital tools was expressed by some employees.
- Informal peer influence and internal champions played a role in encouraging adoption.
- Unclear or inconsistent transformation strategies led to confusion and hesitancy among employees.

4.5.6 Summary Table: Research Questions and Key Findings

Research Question	Key Findings
1. How do leadership communication styles influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives?	Participatory and transparent communication fostered trust and clarity; one-way communication led to disengagement.
2. What role does employee training and upskilling play in enhancing engagement during digital transformation?	Training boosted confidence and readiness; lack of access created inequalities in engagement across departments.
3. How does organizational culture impact the success of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation?	Collaborative and innovative cultures supported engagement; rigid and top-down cultures inhibited participation.

<p>4. How digital literacy affect employee engagement in digital transformation?</p>	<p>Confidence in digital tasks, reduced resistance to digital transformation and digital competency and employee empowerment.</p>
<p>Emerging Questions/Themes</p>	<p>Job security concerns, peer influence, and lack of clarity in digital strategies emerged as additional engagement factors.</p>

Table 4: Summary Table Research questions and key findings

Source: Researcher (2025)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings from Chapter 4 in relation to the research objectives, literature and theoretical framework. The central research question and insight questions guiding this study are drawn from chapter 1. The discussion is structured according to the insight questions, drawing comparisons with existing literature and reflecting on implications within the context of the Nairobi-based organizations studied.

5.2 Discussion of Major Findings/ Themes

5.2.1 Leadership Communication and Employee Engagement

Findings revealed that communication strategies significantly enhanced employee engagement. This is evidenced by leaders who practice effective communication through clarifying the organisations' vision for digital transformation, open-door policies and maintained consistent, transparent updates fostering greater trust and initiative among employees. This aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes inspirational motivation and individualized consideration.

Existing literature supports this observation because according to Bass (1999), transformational leaders empower employees by fostering two-way communication and shared vision. In contrast, top-down, authoritarian leadership communication styles reported in some organizations lead to disengagement, confusion, and resistance to digital initiatives.

Respondents' quotes emphasized the value of being involved in decision-making and informed: *"We feel more committed when we are involved in the decision making and being part of the conversation, not just as receivers of decisions."* This suggests that the way leaders communicate during digital change directly affects employees' morale and buy-in.

5.2.2 Training and Upskilling as a Strategic Lever

Training emerged as a fundamental factor in preparing employees for digital change. Employees who received structured and consistent training demonstrated greater confidence, adaptability, and willingness to support digital transformation goals. These research findings align with Kotter's (2012) change model, which emphasizes empowerment through skill development. Moreover, the ADKAR model underscores knowledge and ability as critical phases in successful change adoption.

Interestingly, Organisations that lacked access to frequent training and support expressed frustration and disengagement. This highlights a gap in leadership strategy and a missed opportunity for inclusive engagement. Employees noted, *“Training helped me understand what’s expected and improve on my computer literacy skills, this made digitization less intimidating.”*

5.2.3 Role of Organizational Culture

The cultural context of organizations strongly influenced how leadership strategies were received. In organizations where openness, collaboration, and innovation were part of the cultural DNA, digital transformation was smoother and more enthusiastically embraced. This observation mirrors Schein's (2010) theory on organizational culture, where shared values and behavioural norms determine the success of change initiatives.

Conversely, in hierarchical cultures with rigid reporting lines and resistance to new ideas, digital transformation encountered significant obstacles. Generational differences also surfaced as a nuanced challenge. Younger employees were more adaptable and open to change, while older staff often preferred legacy systems, highlighting the need for tailored leadership approaches.

5.2.4 Digital literacy on employee engagement

Employees with higher digital literacy levels exhibit greater confidence and autonomy when engaging with digital tools and platforms. This confidence smoothens their adaptation to new technologies and processes, enhancing overall productivity and job satisfaction. Chan et al. (2021) found that digital literacy moderates the relationship

between workplace digitalization and employee engagement, indicating that digitally literate employees are more likely to embrace digital transformation initiatives.

A major hinderance to successful digital transformation is employee resistance, which often stems from fear of the unknown or lack of skills. Providing comprehensive digital literacy training can mitigate this resistance by equipping employees with ideal skills and knowledge, thereby promoting a more positive attitude towards change. Vuori et al. (2019) emphasize that digitalization in knowledge work boosts performance when employees are adequately trained, reducing resistance and promoting engagement.

Developing digital competencies empowers employees, thus enabling them to take initiative and contribute to innovation within their respective organization. Researchers such as Cetindamar Kozanoglu and Abedin (2021) conceptualize digital literacy as a multi-dimensional organizational affordance, suggesting that enhancing digital skills among employees leads to greater empowerment and active participation in digital transformation efforts.

5.2.5 Emerging Themes

An unanticipated theme emerged, “Fear of Job Loss” Many employees linked digital transformation to potential redundancy, that was a threat to their job security. This led to all the respondent groups listing this theme as a challenge which undermined engagement. This theme suggest that leadership strategies must also address emotional and psychological aspects of change, which are not always covered in formal training or communication.

5.3 How Findings Address the Research Questions

My findings addressed the research questions as the objectives that guided this research study, the below questions show the findings;

5.3.1 Research Question 1: How do leadership communication styles influence employee engagement in digital transformation initiatives?

The findings confirm that participatory and transparent communication styles foster trust, ownership, and motivation to adopt digital transformation among all employees and senior executive leadership as well. On the other hand, authoritarian leadership communication styles correlated with disengagement and resistance of employees to digital adoption.

5.3.2 Research Question 2: What role does employee training and upskilling play in enhancing engagement during digital transformation?

Frequent training significantly improved employee confidence through digital literacy empowerment that empowers employees' personal skills and helps them in digital readiness. Lack of frequent training or the entirety lack of training resulted in confusion and exclusion among the employees, this emphasized its critical role in digital adoption and engagement strategies.

5.3.3 Research Question 3: How does organizational culture impact the success of leadership-driven engagement strategies in digital transformation?

Open, collaborative cultures supported change, while rigid, hierarchical ones resisted it. Leadership strategies were more effective in environments that already valued innovation and dialogue.

5.3.4 Research question 4: How digital literacy affect employee engagement in digital transformation

Digital literacy significantly influences employee engagement during digital transformation. Enhanced digital skills boost employee confidence in using new technologies, reduce resistance to change, and foster a sense of empowerment. This

empowerment leads to increased participation and commitment to digital initiatives, highlighting the critical role of digital literacy in successful transformation efforts.

5.4 Linkage to Theoretical Framework

The findings strongly support the relevance of Transformational Leadership Theory in driving employee engagement during digital transformation. Leaders who exhibited clear vision, empathy, and employees' inclusion were more successful in motivating their teams to embrace digital adoption. The ADKAR model also proved useful in understanding the role of awareness, desire knowledge, ability and reinforcement in change management. However, the findings suggest extending the model to include emotional resilience and peer influence as important enablers. This way the emotional aspect of employees can be considered and learning from each other by teaching others the skills we know thus promoting digital adoption.

5.5 Comparison with Existing Literature

5.5.1 Alignment with Previous Studies

The study corroborates several key findings from earlier research. For example, Bass (1999) emphasized that transformational leadership fosters trust and motivation, these are traits that were clearly evident in organizations practicing participatory leadership in this study. The benefits of training highlighted by this research affirm Kotter's (2012) focus on empowering employees through education and readiness.

Similarly, Hiatt's ADKAR model emphasized the importance of knowledge and ability both of which featured prominently in enhancing employee engagement in this case study. Schein's (2010) view of organizational culture as a determinant of innovation success also directly aligns with how open, collaborative cultures facilitated smoother digital adoption.

5.5.2 Contradictions and Gaps

Contrary to previous research that positions technology adoption as empowering, majority of the employees in this study expressed fear of job loss and loss of relevance,

which dampened morale. This introduces a psychological dimension not extensively covered in many traditional digital transformation frameworks. Another gap identified was that even organizations with strong leadership failed to maintain consistent training, contradicting the belief that leadership alone is sufficient to drive transformation.

5.5.3 Contribution to New Knowledge

This research adds fresh insights to the discourse on digital transformation leadership in the African urban corporate context, specifically Nairobi. The emergence of peer influence as a key motivator offers a new avenue for strategic engagement. Furthermore, the strong emotional and psychological undercurrents particularly fear of redundancy suggests that future leadership strategies must incorporate mental wellness and emotional security and intelligence more explicitly. This study also extends existing theories by recommending their adaptation to local cultural and economic realities, where rapid transformation can create both opportunity and anxiety concurrently.

5.6 Practical Implications of the Study

Leaders in Nairobi-based organizations should adopt participatory communication models, incorporate emotional and psychological safety in their strategies, and ensure frequent and consistent paid by the organisation training opportunities across departments. Also ensuring a platform for confidential feedback loop that breaks down the hierarchical gap between the leadership and employees will go a long way in promotion and adoption of digitization.

Small firms may need to creatively leverage peer leaders and internal champions. In larger organizations, structured leadership training and digital readiness programs could bridge generational and skill gaps. Employee inclusivity both in decision making and in offering tools suggestions will also bridge the system complexity issues because the workforce is the driving force for smooth adoption of digitization.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

While the study provides meaningful insights, it is limited by its scope in the following areas;

- The sample was geographically limited to Nairobi.
- The number of employee respondents in the questionnaires fell within the earlier proposed frame but did not exceed, this potentially skewing the balance of perspectives.
- Observational data, while insightful, may carry inherent bias because it was based on individual perspective.
- The virtual interviews despite being convenient in terms of cost saving and time they were affected by technical hitches such as network issues which affected connectivity. The effect of this limitation is almost minimum, the remedy entailed a repeat or rescheduling of the interview sessions.

5.8 Suggestions for Future Research

1. Expand the geographical scope to include rural and peri-urban organizations for broader applicability.
2. Investigate peer influence and emotional safety as distinct areas in digital transformation research.
3. Explore sector-specific differences in leadership and employee engagement strategies.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the study, by offering conclusions derived from the research findings, and provides practical recommendations. It also suggests areas for future research. All discussions and proposals are aligned with the research objectives set out at the beginning of the study, bringing the investigation to a cohesive close.

6.2 Summary of the Study

6.2.1 Problem Statement and Objectives

This study was guided by the central research problem: identifying leadership strategies that effectively foster employee engagement during digital transformation in Nairobi-based organizations. The main objective was to explore and analyse leadership behaviours and organizational practices that enhance employee participation and motivation in the context of technological change. Specifically, the study aimed to examine communication styles, training practices, and cultural influences.

6.2.2 Methodology Summary

A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing both surveys and interviews across selected organizations in Nairobi. Data was gathered from organizational leaders and employees to ensure a balanced perspective. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data, allowing for the identification of key patterns and themes.

6.2.3 Summary of Major Findings

- Transparent and participatory communication significantly improved engagement.
- Regular training and upskilling were crucial for employee readiness.

- Organizational culture shaped the reception and effectiveness of leadership strategies.
- Emotional factors such as fear of redundancy and peer influence emerged as important.

6.3 Key Findings and Interpretations

- Effective communication fosters engagement: Participatory and transparent leadership communication creates trust and motivates employees to align with digital transformation goals.
- Training enhances adaptability: Continuous upskilling improves confidence and morale, enabling staff to embrace change proactively.
- Culture determines transformation success: Organizations with a collaborative and innovative culture experienced smoother transitions.
- Emotional intelligence is vital: Addressing fears and promoting psychological safety can increase employee commitment.
- Peer influence drives momentum: Informal leaders and early adopters can be leveraged to motivate hesitant colleagues.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 Conclusion on Objective 1

Leadership communication styles that are participatory, empathetic, and transparent significantly enhance employee engagement. Top-down and unclear communication, by contrast, leads to mistrust and resistance.

6.4.2 Conclusion on Objective 2

Training and upskilling are critical levers for engagement. Equipping employees with the right skills reduces anxiety and increases readiness, making transformation initiatives more inclusive and successful.

6.4.3 Conclusion on Objective 3

A supportive organizational culture tremendously enhances leadership-driven engagement strategies during digital transformation. Promoting innovation, openness, and adaptability cultures empower organisational leaders to effectively engage employees, giving returns of smoother transitions and successful digital initiatives.

6.4.4 Conclusion on Objective 4

Elevated digital literacy among employees promotes greater engagement in digital transformation efforts. Proficiency in digital skills reduces resistance to change, boosts confidence in utilizing new technologies, and enables active participation in transformation processes for both organisational leaders and the entire workforce in organisations within the Nairobi context.

6.4.5 General Conclusion

The study concludes that successful digital transformation in Nairobi-based organizations depends on leadership strategies that combine clear communication, emotional intelligence, inclusive training, and an enabling culture. These elements are interdependent and must be addressed holistically.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Practical Recommendations

- Implement open-door policies and routine feedback loops.
- Provide consistent training opportunities across all departments.
- Address emotional and psychological concerns through wellness programs.
- Identify and support peer champions as change agents.

6.5.2 Recommendations for Organizational Leadership

- Adopt a transformational leadership approach to foster trust and motivation.
- Customize leadership strategies to accommodate generational and departmental differences.

- Foster a culture of innovation through incentives and recognition.

6.5.3 Policy/Strategic Recommendations

- National training bodies should develop digital readiness programs tailored to industry needs.
- Government policies affecting organizations to be reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness, eliminate redundancy and ensure relevance to digitization.
- Organizational policies should integrate emotional intelligence and mental health as key leadership competencies.
- Encourage cross-departmental collaboration to share best practices in digital leadership.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

- Extend research to include rural and peri-urban settings for comparative analysis.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to assess how leadership strategies evolve throughout digital transformation process.
- Explore sector-specific digital transformation challenges and strategies.
- Investigate the role of informal peer leadership in organizational change.
- Explore specific digital transformation process from adoption to implementation including the process flow among organizations' executive level.

6.7 Final Remarks

This research study highlights the fundamental role of leadership in guiding organizations through the complex journey of digital transformation. By focusing on employee-centred strategies such as communication, training, positive culture, inclusion, feedback loop and emotional safety, Organisational leaders can foster resilient and adaptable teams. The insights shared here contribute to a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics in the Kenyan context and it offer a foundation for more inclusive, effective transformation practices in the future.

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See Appendix A for the full Survey (questionnaire) for Organizational Leaders.

See Appendix B for the full Survey (questionnaire) for Employees across all Levels.

See Appendix C for the full Survey (questionnaire) for IT/Digital Transformation experts.

See Appendix D for the Survey Interview Questions for all Respondent Categories

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions for Organizational Leaders

This appendix contains the structured questionnaire used to collect responses from all respondent categories regarding their engagement in digital transformation initiatives.

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

Section 1: Demographic Information (*Closed-ended, Single Choice*)

What is your current leadership position in the organization?

Senior Executive (CEO, CIO, CTO, Director)

Corporate Manager (Department Head, Team Lead, Supervisor)

Digital Transformation Lead

Other (please specify) _____

How many years of leadership experience do you have in this organisation?

Less than 1 years

2-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

How would you describe the level of digital transformation in your organization?

Not yet started

Early planning/Just beginning phase

In the early implementation phase

Mid-stage implementation

Advanced/fully transformed

What is the primary sector of your organization?

Banking/Finance

Healthcare

Education

Manufacturing

Telecommunications

Retail & E-commerce

Government/Public Sector

Technology/Software Development

Other (please specify) _____

Have you implemented leadership strategies to engage employees in digital transformation??

Yes

No

Section 2: Leadership & Engagement Strategies (Likert Scale Questions)

a. Leadership in my organization effectively sufficient communicate digital transformation goals to employees.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

b. Employees are provided with adequate training and support to adapt to digital transformation changes.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

c. Employee resistance is a significant barrier to successful digital transformation in our organisation. (Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

d. The leadership team actively involves employees in decision making regarding digital transformation. (Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

e. Our organisation has a structured approach to measuring and improving employee engagement in digital transformation.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

Section 3: Closed-Ended Questions)

What are the main leadership strategies you use to engage employees in digital transformation? (*Select all that apply*)

Regular communication and update

Training and skill development programs

Employee involvement in decision making

Incentives and recognition for digital adoption

Clear alignment of digital goals with company vision

What is the most common challenge you face in ensuing employee engagement in digital transformation? (*Select all that apply*)

Resistance to change

Lack of necessary digital skills among employees

Inadequate resources for implementation

Misalignment between leadership expectations and employee concerns

Other (please specify) _____

How frequently do you assess employee readiness for digital transformation initiatives?

Monthly

Quarterly

Annually

No formal assessment is conducted

What forms of communication do you use to inform employees about digital transformation initiatives? (Select all that apply)

Regular team meetings

Emails and newsletters

Digital collaboration platforms

Workshops and training sessions

Other

Based on your experience what is the most effective approach to overcoming employee resistance to digital transformation?

Providing continuous training

Aligning transformation goals with employee career growth

Encouraging a culture of innovation and adaptability

Offering incentive for technology adoption

Section 4: Open-Ended Insights (Qualitative Responses)

- a. What leadership strategies have been most successful in driving employee engagement in digital transformation? In your opinion, what role
- b. What are the key factors that contribute to employee resistance to digital transformation, based on your observations?
- c. How do you ensure that employees remain motivated and adaptable during digital transformation efforts?
- d. What improvements would you suggest for better leadership-driven employee engagement in digital transformation?
- e. How do you assess the overall impact of leadership strategies on digital transformation success in your organization?

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire for Employees across all levels

This section provides the semi-structured interview guide used for collecting insights from senior leaders and middle managers on leadership strategies for digital transformation.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES ACROSS ALL LEVELS

Section 1: Demographic Questions (*Single Choice*)

a. What is your current job level?

Support staff/ employee

Entry-Level Employee

Mid-Level Professional

Senior-Level Professional

Other (please specify) _____

b. How many years have you worked in your current organization?

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

4-6 years

More than 6 years

c. What department do you work in?

IT/Technology

Finance and Accounting

Human Resources

Operations and Logistics

Sales and Marketing

Other (please specify) _____

d. How would you describe your familiarity with digital transformation initiatives in your organization?

Not aware at all

Somewhat aware

Moderately involved

Actively involved

e. Has your organization undergone or is currently undergoing digital transformation?

Yes

No

Not sure

f. If yes, how frequently do you use digital tools in your daily work?

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Section 2: Linkert Scale Questions with Single Response Options (*Kindly choose one answer from the listed set of pre-defined responses, (1 - Strongly Disagree/ Never/ Not engaged at all, 2 - Disagree/ Rarely/ Slightly engaged, 3 - Neutral/ Sometimes/ Moderately engaged, 4 - Agree/ Often/ Highly engaged, 5 - Strongly Agree/ Always/ Very engaged)*)

a. To what extent do you agree: "Leadership in my organization communicates a clear vision for digital transformation.

1 - Strongly Disagree/ Never/ Not engaged at all

2 - Disagree/ Rarely/ Slightly engaged

3 - Neutral/ Sometimes/ Moderately engaged

4 - Agree/ Often/ Highly engaged

5 - Strongly Agree/ Always/ Very engaged

b. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My organization's leadership effectively supports employees in learning and adapting to new digital tools?"

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

c. How would you rate your overall understanding and engagement of your role in your organization's digital transformation initiatives? (Likert Scale: 1 = Not Engaged at All, 5 = Very Engaged)

1 - Not Engaged at All / Strongly Disagree

2 - Slightly Engaged / Disagree

3 - Moderately Engaged / Neutral

4 - Highly Engaged / Agree

5 - Very Engaged / Strongly Agree

d. The organization provides sufficient training and support for employees during digital transformation.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

e. Leadership actively seeks employee feedback on digital transformation challenges and solutions.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

Section 3: (Closed-Ended Questions with Multiple Response Option)

a. Which of the following leadership engagement strategies have you experienced in your organization that are most effective in engaging employees in digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

Clear and frequent communication updates on digital transformation progress

Training and development programs on digital tools, processes and new digital skills

Opportunities for employee's involvement in decision making and giving feedback for digital changes

Recognition, incentives and rewards for adapting digital initiatives

Leadership mentorship and hands-on support

No clear engagement from leadership

b. What are the biggest challenges you face when adapting to digital transformation? (*Select all that apply*)

Lack of training or upskilling opportunities

Unclear leadership direction on digital transformation

Resistance to change from employees

Lack of motivation or incentives

Poor communication from management

Other (please specify) _____

c. What motivates you to engage with digital transformation initiatives? (*Select all that apply*)

Opportunities for career growth

Incentives or rewards for digital adoption

Leadership support and recognition

Ease of performing daily tasks with new technology

Peer encouragement and teamwork

d. What are the biggest challenges you face in adapting to digital transformation? (*Select all that apply*)

Lack of clear communication from leadership

Insufficient training on new digital tools

Fear of job displacement due to automation

Limited resources to implement digital processes

Other (please specify) _____

e. What communication channels do you find most effective for receiving digital transformation updates from leadership? (*Select all that apply*)

Emails and newsletters

Team meetings and town halls

Digital collaboration tools (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams)

One-on-one sessions with managers

Online training platforms

Section 4: Open-Ended Insights (*Qualitative Responses*)

- a. What specific actions from leadership have made you feel more included in digital transformation?
- b. Do you feel that your concerns and feedback about digital transformation are heard and addressed by leadership? Why or why not?
- c. What challenges have you faced while adapting to digital transformation, and how do you think leadership could support you better?
- d. What additional resources or support would make you feel more confident in adapting to digital transformation?
- e. If you could suggest one improvement to leadership's approach to engaging employees in digital transformation, what would it be?

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire for IT Experts/ Digital Transformation Experts

This appendix presents the questions and discussion prompts used in sessions with IT and digital transformation experts.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR Information Technology Experts AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION EXPERTS

Section 1: Demographic Information (*Single Choice Questions*)

a. What is your current role in digital transformation?

Executive IT Leaders (CIO, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), It Director, HOD's etc)

IT Manager (Project Lead, Systems Administrator, Data Analyst etc)

IT Consultant (Digital Transformation Expert, AI Specialist etc)

IT Helpdesk Officer

Other (please specify) _____

b. How many years of experience do you have in IT/ Digital Transformation?

Less than 2 years

2-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

c. What industry does your organization belong to?

Large Corporation (500+ employees)

Medium-sized Organization (51-500 employees)

Tech Firm (IT Consultant, Start-up, Private Sector, 1-50 employees)

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

Government Agency/ Public Sector

d. What is your organization's current stage of digital transformation?

Planning phase

Early implementation phase

Mid-stage implementation

Advanced/fully transformed

Not engaged in digital transformation

e. What is the primary focus of your digital transformation work?

Infrastructure Modernization (Cloud, Networks)

Software Implementation (ERP, CRM)

Data Analytics & AI

Change Management & Employee Training

Cybersecurity & Compliance

Other (please specify) _____

Section 2: Linkert Scale Questions with Multiple Response Options

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where: (1 - Strongly Disagree/ Never/ Not engaged at all, 2 - Disagree/ Rarely/ Slightly engaged, 3 -

Neutral/ Sometimes/ Moderately engaged, 4 - Agree/ Often/ Highly engaged, 5 - Strongly Agree/ Always/ Very engaged)

a. Leadership in my organization actively supports IT teams in driving digital transformation initiatives.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

b. Employees are given adequate training and upskilling opportunities before new digital tools and systems are introduced.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

c. Organization Leadership effectively communicates the purpose and benefits of digital transformation to employees.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

d. The current digital transformation strategy effectively aligns with employee needs and expectations.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

e. Employees actively seek IT support when experiencing challenges with new digital tools.

1 - Strongly Disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Neutral

4 - Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

Section 3: Closed Ended Questions

a. Which employee engagement challenges do IT teams face when implementing new technologies? (Select all that apply)

Employees feel overwhelmed by new technologies

Lack of IT support for troubleshooting

No incentives for employees to adopt digital tools

Slow leadership decision-making in approving digital initiatives

b. What level of involvement do IT leaders have in shaping employee engagement strategies for digital transformation?

Minimal involvement

Some involvement but not a priority

Active involvement in decision-making

Leading the strategy

c. What are the primary challenges IT leaders face in engaging employees during digital transformation? (Select all that apply)

Resistance to change among employees

Lack of leadership buy-in and support

Limited training and upskilling resources

Poor communication between leadership and employees

Lack of incentives or motivation for employees

Other (please specify) _____

d. What digital tools or technologies have been most impactful in driving digital transformation in Nairobi organizations? (Select all that apply)

Cloud computing & SaaS applications

Artificial intelligence & automation

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems

Collaboration tools (Microsoft Teams, Slack)

Cybersecurity & data protection solutions

e. Which leadership strategies have you found most effective in engaging employees during digital transformation? (*Select all that apply*)

Transparent communication about digital transformation goals

Leadership involvement in hands-on digital training

Incentives and rewards for digital adoption

Encouraging cross-departmental collaboration

Creating a culture of continuous learning and innovation

Other (please specify) _____

Section 4: Open-Ended Insights (*Qualitative Responses*)

a. In your experience, what are the most common technical challenges employees face when adopting new digital tools?

b. How do IT teams support leadership in engaging employees during digital transformation initiatives?

c. What are the most common mistakes leaders make when engaging employees in digital transformation, and how can they be avoided?

d. What strategies have proven most effective in increasing employee participation in digital transformation efforts?

e. What recommendations would you give for ensuring a smoother transition in digital transformation, based on employee engagement trends?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for all Respondents Categories

This section outlines the questions used to interview all respondents in the three categories

Interview Questions for Data Collection

Organizational Leaders (Senior Leaders & Middle Managers)

1. How do you ensure that employees are actively engaged in digital transformation initiatives within your organization?
2. What leadership strategies have you found most effective in overcoming employee resistance to digital transformation?
3. How do you communicate the long-term vision and benefits of digital transformation to employees at different levels?
4. In your experience, what are the biggest challenges leaders face in sustaining employee motivation and participation in digital adoption?
5. What specific measures have you implemented to assess and improve employee engagement during digital transformation projects?

2. Employees Across All Levels

1. How would you describe your level of involvement in your organization's digital transformation initiatives?
2. What challenges do you face when adapting to new digital tools or systems introduced in your workplace?
3. How effectively do you think your leaders communicate the purpose and benefits of digital transformation?
4. What kind of support (training, mentorship, incentives) do you believe would help improve employee engagement in digital transformation?
5. In what ways can leadership improve employee involvement and motivation in adopting digital technologies?

3. IT Leaders & Digital Transformation Experts

1. Based on your observations, how do employees generally respond to new digital technologies introduced in the organization?
2. What common technical challenges hinder employees from fully engaging in digital transformation processes?

3. How does the IT department collaborate with leadership to facilitate a smooth digital transition for employees?
4. From your perspective, what strategies have been most effective in equipping employees with the necessary digital skills for transformation?
5. What measures do you think can enhance employee confidence and willingness to adopt digital tools in their daily work?