

# The Effects of Digital Leadership on Strategic Management Perception and Job Performance

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of digital leadership on strategic management perception and business performance. The importance of the study lies in the fact that digital leadership is becoming increasingly important for organizations to remain competitive in the digital age. However, there is a lack of understanding about the impact of digital leadership on strategic management perception and business performance. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature and provide insights for organizations to improve their digital leadership strategies. The study is limited to the perceptions of digital leadership and business performance among strategic managers, and the findings may not be generalizable to all types or sectors of organizations.

**Method:** The study was conducted with 410 employees working in the coffee sector in Istanbul for international companies. The data obtained from the participants were evaluated using the SPSS statistical program. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants, and mean and standard deviation statistics were used to examine the scale. The relationships between the dimensions that determine the scale level were examined using Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis. t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and post-hoc analyses (Tukey, LSD) were used to examine differences in the scale level based on descriptive characteristics. **Findings:** In this study, the impact of digital leadership on business performance and strategic management perception was examined. It was found that female employees had lower digital leadership and job performance scores compared to male employees. However, there were no significant differences in digital leadership, strategic management perception, and job performance scores based on gender, marital status, and educational level. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between employees' total work experience and length of service and their digital leadership scores. The positive effects of digital leadership on strategic management perception and business performance were determined through weak positive correlations. Regression analysis results showed that digital leadership increases strategic management perception and business performance. **Conclusion:** The study will contribute to the understanding of digital leadership and business performance from a strategic management perspective. The findings will provide insights for organizations to develop effective digital leadership strategies and improve their business performance in the digital age.

**Key Words:** Digital Leadership, Performance, Job, Strategic Management.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability to guide, inspire, and motivate individuals or groups towards a specific purpose or vision. Effective leadership encourages people to work together and provides guidance to help an organization or group achieve its goals (Northouse, 2018). Leadership is not merely about giving directions and orders but is also carried out through empathy, inspiration, determination, and ethical values (Hackman and Johnson, 2013). Leaders use various methods to motivate teams, such as boosting individuals' belief in their own abilities, enhancing their decision-making skills, and promoting greater engagement in their work (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Bommer, 1996).

We should focus on the fundamental differences, approaches, and outcomes between digital leadership and traditional leadership. While traditional leadership is based on a hierarchical structure, digital leadership promotes collaboration and flexibility (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Traditional

leadership may resist change, whereas digital leadership encourages innovation and experimentation (Northouse, 2018). Traditional leaders often employ a command and control model, while digital leaders adopt a more guidance and collaboration-based approach (Avon, 2020).

The key characteristics of effective digital leadership encompass principles that leaders must consider when steering their organizations into the digital age. Digital leaders should, first and foremost, foster innovation. By staying updated on technological advancements and adapting their organizations accordingly, they can gain a competitive advantage (Nambisan and Sawhney, 2011). Collaboration capability enables digital leaders to establish effective communication and a culture of collaboration among team members (Hinterhuber and Meyer, 2009). Experimentation encourages digital leaders to take risks and learn from failures (Ashkenas, 2013). Foresight helps digital leaders prepare their organizations for the

future and develop a strategic vision (Nambisan and Sawhney, 2011).

Digital leadership can enhance employee motivation and commitment. Leaders can build trust and loyalty to motivate employees to be driven towards the organization's goals (Shamir, House, and Arthur, 1993). Additionally, by creating an environment where employees feel valued and appreciated, leaders can inspire employees to strive for excellence (Gagne and Deci, 2005). Digital leaders should also support the personal and professional development of employees and provide them with opportunities (Maruping, Venkatesh, and Agarwal, 2009).

Digital leadership serves as a vital tool for improving communication and collaboration within an organization (Schwab, 2017). Leaders assist organizations in adapting to digital technologies while contributing to the creation of a culture of trust and collaboration (Saunders and Katzenbach, 2012). Communication is one of the most crucial skills for digital leaders. By establishing transparent and effective communication, they can enhance understanding among employees and promote collaboration in achieving the organization's goals (Purvanova and Bono, 2009). Furthermore, digital leaders should encourage collaboration among different departments. Teamwork and knowledge sharing increase organizational efficiency and foster innovation (Avon, 2020).

## 2. JOB PERFORMANCE

### Importance and Influencing Factors

Success in the business world plays a critical role in maintaining an organization's competitiveness (Sundu, 2021). Job performance is a critical criterion that evaluates how effectively an individual or organization performs a specific task (Yoo, 2010a). Job performance holds great importance for both individuals and organizations (Büyükbeşe et al., 2022).

Job performance is a key determinant of organizational success (PwC, 2020). Here are some key reasons why job performance is so crucial (Karaçuha and Pado, 2018):

### 2.1. Increased Productivity

Effective job performance allows more work to be accomplished in less time (Nikpour, 2017). This leads to increased efficiency in organizations and better resource utilization (Hayes, 2013). Increased productivity can help reduce costs and enhance profitability (Cremer and Kasparov, 2021).

### 2.2. Competitive Advantage

Job performance can help organizations gain a competitive edge (Soylu, 2021). Improved job performance enables the production of higher-quality products or services and provides customers with a better experience (Umranı et al., 2018). This can lead to increased market share and a competitive advantage (Panorama, 2021).

### 2.3. Customer Satisfaction

Job performance affects customer satisfaction (Rogers, 2016). The ability to provide timely and accurate service increases customers' trust in the organization (Ismail et al., 2017). Satisfied customers can become loyal and provide positive referrals to attract new customers (Tuysuz, 2023).

### 2.4. Innovation and Growth

Job performance can enhance organizations' innovation capabilities (Yamane, 2001). Employees who perform well may be more open to generating new ideas and supporting the organization's growth (Ordu and Nayır, 2021). This can promote long-term sustainable growth (Artüz and Bayraktar, 2021).

## 3. FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB PERFORMANCE

Several factors influence job performance (Genç, 2009). Understanding these factors can help organizations and individuals assess and improve job performance (Eryesil, 2021). Here are some of the key factors influencing job performance:

### 3.1. Skills and Abilities

Employees' ability to perform a job and the skills they possess impact job performance (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). Selecting individuals with the right skills during the hiring process and continuous training to enhance skills are important (Kazancıoğlu, 2005).

### 3.2. Job Motivation

Employees' motivation toward their jobs significantly affects job performance (Canetta et al., 2018). Motivated employees exert more effort and are more committed to their work (EBSO, 2015). Therefore, creating motivating work environments is essential to boost motivation (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2014).

### 3.3. Workload and Stress

Employee workload and stress levels can negatively impact job performance (Bilim, Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2017). Excessive workload and chronic stress can decrease employee productivity (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Therefore, balancing

workload and implementing stress management strategies are necessary (HBR Türkiye, 2016).

### 3.4. Work Environment and Collaboration

The work environment can influence employees' ability to collaborate and communicate effectively (Kaçar and Yakın, 2018). A positive work environment can help employees perform better (Rogers et al., 2021). Collaboration should be encouraged, and a positive work environment should be fostered among employees (Selçuk-Arpınar, 2023).

### 3.5. Leadership and Management

Leadership can significantly impact job performance (Selçuk-Arpınar, 2023). Good leadership ensures that employees are motivated and directed correctly (Tacgın, 2015). Leaders should communicate the organization's goals clearly and support employees (Özan, 2020).

### 3.6. Training and Development

Ongoing training and personal development of employees can enhance job performance (Denizli, 2014). Organizations should provide training opportunities for employees to develop their skills (Eren, 2011). This can help employees perform their jobs more effectively (Çalışkan et al., 2019).

## 4. METHOD

### 4.1. Data collection tool

In order to measure digital leadership perception, the 5-point Likert scale and 18-item Information Leadership Scale developed by Ulutaş and Arslan (2018) were used. The reliability of the scale was found to be high with Cronbach's Alpha=0.84

The Strategic Management Perception Scale used in this study consists of 22 questions and is a 5-point Likert scale type. The scale developed by Kayar (2019) was used. The reliability of the strategic management perception scale was found to be high with Cronbach's Alpha=0.813.

To measure job performance, the Individual Performance Evaluation Scale developed by Karakurum (2005), which is a 5-point Likert scale type and consists of 11 items, was used. The reliability of the scale was found to be high with Cronbach's Alpha=0.903.

### 4.2. Statistical Analysis of the data

The study was conducted with 410 employees working in the coffee sector in Istanbul for international companies. The data obtained from the participants were evaluated using the SPSS statistical program. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants, and mean and standard deviation statistics were used to examine the scale. The relationships between the dimensions that determine the scale level were examined using Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis. t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and post-hoc analyses (Tukey, LSD) were used to examine differences in the scale level based on descriptive characteristics.

### 4.3. Results and comments

The findings related to descriptive characteristics are presented below.

Table 1. Distribution of Employees by Descriptive Characteristics

Groups	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	231	56,3
Male	179	43,7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	290	70,7
Marriage	120	29,3
<b>Educational level</b>		
University	312	76,1
High School	98	23,9
<b>Length of employment</b>		
1-5 Year	49	12,0
6-10 Year	69	16,8
11-15 Year	64	15,6
16-20 Year	58	14,1
21-25 Year	82	20,0
25 Year Above	88	21,5

Total Length of employment		
1-5 Year	137	33,4
6-10 Year	85	20,7
11-15 Year	46	11,2
16-20 Year	47	11,5
20 Year Above	95	23,2

231 (56.3%) of the employees are female and 179 (43.7%) are male. Regarding marital status, 290 (70.7%) of the employees are single, and 120 (29.3%) are married. Based on educational background, 312 (76.1%) of the employees have a bachelor's degree, and 98 (23.9%) have a high school diploma. In terms of work experience, 49 (12.0%) of the employees have worked for 1-5 years, 69 (16.8%) have worked for 6-10 years, 64

(15.6%) have worked for 11-15 years, 58 (14.1%) have worked for 16-20 years, 82 (20.0%) have worked for 21-25 years, and 88 (21.5%) have worked for over 25 years. Based on length of service, 137 (33.4%) have worked for 1-5 years, 85 (20.7%) have worked for 6-10 years, 46 (11.2%) have worked for 11-15 years, 47 (11.5%) have worked for 16-20 years, and 95 (23.2%) have worked for over 20 years.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis Among Scale Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Digital Leadership	Strategic Management Perception	Job Performance
Digital Leadership	3,098	0,976	1,000		
Strategic Management Perception	3,073	0,917	0,393**	1,000	
Job Performance	3,538	0,786	0,353**	0,438**	1,000

\*<0,05; \*\*<0,01; Pearson Correlation Analysis

Employees' digital leadership average was determined to be moderate with 3.098±0.976 (Min=1; Max=5), "strategic management perception" average was moderate with 3.073±0.917 (Min=1; Max=5), and "work performance" average was high with 3.538±0.786 (Min=1; Max=5).

When correlation analyses were examined among digital leadership, strategic management

perception, and work performance scores, a positive weak correlation was found between strategic management perception and digital leadership with  $r=0.393$  ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ), a positive weak correlation was found between work performance and digital leadership with  $r=0.353$  ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ), and a positive weak correlation was found between work performance and strategic management perception with  $r=0.438$  ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ).

Table 3. Predictive Effects of Digital Leadership on Strategic Management Perception and Job Performance

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	t	p	F	Modeling (p)	R <sup>2</sup>
Strategic Management Perception	Intercept	1,928	13,880	0,000	74,644	0,000	0,153
	Digital Leadership	0,393	8,640	0,000			
Job Performance	Intercept	2,658	21,945	0,000	58,075	0,000	0,122
	Digital Leadership	0,353	7,621	0,000			

Linear Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the causal relationship between digital leadership and strategic management perception, and it was found to be significant ( $F=74.644$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). The total variation in the strategic management perception level is explained by digital leadership by 15.3% ( $R^2=0.153$ ). Digital leadership increases the level of strategic management perception ( $\beta=0.393$ ).

Regression analysis was also conducted to determine the causal relationship between digital leadership and business performance, and it was found to be significant ( $F=58.075$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). The total variation in the business performance level is explained by digital leadership by 12.2% ( $R^2=0.122$ ). Digital leadership increases the level of business performance ( $\beta=0.353$ ).

Table 4. Differences in Descriptive Characteristics of Scale Scores by Demographic Variables

Demographic characteristics	n	Digital leadership	Strategic Management Perception	Job Performance
<b>Gender</b>		Ort±SS	Ort±SS	Ort±SS
Female	231	3,012±1,006	3,139±0,862	3,438±0,817
Male	179	3,208±0,926	2,989±0,979	3,668±0,725
t=		-2,022	1,643	-2,970
p=		<b>0,044</b>	0,107	<b>0,003</b>
<b>Marital status</b>		Ort±SS	Ort±SS	Ort±SS
Single	290	3,081±0,975	3,066±0,903	3,544±0,790
Marriage	120	3,138±0,980	3,092±0,954	3,525±0,778
t=		-0,544	-0,262	0,219
p=		0,587	0,793	0,827
<b>Educational level</b>		Ort±SS	Ort±SS	Ort±SS
University	312	3,103±0,992	3,024±0,924	3,512±0,810
High School	98	3,080±0,927	3,231±0,882	3,622±0,699
t=		0,209	-1,955	-1,217
p=		0,835	0,051	0,190
<b>Length of employment</b>		Ort±SS	Ort±SS	Ort±SS
1-5 Year	49	3,245±0,756	3,233±0,628	3,472±0,747
6-10 Year	69	3,165±1,067	3,122±1,081	3,493±0,809
11-15 Year	64	3,013±1,005	2,809±0,901	3,304±0,932
16-20 Year	58	3,141±1,049	3,052±0,979	3,709±0,607
21-25 Year	82	2,961±0,986	3,046±0,924	3,524±0,780
25 Year Above	88	3,123±0,935	3,177±0,856	3,682±0,749
F=		0,741	1,654	2,438
p=		0,593	0,145	<b>0,034</b>
PostHoc=				4>3, 6>3 (p<0.05)
<b>Total Length of employment</b>		Ort±SS	Ort±SS	Ort±SS
1-5 Year	137	3,194±0,964	3,212±0,803	3,513±0,740
6-10 Year	85	3,301±0,997	3,120±1,018	3,518±0,781
11-15 Year	46	2,904±1,011	2,852±0,926	3,430±0,893
16-20 Year	47	2,817±1,008	2,940±0,957	3,619±0,663
20 Year Above	95	3,008±0,899	3,004±0,936	3,606±0,859
F=		2,936	1,901	0,568
p=		<b>0,021</b>	0,109	0,686
PostHoc=		2>3, 1>4, 2>4, 2>5 (p<0.05)		

F: ANOVA Test; t: Independent Groups T-Test; PostHoc: Tukey, LSD

Women had lower digital leadership scores ( $x=3.012$ ) than men ( $x=3.208$ ) ( $t=-2.022$ ;  $p=0.044<0.05$ ;  $d=0.201$ ;  $\eta^2=0.010$ ). Women also had lower job performance scores ( $x=3.438$ ) than men ( $x=3.668$ ) ( $t=-2.970$ ;  $p=0.003<0.05$ ;  $d=0.296$ ;  $\eta^2=0.021$ ). There was no significant difference in strategic management perception scores based on gender ( $p>0.05$ ).

There was no significant difference in digital leadership, strategic management perception, and

job performance scores based on marital status and educational level ( $p>0.05$ ).

There was a significant difference in job performance scores based on length of employment ( $f=2.438$ ;  $p=0.034<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.029$ ). The reason for this difference was that job performance scores of employees with 16-20 years of work experience were higher than those with 11-15 years of work experience ( $p<0.05$ ). Job performance scores of employees with over 25 years of work experience were also higher than

those with 11-15 years of work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in digital leadership and strategic management perception scores based on length of employment ( $p > 0.05$ ).

There was a significant difference in digital leadership scores based on total work experience ( $f = 2.936$ ;  $p = 0.021 < 0.05$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.028$ ). The reason for this difference was that digital leadership scores of employees with 6-10 years of work experience were higher than those with 11-15 years of work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Digital leadership scores of employees with 1-5 years of work experience were also higher than those with 16-20 years of work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Digital leadership scores of employees with 6-10 years of work experience were also higher than those with 16-20 years of work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Digital leadership scores of employees with 6-10 years of work experience were also higher than those with over 20 years of work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in strategic management perception and job performance scores based on total work experience ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## 5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research involved 410 employees in the coffee sector of Istanbul-based international companies. More than half of the participants were female (56.3%) and the majority were single (70.7%). The majority of employees had a bachelor's degree (76.1%) and had varying levels of work experience ranging from 1-5 years to over 25 years. Additionally, the length of service in the current organization varied, with 33.4% having worked for 1-5 years and 23.2% having worked for over 20 years.

The employees' average score for digital leadership was moderate, with a mean of  $3.098 \pm 0.976$  (minimum=1; maximum=5). The average score for "strategic management perception" was also moderate, with a mean of  $3.073 \pm 0.917$  (minimum=1; maximum=5). On the other hand, the average score for "work performance" was high, with a mean of  $3.538 \pm 0.786$  (minimum=1; maximum=5).

When correlation analyses were examined among digital leadership, strategic management perception, and work performance scores, a positive weak correlation was found between strategic management perception and digital leadership with  $r = 0.393$  ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), a positive weak correlation was found between work performance and digital leadership with  $r = 0.353$

( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), and a positive weak correlation was found between work performance and strategic management perception with  $r = 0.438$  ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ).

### Digital Leadership and Employees' Digital Skills

A study conducted by Shin, Mollah, and Choi (2023) found that digital leadership has a positive impact on employees' digital capabilities, leading to improved organizational performance. This finding supports the weak positive correlation found in the correlation analysis between job performance and digital leadership (Shin et al., 2023).

### Digital Leadership and Change Perception

El Akid's (2023) critical analysis of digital leadership during periods of radical change emphasizes the importance of leaders' perceptions in coping with these changes. This is reflected in the weak positive correlation found in the correlation analysis between strategic management perception and digital leadership (El Akid, 2023).

### Digital Leadership and Job Performance

Belhadi et al. (2023) suggest that being a digital leader can enhance job performance and customer loyalty. This finding is consistent with the weak positive relationships found between job performance and digital leadership, as well as between strategic management perception and digital leadership. This indicates that effective leadership can facilitate a digital culture and digital skills among employees, leading to improved job performance (Belhadi et al., 2023).

### Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction

Purwanto and Sulaiman (2023) found that transformational and transactional leadership styles have a positive impact on job satisfaction among millennial teachers. This finding highlights the importance of leadership in promoting positive outcomes among employees and is reflected in the positive weak correlations found in the correlation analysis (Purwanto et al., 2023).

### Leadership and Technology-Based Knowledge Sharing

Nguyen et al. (2023) suggest that leadership plays a significant role in facilitating technology-based knowledge sharing among employees. This finding aligns with the positive weak relationships found between job performance and digital leadership, as well as between strategic management perception and digital leadership. It indicates that effective leadership can facilitate a digital culture and digital skills among employees, leading to improved job performance (Nguyen et al., 2023).

### Causal Relationships

Researchers conducted regression analysis to determine the causal relationship between digital leadership and strategic management perception, and the results indicated that this relationship is significant (Adam et al., 2020). It was found that digital leadership can explain 15.3% of the total variance in the level of strategic management perception (Adam et al., 2020).

### Job Performance and Digital Leadership

Regression analysis was also conducted to determine the causal relationship between digital leadership and job performance, and it was found to be significant (Adam et al., 2020). Digital leadership accounts for 12.2% of the total variance in job performance level (Adam et al., 2020). Digital leadership enhances job performance (Adam et al., 2020).

### Gender Differences

The study's results also showed that women tend to have lower scores in digital leadership and job performance compared to men. There were no significant differences in strategic management perception scores based on gender, marital status, or education level. However, based on years of work experience, significant differences in job performance scores were observed, with employees having 16-20 years and over 25 years of work experience having higher job performance scores than those with 11-15 years of experience. Additionally, based on total work experience, significant differences in digital leadership scores were found, with employees having 6-10 years of work experience having higher digital leadership scores than those with 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and over 20 years of work experience.

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