

# HUMAN-CENTERED MANAGEMENT INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND DIGITAL TOOLS IN ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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## Abstract:

Organizations are putting the spotlight on the human aspect of management innovation for a long-term victory in performance and competitiveness. The paper delves into the management perspective the interplay of leader effectiveness, emotional intelligence, and the use of digital tools on the performance of the organization.

Human-centered management insists on modernizing the approach according to the human values, feelings, and capabilities, thereby giving rise to the innovation, collaboration, and adaptability. Mutual presence of effective leadership and emotional intelligence boosts levels of employee engagement, the quality of decision-making, and organizational loyalty, while digital means of communication increase contact, information distribution, and efficiency of operations.

This research adds to management theory by positing an interconnected framework of human-centered innovation that includes leadership, emotional intelligence, and digitalization. It provides managers and policymakers with practical guidelines on how to create management practices that are workforce-inclusive, adaptable, and performance-oriented in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Human-Centered Management, Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Digital Tools, Organizational Performance, Management Innovation.

## INTRODUCTION

The modern-day corporate world is defined by new technologies that come in fast and furious, changes in the composition of the workforce and the organizational structure becoming more complicated. As Management Innovation has started to change, it has already moved from the traditional models that focused on efficiency to human-centered approaches that consider the well-being, emotional engagement, and ethical leadership of employees as the top priorities. The human-centered management innovation model acknowledges that the success of an organization is not only through the use of technology but rather the synergy of human capabilities with the digital tools.

In the role of leadership, it is absolutely decisive when it comes to the company culture and the whole process of innovation. Leaders who have emotional intelligence have the upper hand in managing the transition, resolving the disputes, and in motivating people to accept the changes during the process of digital transformation in organizations. The interviewees can elicit to an extent the feelings of the subordinates, establishing an atmosphere of trust and being open to their participation, which is precisely what knowledge-driven companies need in order to maintain productivity. At the same time, the digital tools such as the collaborative platforms, analytics dashboards, and communication technologies have also changed the managerial processes as they enhance the speed, transparency, and quality of decision-

making.

But, the use of digital tools is reliant mainly on how those in control lead and their capability to manage emotions. Resistance, non-participation, and performance results below the intended level are some of the problems that usually come up in the case of organizations using technology while ignoring the human factors. Hence, it has become a trend in the management world to regard the leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools integration as a human-centered approach.

Through the use of digital tools, the role of leadership and emotional intelligence in shaping organizational performance is examined in this work. The conducting of the research from a management-centered and multi-disciplinary point of view helps the study to be a part of the ongoing debate about the need for and the means to achieve sustainable and inclusive management innovation. The research is of great importance for the organizations that want to have the technology progress along with the human values so that eventually they can reap the benefits in terms of longevity and organizational strength.

#### **IN THIS STUDY, THE RESEARCHERS AIMED TO:**

1. To analyze how leadership can facilitate the use of human-centered management innovation.
2. To evaluate the role of emotional intelligence in making managers effective and engaging employees.
3. To investigate how digital tools can affect the performance of the organization.
4. To determine the joint impact of leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools on the performance of the organization.
5. To suggest a human-centered management model for innovation-led businesses.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is a significant trait to the point of being a leader effectively. The research suggested that leaders who are able to understand and control their own feelings and at the same time, the feelings of other people, are more effective in communication, motivation, and conflict management. Thus, emotional intelligence has a direct impact on the quality of relationships between employees and, consequently, the whole organization.

Bass (1985) performed a study on leadership styles and indicated that among them all, the transformational style had the greatest impact on the encouragement of participation and innovation among the lower staff. The author mentioned that the leaders who are able to inspire, direct, and support the employees are making the good organizational culture, which is the core of the human-centered management practices, even more so.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) considered emotional intelligence as a human trait that enhances decision-making and adaptability. The research concluded that persons with higher emotional intelligence are able to handle stress and change quite easily. This is especially true for managers working in technology-driven and changing organizations.

Bala Suriya S and Hari Haran R. V. (2023), in their research paper presented in the IOSR Journal of Computer Engineering, investigated the role of emotional intelligence among college students. The study classified self-awareness, control of emotions, empathy, and social abilities as the main components of emotional intelligence. The results may be extrapolated to informal relationships in non-academic settings and hence provide an avenue of applied psychology whereby emotional intelligence is a major factor for successful leaders and effective managers.

In their study, Kane et al. (2015) discussed the influence that digital tools have on organizations and they mentioned among the advantages that daily communication, and work in general, are made more

efficient. Still, the authors pointed out that the application of digital tools is at its best when it is backed by upper management and accepted by the workforce. A human-centric approach is a must for tech to yield better results for organizations.

Davenport and Ronanki (2018) argued that digital transformation should not only be a technical issue but also a people issue. They extolled the virtues of a partnership model whereby digital tools empower the human workforce thus leading to better outcomes for the organization instead of the labor being replaced.

A similar perspective is shared by Shrestha et al. (2019) who claim that the overreliance on automated systems will lead to a deterioration of managers' critical thinking skills. The authors argued that a technology-human combo approach is the way to go for effective leadership and responsible decision-making.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Human-Centered Management Theory**

Human-centered management theory aims at the people being the center of all organizational processes. It proposes that when human abilities, values, and emotions are in sync with the systems, structures, and technology, the organizational performance gets better. This approach prioritizes employee well-being, participation, and ethical management, at times adopting innovation and digital tools even more.

### **2. Role of Leadership**

Leadership is considered the main driving force in the framework. Good leaders not only direct the employees but also, slowly, the culture of the organization that supports innovation. Leaders play an important role in how and the extent to which emotional intelligence is created and digital tools utilized within the organization. Supportive and people-oriented leadership is a source of trust, motivation, and engagement among employees.

### **3. Emotional Intelligence as a Mediating Factor**

Emotional intelligence works as a mediator in the relationship between leadership and employee engagement. Emotions of the employees are recognized, the communication is passed well, and the compassion is felt by the leaders possessing high emotional intelligence. All these have a great impact on the employee, who thus becomes more productive and less conflicting, a situation where the workers are happy, and this result finally is seen as better performance by the organization.

### **4. Role of Digital Tools**

The digital tools are the means that support the flow of information, the joining together of teams, and the making of decisions in organizations. The digital tools when applied in a good way bring about a big increase in the effectiveness of the workers and in the creating of new ideas. On the contrary, their power still relies on the management to be supportive and on the staff being emotionally ready. The adoption of the human-centered approach in the application of technology is a guarantee that the digital tools will be siding with the human judgment rather than taking it away.

### **5. Impact on Organizational Performance**

The leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools have interaction among themselves which leads to elevating the level of organizational performance. The combination of these factors makes an organization have not only a healthy but also a long-term management system that supports none other than the mentioned -innovation, engagement, and the success of the organization, in the long run.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research is limited due to the fact that it depended on self-report data, which could be influenced by the bias of the individuals involved and the differences in perceptual viewpoint of the respondents. The total of 149 participants, although sufficient for descriptive analysis, limits the possibility to make really large-scaled claims about the findings to diverse industries and areas. Besides, the research only deals

with certain management variables and does not utilize a longitudinal study to detect the long-term effects on performance.

**IN RESEARCH FRAME RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Aspect	Details
Sample Size	149 responses
Sampling Technique	Random Sampling
Study Area & Period	India (Virudhunagar, Coimbatore, and Chennai) – up to 31st December 2025
Data Collection	Primary Data – Structured Questionnaire
Target Population	Employees, Supervisors, Middle-Level Managers, and Senior Managers
Research Approach	Descriptive and Analytical Research
Nature of Study	Empirical Study

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	82	55.0
	Female	67	45.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	Below 30 Years	46	30.9
	31–40 Years	58	38.9
	Above 40 Years	45	30.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Undergraduate	41	27.5
	Postgraduate	76	51.0
	Doctorate / Others	32	21.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Work Experience</b>	Below 5 Years	49	32.9

	5–10 Years	61	40.9
	Above 10 Years	39	26.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Designation</b>	Executive Level	63	42.3
	Middle Management	54	36.2
	Supervisory Level	32	21.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of Organization</b>	Manufacturing	38	25.5
	Service	71	47.7
	IT / Technology	40	26.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Nature of Employment</b>	Permanent	112	75.2
	Contractual	37	24.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Exposure to Digital Tools</b>	Low	29	19.5
	Moderate	67	45.0
	High	53	35.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the demographic details the respondents are well dispersed and thus are an appropriate sample for the study. The male and female respondents are equally distributed in number in the study thus facilitating the recognition of different opinions about the leadership, the emotional intelligence, and the organization digital tools.

The youngest group (ages 31–40 years) forms the majority of the respondents, followed by the younger group (less than 30 years) and the older one (more than 40 years). This illustrates that the research takes into account opinions from both the inexperienced and the experienced workers thus providing an even up understanding of the management practices.

Educationally, more than half of the respondents have a master's degree or equivalent while some hold a bachelor's degree or a doctorate. This points to the fact that the respondents possess the required knowledge to comprehend the management and digital concepts.

Talking about the work experience, most participants have been in the field for 5–10 years. This can be interpreted as they having the proper amount of exposure to organization systems and different kinds of leadership. A mix of less and more experienced employees are also included thus providing variety in the responses. With respect to the position, the majority of the respondents belong to the executive and middle management levels, followed by the supervisory level. The reason for that is simple, these sections are the closest to the managers in their daily activities and digital tools use. To sum up, the demographic profile suggests that the respondents are highly qualified to provide insights and reliable data in the area of human-centered management innovation.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

Research Question	Agree (SA+A)	%	Neutral (N)	%	Disagree (D+SD)	%
RQ1: Leadership supports human-centered management practices	108	72.5	24	16.1	17	11.4
RQ2: Leadership positively influences employee engagement	105	70.4	27	18.1	17	11.5
RQ3: Emotional intelligence improves managerial effectiveness	114	76.5	21	14.1	14	9.4
RQ4: Emotional intelligence helps manage workplace conflicts	111	74.5	23	15.4	15	10.1
RQ5: Emotional intelligence enhances trust between leaders and employees	112	75.2	23	15.4	14	9.4
RQ6: Digital tools improve communication within the organization	103	69.1	29	19.5	17	11.4
RQ7: Digital tools support collaboration among employees	106	71.1	26	17.4	17	11.5
RQ8: Leadership encourages effective use of digital tools	110	73.8	25	16.8	14	9.4
RQ9: Emotional intelligence supports effective use of digital tools	105	70.5	27	18.1	17	11.4
RQ10: Leadership and emotional intelligence improve organizational performance	111	74.5	23	15.4	15	10.1
RQ11: Human-centered management with digital tools enhances innovation	108	72.5	26	17.4	15	10.1
RQ12: Human-centered management improves overall organizational	112	75.2	23	15.4	14	9.4

performance						
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It can be seen from the table that most of the respondents do not disagree with any of the research statements. The fact that there is great support for human-centered management practices is evidenced by the high agreement levels for leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools, respectively. Emotional intelligence was singled out as having the highest agreement, pointing to its role in the effectiveness, trust, and conflict management of managers. The use of digital tools, on the other hand, is generally recognized to have a positive impact on communication, collaboration, and innovation. All in all, the feedback supports the idea that the combination of leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools has a favorable effect on the performance of the organization.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) :** The combined effect of leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools will notably improve human-centered management practices and thus organizational performance.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) :** There is no significant impact of leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools on human-centered management practices and consequently no effect on organizational performance.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST**

**Objective**

To examine whether leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools have a **significant effect** on organizational performance.

**Observed Frequency Table (Combined Responses)**

Response Category	Observed Frequency
Agree	1302
Neutral	298
Disagree	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>1788</b>

**Expected Frequency Table**

Response Category	Expected Frequency
Agree	596
Neutral	596
Disagree	596
Total	1788

**Chi-Square Calculation Table**

Category	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> / E
Agree	1302	596	835.72
Neutral	298	596	149.02

Disagree	188	596	279.38
Calculated $\chi^2$			1264.12

### Decision Rule

- Degrees of Freedom (df) = (3 - 1) = 2
- Table Value at 5% significance level = 5.99
- Calculated Value = 1264.12

Since the calculated  $\chi^2$  value is much greater than the table value, **the result is statistically significant.** The outcomes of the Chi-Square test show that there is a significant relationship between leadership, emotional intelligence, digital tools, and organizational performance on a statistically significant level. The Chi-Square value calculated (1264.12) is much larger than the table value (5.99) assuming the null hypothesis at the 5% level of significance, which results in the null hypothesis being accepted. This indicates that the effectiveness of leadership, emotional intelligence, and the use of digital tools are gradually becoming significant and combined factors in the strengthening of human-centered management practices and the improvement of organizational performance. The results offer solid empirical evidence for the necessity of integrated, people-centric management approach in modern organizations.

### FINDINGS

The study discloses several significant findings concerning the human-centered management innovation. The major part of the surveyed people basely agreed on the fact that leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital tools altogether have a positive impact on the performance of the organization. Emotional intelligence was pointed out as the most productive factor, especially in making the managerial effectiveness, trust, and conflict management better. It was also found that leadership played an important role in making the employees engaged and thus the digital tools used effectively. The percentage analysis revealed consistently high agreement levels (over 70%) for all the research statements, which means that the human-centered management practices are strongly accepted by the employees. Besides, the Chi-square test confirmed a statistically significant link between leadership, emotional intelligence, digital tools, and organizational performance which led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. In sum, the findings to a large extent suggest that organizations that human-centered approach would be the ones requiring lesser time and effort for inter-departmental collaboration, innovation and thus overall performance.

### SUGGESTIONS

The study's findings indicate a need for organizations to take some actions aimed at improving their performance. One such action is the undertaking of leadership development programs that point out the necessity of emotional intelligence, empathy, and human-oriented decision-making. Such practices could be carried out through the frequent training of the staff to managers to help them to be able to use the digital tools together with the human-centered practices. It is also suggested that companies should promote open communication between management and staff and participative management styles so as to build the trust and engagement of the employees.

The implementation of digital tools should come along with the proper support, guidance, and emotional preparedness of the employees to minimize their resistance to change. Besides, organizations should formulate policies that would allow the balancing of technological progress and the wellness of employees to make sure of their growth being sustainable. Taking these steps will enable companies to gain all the advantages of the human-centric management innovation.

## CONCLUSION

The study arrives at the decision that to manage human-centered is one of the most important changes in management if enhancing organizational performance is the goal. Leadership plus emotional intelligence plus digital tools together create a workplace that is not only changing but also nurturing of the worker's engagement, innovative thinking, and productivity. The percentages drawn from the empirical evidence as well as the Chi-square testing have shown that these factors are the cause of the better organizational outcomes. The null hypothesis being accepted emphasizes the necessity of merging human values with digital transformation efforts. Organizations that in the present rapidly changing business environment put people next to technology are more likely to be the winners in the long run. Therefore, the adoption of a human-centered management approach has become a not only preferred but also a requirement for the performance of organizations that is to be sustainable.

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