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The Impact of Digital Leadership on Organisational Agility in A Dynamic Business Environment in China

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ABSTRACT: The rapid growth of digital technology and environmental risks has brought about radical changes in the way business is conducted, particularly in emerging nations such as China. Digital leadership is seen as an important ability for organisations to cope with the current pace of technology innovation and competitive pressure in the business arena. The research was undertaken to explore the influence of digital leadership on a dynamic business environment in China. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of digital leadership on the flexibility and responsiveness of organisations to change in a dynamic economic environment. Data was gathered from employees who work for organisations operating in dynamic business environments in China. The purposive sampling method was employed to get a valid sample of 800 participants. The study instrument included a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: demographics and a 5-point Likert scale assessing digital leadership and the changing business climate in China. Data were analysed using SPSS version 25 and Microsoft Excel. Statistical techniques, including descriptive analysis, factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were used to evaluate validity, reliability, and relationships across variables. The results proved a statistically significant positive link between digital leadership and the dynamic business environment in China ($F = 239.881$, $p < 0.000$). The KMO statistic of 0.983 and the significant Bartlett's Test ($p = 0.000$) indicated that the measures had construct validity and were suitable for component analysis. Digital leadership seems to encourage companies to embrace new technology solutions and make informed strategic choices to solve environmental issues. The study shows the importance of digital leadership as an organisational ability that makes a corporation adaptable, imaginative, and resilient. This study shows the importance of digital leadership in dynamic Chinese business contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rapid development of digital technology has radically changed the business world and requires organisations to adapt to new circumstances and conditions. Digital transformation has become an important requirement for any organisation which needs to increase efficiency, innovate and maintain its competitive advantage (Cui, 2025). In this situation, digital leadership is a key organisational competence, which gives leaders the ability to work with digital technologies, initiate organisational transformation and create agile business strategies. As opposed to traditional approaches, digital leadership emphasises skills in terms of technological knowledge, creativity, and decision-making based on data, and managing uncertainties in the rapidly changing digital economy (Alhosani & Ahmad, 2024). China provides a very valuable model for examining the topic of digital

leadership due to its rapid digitalisation, government support for technological innovations and the wide use of advanced digital technology in various industries. Rapid development of the country's digital economy, characterised by artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and e-commerce, has radically changed the organisational structure and business practices. This way, corporate leaders in China face the growing challenge of dealing with market changes, customer needs, and technological shifts (Wang et al., 2022).

In a dynamic environment, digital leadership is vital in ensuring that organisations are agile, innovative and make better decisions strategically. Digital leadership contributes to the creation of a culture of continuous learning, cooperation and technological readiness, helping organisations proactively deal with challenges from the outside world and take advantage of future opportunities (Liu et al., 2024). Moreover, digital leadership helps in the successful implementation of digital transformations through alignment of technological investments and organisational goals, and people's skills. This study aims at shedding light on the role played by digital leadership in the context of the evolving business environment in China (Xu et al., 2024). This research examines the effect of digital leadership on organisational agility, innovation and strategic performance, hence expanding the current literature on digital transformations and leadership.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The advent of digital technology has witnessed a drastic change in the international business landscape, thereby posing both opportunities and threats to businesses operating in China. The technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analysis, cloud computing, internet of things, and digital platforms have played an important role in bringing about such a transformation (Kumar et al., 2025). Consequently, businesses must constantly adapt themselves to changing market environments. Digital leadership emerges as an essential talent in this context and is one that will enable businesses to effectively transition into the digital world, innovate and maintain their competitive advantage. Digital leaders are those who are able to leverage vision, technical expertise, and skills of change management to integrate digital endeavours with the organisational goals while nurturing a culture of learning and innovation (Jing et al., 2023).

The key premise from which digital leadership can be evaluated comes from China, owing to its rapid growth in the economy and the high focus on digital transformations. One of the most digitally transformed economies in the world, China has put in place huge investments in digital infrastructure, smart manufacturing, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and digital governance. Organisations understand that it is important to embrace technology in order to increase their productivity and efficiency, and competitiveness in the international business environment, due to policies implemented by governments in support of digital innovations (Zhang et al., 2025). Moreover, firms operating in China encounter heightened volatility due to technology innovations, shifts in consumer demands, regulatory changes, and both local and international rivalry. Consequently, it is vital to augment organisational agility. Organisational agility refers to an organisation's ability to recognise external environmental shifts, respond to market demands, and adapt its strategies, processes, and resources to sustain competitiveness. Agile organisations have the capacity to innovate, make timely decisions, and handle risks efficiently in the case of changing situations (Jing et al., 2023). Digital innovation, information sharing, employee empowerment, and strategic adaptation are some of the key components of digital leadership necessary for building organisational agility. Digital leaders, who know about digital technologies, help improve communication, data-based decision-making, and adaptation to changes in the external environment (Shi et al., 2023).

Many studies have examined the relationship between digital transformation and organisational performance; however, limited focus has been directed by researchers towards the link between digital leadership and organisational agility, especially within the specific context of China's economy. The majority of studies being carried out tend to give more importance to the technological aspect rather than paying attention to the qualities of leaders, which help an organisation transform itself (Alam et al., 2025). Given the rapid pace of digitisation in China as well as the ever-changing business competition, it becomes imperative for any researcher to get a thorough idea regarding the significance of digital leadership towards the development of organisational agility. This research attempts to look into the relationship between digital leadership and organisational agility in China (Shatila, 2025). Through this research, not only some important theoretical contributions but also some practical implications can be drawn for organisations aiming at improving their resilience, innovation, and competitiveness.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to emphasise the importance of digital leadership with respect to organisational agility within the changing dynamics of business environments in China. In light of technological advancements, digital transformations and changing market conditions that affect many industries, there is a need for organisations to respond to the opportunities and challenges arising from their perspectives. In such an environment, digital leadership becomes one of the important capabilities which allows organisations to embrace new technologies and learn and make strategic decisions continuously. This research will focus on the influence of digital leadership on organisational agility and improvements in adaptability, collaboration, innovation and response to environmental changes. This research will try to understand the process through which digital leadership helps organisations to cope with the uncertainty, competitiveness and success in the fast-growing Chinese economy.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of digital leadership has become a relevant concept in organisational studies due to the increasing level of technological incorporation and the need for organisations to be competitive in the current business world. Although traditional leadership concentrates on some elements, digital leadership focuses on the appropriate use of technology, information-based decision-making, innovation, and collaboration within the organisation (Bux et al., 2025). Literature demonstrates that digital leaders significantly contribute to the effective digital transformation of organisations by fostering innovation, promoting a flexible working environment, and encouraging staff development. Leaders need to have such competencies in dynamic business environments. Organisational agility can be defined as the capacity of an organisation to sense the changes in the external environment, react to the new opportunities and threats, and adapt its plans and actions all the time (Zhang & Li, 2022). The research dedicated to the issue shows that an agile organisation can sustain its competitive advantage, improve its efficiency and develop sustainably. Digital leadership promotes organisational agility by promoting innovation, communication and coordination, and making decision-making more flexible. It can be said that a leader competent in digital technologies guarantees prompt information exchange and organisational agility (Chen et al., 2022).

The Chinese corporate environment has seen significant transformations due to technology breakthroughs, governmental initiatives to foster digitalisation, and investments in sectors such as AI, cloud computing, and big data analytics. The Chinese business landscape is marked by intense rivalry, evolving consumer preferences, and technical progress (Yongyue & Lihua, 2024). Digital leadership is vital for organisations to navigate transition and maintain a competitive edge. Research shows that Chinese firms headed by digitally capable CEOs have a higher probability of engaging in innovation, becoming flexible, and performing better as organisations. Despite the growing body of literature, there remain certain gaps that exist within the existing research. Most research conducted to date has been based on understanding the link between digital transformation and organisational performance, but little research has been done regarding the impact of digital leadership on organisational agility in the fast-changing environment of China (Xiufan & Yunqiao, 2025). Furthermore, most research conducted in this area has been limited to advanced Western countries, thereby not fully grasping the idea of leadership skills in new digital environments such as China. It is the goal of this study to conduct an investigation into the role of digital leadership in promoting organisational agility within Chinese companies (Zhaoquan et al., 2025).

In the previous studies, the researcher Ly (2023) has shown that digital transformational leadership increases organisational agility and facilitates successful digital transformation because of the ability of an organisation to respond to the changes in the market environment (Ly, 2023). Similarly, Khattak et al. (2025) found that digital leadership capability improves organisational agility and digital transformation of Chinese companies through resilience, adaptability, and responsiveness. In another study, the researchers Zhang et al. (2025) concluded that digitisation improves organisational adaptability, even though their research did not concentrate on digital leadership but on digital capability. Overall, all these studies imply the importance of digital leadership to make use of digital technology to foster organisational agility in the Chinese business environment (Khattak et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). The results are expected to improve the growing literature on digital leadership.

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the influence of digital leadership on dynamic business environment in China?

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6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method to explore the connection between digital leadership and a dynamic business environment in China. Data were gathered via a structured questionnaire using the purposive sampling technique. The total number of respondents for this study was 800, and all of them belonged to a dynamic business. Demographic information was acquired using the questionnaire, coupled with Likert scale items evaluating the core constructs of the study.

6.2Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to choose the study's participants. Using Krejcie and Morgan's algorithm through the RaoSoft calculator, the sample size of 800 was determined. There were 1000 questionnaires distributed, and 850 questionnaires were received back. Out of which 50 questionnaires were discarded because of incomplete answers. Finally, 800 questionnaires were used for this investigation.

6.3Data and Measurement

The researcher used a survey method to collect the primary data from the employees working for firms in China who operate in dynamic business environments. The data was collected via survey questionnaires that were especially formulated to determine the effect of digital leadership in dynamic business environments. Section one of the survey questionnaire contained the demographic details of the participants, while section two comprised the 5-point Likert scale on the various components of both online and offline networks. The secondary research data was composed mainly from online sources.

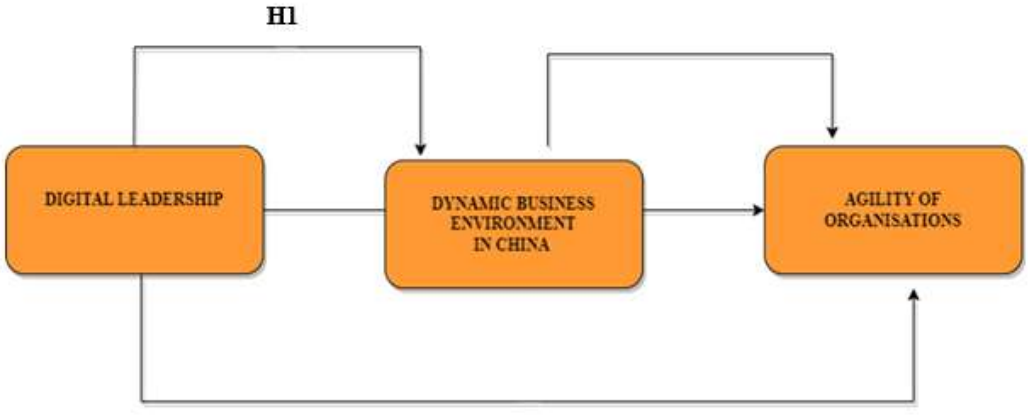
6.4Statistical Software

The researchers used SPSS version 25 along with Microsoft Excel to analyse the quantitative data.

6.5Statistical Tools

The researchers employed a descriptive statistical research methodology to have a more profound understanding of the key components of the quantitative data achieved. The study employed the ANOVA technique to examine the relationship between the variables. Factor analysis was used by the researcher to determine validity.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

- Factor Analysis

The factor analysis (FA) is a statistical procedure applied to find underlying patterns and relationships within data. The KMO test measures the correctness of the data for FA. The result obtained from the KMO test varies from 0 to 1, to be interpreted by the researcher. The sample size is considered adequate if the result is between 0.8 and 1.

The standards set up by Kaiser for adequacy are:

Poor 0.50 to 0.59, Unacceptable 0.60 to 0.69.

Acceptable point scores are 0.80 to 0.89. The score in the range of 0.90 to 1.00 is considered marvellous.

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's Sampling Adequacy Measured by KMO: 0.983

The findings of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are as follows:

Approx. Chi-Square = 942

df = 190; sig = .000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test[a]		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.983
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	942
	df	190
	Sig.	.000
a. Based on Correlations		

The researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to ascertain if the link was statistically significant. A high KMO index of 0.983 denotes the validity of the distributed survey questions. Based on a tiny p-value of around 0.00, the researchers determined the data's statistical significance.

- INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (Digital Leadership)

The term digital leadership refers to the ability of leaders to strategically integrate digital technology, encourage innovation, and steer the organisation through the process of digital transformation to achieve sustainable performance and agility. A digitally enabled organisational culture encourages continuous learning, cooperation, and informed decision-making. This culture goes beyond the mere use of technology since it incorporates the vision, skills, and behaviours that are essential to build such a culture. Digital leaders believe in the need for new technology such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing and digital communication systems to increase efficiency and responsiveness of the organisation (Kang, 2025). The thought of digital leadership has taken on importance in China's economic environment amid challenges associated with the fast pace of technological development, change in consumers' demands, and stiff competition in the markets. Digital leaders help organisations to predict changes in their environment, make well-thought-out strategic decisions based on data and solve any problems in the marketplace. Digital leadership contributes to organisational agility through flexible organisational structure, collaboration among different organisational departments, and innovation. Furthermore, digital leadership combines technological skills and organisational goals, enabling organisations to remain competitive in the digital world (Gong & Ribiere, 2025).

- MEDIATING VARIABLE (Dynamic Business Environment in China)

A dynamic environment for doing business in China refers to the fast-changing economic, technological, regulatory and competitive elements that always affect organisational strategies and operations. China, as one of the biggest and rapidly expanding economies globally, has seen a substantial digital transformation propelled by advancements in AI, big data, cloud computing, e-commerce, and digital banking. These changes, along with changing consumer preferences, government support through digital innovation policies, globalisation of markets and stiff competition, have created a business environment that requires organisations to adapt fast to remain competitive (Feng & Abd Rani, 2024). In this context, organisations will require

strong digital leadership to be able to manoeuvre their way through this dynamism and respond effectively to changing challenges and opportunities. The role of digital leaders is serious in helping organisations understand environmental changes, make use of digital technology, and develop agility skills that promote innovation and adaptability. In the ever-changing business environment in China, the capability to make fast and data-driven decisions and build an organisation that is always learning has been vital to sustaining a competitive edge. Therefore, the dynamic business environment in China is characterised by fast-changing technological and economic changes, which require organisations to undergo digital transformation and develop agility and leadership skills (Cui, 2025).

- Relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China

There is a complex connection between digital leadership and the shifting business environment in China. This is due to the fact that effective leadership is necessary for any company to be successful in adapting to change. The business environment in China comprises continuous digital change, changes in the demands of customers, changes in legislation and stiff competition, requiring prompt and strategic actions from firms (Ye, 2025). In such a case, digital leadership plays a very significant role in becoming an organisational competency which enables organisations to embrace digital transformation, incorporate technologies and build resilience against environmental uncertainty. Digital leaders formulate a clear strategic vision through calling for the acceptance of advanced digital technologies, fostering revolution and establishing a culture of constant learning. They help employees develop digital competencies, make collaborative decisions and apply analytical information to improve organisational responsiveness. This makes firms led by competent digital leaders better equipped to identify opportunities in the market, mitigate risks and adapt to changing business environments (Fang, 2023).

In China, where support from the government regarding digital innovations, technical implementation, and growth of the digital economy is causing variations in various industries, the importance of digital leadership has become much more pronounced. Organisations that have strong digital leadership capabilities will be able to achieve better flexibility, innovation, and organisational agility, and therefore maintain an advantage over their competitors (Panichakarn et al., 2024). The connection between digital leadership and the dynamic business environment in China is mutually beneficial. The changing environment requires flexible and technology-based leadership, but digital leadership allows organisations to deal with the changing environment, to undergo digital transformation, and ensure sustainable growth and competitiveness (Meng et al., 2025).

As mentioned in the discussion, the hypothesis was developed with the consideration of examining the strong relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China.
- H1: There is a significant relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China.

Table 2: H1 ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	48540.00	150	323.60	239.881	.000
Within Groups	875.60	649	1.349		
Total	49415.60	799			

The result is significant, and the value of F is 239.881, which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (which is less than the .05 alpha level). This means the alternative hypothesis "H1: There is a significant relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China" is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

The researcher found that digital leadership is positively correlated with the dynamic business environment in China. Because there is a significant association ($F = 239.881$, $p < .000$), the ANOVA test validates the hypothesis (H1). The measurement

model was found to be suitable for factor analysis, as shown by its substantial Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and KMO value of 0.983. Findings show that companies can't survive in China's dynamic economy without digital leadership.

According to the research conducted by Ly (2023), digital transformational leadership enhances organisational agility and effectiveness. Within this study, findings have been validated in regard to technological-savvy leaders making the organisations agile due to market and environmental changes. The research has an emphasis on organisational agility being a mediator of the success of digital transformation (Ly, 2023). The results support the findings proposed by Khattak et al. (2025) regarding the impact of digital leadership competencies on the agility and digital transformation of Chinese organisations. Digital leadership enhances organisational agility and facilitates digital transformation, as per their findings. Considering the dynamic nature of the Chinese economy, this study looks at how digital leadership may help businesses succeed (Khattak et al., 2025). According to the study's findings, digital leadership helps people be more resilient, adaptable, and responsive to changing circumstances. Digitisation contributes to increased organisational adaptability in micro, small and medium firms in China. According to Zhang et al. (2025), digital capabilities contribute to organisational adaptability to changes in the environment and technologies, as shown in their study. It was digitisation, not digital leadership, which was the organisational capability in this study. However, digital leadership is needed for both digitisation and organisational adaptability, according to the authors. Digital technologies can transform organisations, but only great leaders should use them to promote agility and competitive advantage (Zhang et al., 2025). The second important point in the methodological scope of this research is related to the number of participants. The study involves 800 employees from dynamic Chinese organisations, while Khattak et al. (2025) have investigated 328 employees of organisations implementing digital transformation. A higher number of participants is advantageous when collecting empirical data. This study concentrates on digital leadership in the context of a dynamic business environment in China (Khattak et al., 2025).

As observed from the findings of this research, digital leadership is an organisational competency and not a management competency. As far as the changing organisational environment in China is concerned, managers have to make use of digital technologies in decision making, innovation, training of employees, and ensuring organisational flexibility. From the results of this study, it has become evident that digital leadership allows organisational flexibility in predicting changes in the environment and responding to those changes effectively. In a technology-driven market environment, digital leadership competence helps organisations become flexible.

This research enhances the digital leadership literature by examining the influence of digital leadership within dynamic business environments in China. This is the first identification of digital leadership as the core organisational competence that helps organisations deal with environmental uncertainty, surpassing previous research that examined digital transformation or organisational agility. This research offers a lot of theoretical contributions to digital leadership and organisational agility, as well as managerial implications for business leaders and political leaders.

10. CONCLUSION

This research investigated the effects of digital leadership in China's fast-paced business climate were the focus of this study. There is a positive relationship between digital leadership and dynamic business environment in China. This outcome validated the notion that digital leadership is a crucial competence for organisations facing fast technological, economic, and competitive changes. The statistical result, namely from ANOVA, a high KMO value, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, indicates that the model of this research study is both reliable and valid. This research concludes that organisations headed by digital leaders are more equipped to adapt to new technologies, innovate, make choices, and manage environmental risks. Instead of limiting itself to studying organisational agility and the consequences of digitisation, this study breaks new ground by investigating the connection between digital leadership and China's ever-changing economic climate. Besides, the use of a greater number of employees working in companies belonging to dynamically changing industries allows acquiring more information concerning the relevance of digital leadership. Hence, the ability to adapt, be resilient, and maintain a competitive edge in the digital era is a key strategic competency for businesses.

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