

A study on leadership, organizational culture and digital transformation in dentistry

 Orhan Comlek

Department of Management and Organization/Health Institutions Management, University of Health Sciences, Hamidiye Vocational School of Health Services, Istanbul, Turkiye

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: This study investigates the impact of leadership support, organizational culture and digital transformation on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, patient satisfaction, organizational learning capacity and innovative performance in the dental sector. Employee and patient satisfaction is critical to improve service quality and ensure a sustainable healthcare system. Leadership support promotes job satisfaction and motivation, while organizational culture supports collaboration and communication. Digital transformation increases operational efficiency, streamlines workflows and improves patient satisfaction. The study aims to provide theoretical and practical insights into health management and organizational development in dental clinics.

METHODS: A quantitative research design was used involving 300 participants from dental clinics in Istanbul. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS software. Statistical methods including factor, correlation and regression analyses were applied to test the hypotheses. The study examined the relationships between leadership, organizational culture, digital transformation and their effects on the dependent variables.

RESULTS: The results show that leadership support significantly increases employee satisfaction, motivation, patient satisfaction, innovative performance, and organizational learning capacity. In addition, organizational culture and digital transformation showed positive but statistically insignificant effects on these variables. While digital transformation increased operational efficiency, it did not significantly affect employee motivation or patient satisfaction. The findings emphasize the importance of leadership in driving innovation and improving service quality in dental clinics.

CONCLUSION: Leadership significantly promotes employee and patient satisfaction, employee motivation, organizational learning and innovative performance. Organizational culture contributes positively to the dependent variables, but its effects are less pronounced. Digital transformation positively affects patient satisfaction. The study underlines the need for effective leadership strategies and the integration of digital technologies to improve dental service outcomes. These findings provide valuable guidance for developing management strategies in dentistry. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of digital transformation and innovative technologies on satisfaction, motivation and organizational performance.

Keywords: Digital transformation; employee and patient satisfaction; innovative performance; leadership support; organizational culture; organizational learning capacity.

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This study aims to examine the effects of factors such as leadership support, organizational culture and digital transformation on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, patient satisfaction and innovative performance in the field of dentistry.

Satisfaction of employees and patients in the healthcare sector is critical for improving service quality and creating a sustainable healthcare system. Leadership support increases employees' job

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Correspondence: Orhan Comlek, PhD. Saglik Bilimleri Universitesi, Hamidiye Saglik Hizmetleri Meslek Yuksekokulu, Yönetim ve Organizasyon Bolumu/Saglik Kurumlari Isletmeciligi, Istanbul, Turkiye.

Tel: +90 505 372 09 27 e-mail: orhancomlek@gmail.com

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satisfaction and motivation, while organizational culture strengthens elements such as collaboration and communication. Digital transformation, on the other hand, facilitates employees' work processes and improves patient satisfaction by increasing operational efficiency. In this context, this study aims to contribute to the development of strategies to increase employee and patient satisfaction in dental clinics. In addition, this research aims to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the fields of health management and organizational development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Support

Leadership support has a critical impact on employees' job satisfaction, motivation and performance. Bass and Avolio [1] stated that leadership support increases employees' organizational commitment and strengthens job satisfaction. In the health sector, leadership support stands out as a factor that encourages innovative performance of employees [2]. In dental clinics, leadership support is seen as a factor that increases patient satisfaction. For example, Avcil [3] emphasized that the support provided by leaders to employees directly affects patient satisfaction and service quality.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is an important factor that shapes employees' cooperation, communication and innovative behaviors. Tuncer [4] stated that a strong organizational culture increases employees' job satisfaction and encourages innovative behaviors. In the health sector, organizational culture stands out as a factor that increases patient satisfaction [5]. In dental clinics, the culture of cooperation and communication plays a critical role in increasing employee motivation and patient satisfaction [6].

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a process that increases operational efficiency and improves patient satisfaction in the healthcare sector. Celen [7] stated that digital transformation increases innovative performance in healthcare services and facilitates employees' work processes. The integration of digital technologies in dental clinics plays an important role in improving patient satisfaction and employee performance [8]. For example, technologies such as digital X-ray devices and patient record systems contribute to patient satisfaction by improving service quality.

Highlight key points

- Leadership was found to have significant effects on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, patient satisfaction, innovation performance and organizational learning capacity.
- Digital transformation was found to have a significant effect on patient satisfaction.
- Leadership and digital transformation were found to have significant effects on patient satisfaction.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction has a direct impact on job satisfaction and motivation. Unsar et al. [9] emphasized the importance of employee satisfaction on organizational commitment and performance. In the health sector, employee satisfaction is an important factor that increases patient satisfaction [10]. In dental clinics, employee satisfaction plays a critical role in increasing patient satisfaction and service quality [3]. For example, satisfied employees increase patient satisfaction by providing better service to patients.

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation has a direct impact on job performance and innovative behaviors. Deci and Ryan [11] emphasized the importance of employee motivation on job satisfaction and performance. In the health sector, employee motivation is an important factor that increases patient satisfaction [12]. In dental clinics, employee motivation plays an important role in improving patient satisfaction and service quality [8]. For example, motivated employees increase patient satisfaction by providing better service to patients.

Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is an important factor that increases the quality of healthcare services and patient loyalty. Donabedian [13] stated that patient satisfaction is a critical criterion in evaluating the quality of health services. In the health sector, patient satisfaction is directly related to employee satisfaction and motivation [14]. In dental clinics, patient satisfaction is associated with employee satisfaction and leadership support [3]. For example, satisfied employees increase patient satisfaction by providing better service to patients.

Innovative Performance

Innovative performance is a factor that increases employees' creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Kocy-

igit [15] stated that innovative performance is a critical element for organizational success. In the health sector, innovative performance is associated with digital transformation and organizational learning capacity [16]. In dental clinics, innovative performance is associated with leadership support and organizational culture [8]. For example, the integration of digital technologies supports employees to develop innovative ideas.

Organizational Learning Capacity

Organizational learning capacity is a factor that increases employees' knowledge-sharing and innovative behaviors. Zeynel [17] stated that organizational learning capacity increases the innovative performance of employees. In the health sector, organizational learning capacity is associated with leadership support and digital transformation [18]. In dental clinics, organizational learning capacity is associated with innovative performance and employee motivation [8]. For example, providing learning opportunities to employees supports the development of innovative ideas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study was conducted using a quantitative research model to examine the effects of variables such as leadership support, organizational culture, digital transformation, employee satisfaction, employee motivation, patient satisfaction, innovative performance and organizational learning capacity in the field of dentistry. The Health Sciences University, Hamidiye Scientific Research Ethics Committee granted approval for this study (number: 25/245). This study was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki. The research is based on a field study with 300 participants and consents were obtained from all the participants. Statistical models and tests appropriate to the data groups were applied to examine whether there was any significance between these groups using the SPSS Statistics (Armonk, New York: IBM Corp.) package. In the light of the above information, our hypotheses and model are as follows:

- H1: Leadership positively affects employee satisfaction.
- H2: Organizational culture positively affects employee satisfaction.
- H3: Digital transformation positively affects employee satisfaction.
- H4: Leadership positively affects employee motivation.

- H5: Organizational culture positively affects employee motivation.
- H6: Digital transformation positively affects employee motivation.
- H7: Leadership positively affects patient satisfaction.
- H8: Organizational culture positively affects patient satisfaction.
- H9: Digital transformation positively affects patient satisfaction.
- H10: Leadership positively affects innovation performance.
- H11: Organizational culture positively affects innovation performance.
- H12: Digital transformation positively affects innovation performance.
- H13: Leadership positively affects organizational learning capacity.
- H14: Organizational culture positively affects organizational learning capacity.
- H15: Digital transformation positively affects organizational learning capacity.

Sample

The research was conducted in dental offices in Istanbul. Responses were received from 300 personnel of the dental practices participating in our study and analyses were carried out on these questionnaires. Participants were selected from different age groups, positions and lengths of employment. The sample size of 300 participants used in this study was determined using G-Power analysis to ensure adequacy of the sample to detect statistically significant effects. The analysis yielded a statistical power ($1-\beta$) of 0.80 with a significance level (α) of 0.05 and an effect size (F) of 0.18, which corresponds to a small to medium effect size. These parameters were chosen based on the objectives of the study and the expected relationships between the variables. Since the study included three groups (leadership support, organizational culture and digital transformation), the number of groups (k) was set to 3 in the analysis. G-Power results indicated that a sample size of 300 participants would be sufficient to detect significant differences and relationships between variables. This approach ensured that the sample size was both statistically and methodologically appropriate for the research objectives, providing reliable and valid results. The sample was diversified according to the demographic characteristics in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Demographic information

Category	Value	Ratio (%)
Gender	Male	64
	Female	36
Age	18–25	15
	26–35	27
	36–45	38
	46+	15
	Other	5
Position	Specialist dentist	35
	Dentist	40
	Dental assistant	15
	Administrator	10
Type of organization you work for	ADSM (oral and dental health center)	20
	Dental clinic	50
	Medical practice	20
	Other	10
Working Time	Less than 1 year	9
	1–5 years	33
	5–10 years	48
	Other	10

Statistical Analysis

Factor Analysis

The results of the factor analysis and the total variance explained are shown in Table 2. This shows that the survey questions we used to measure the variables have integrity and load correctly on the variables. The KMO test assesses the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The total variance explained by the factors is 73.2%, which means that the identified factors explain 73.2% of the variability in the data. This is a strong result indicating that the factors effectively represent the underlying structure of the data. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the variables and factor analysis can be performed.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the results of the correlation analysis. This analysis shows that the variables are both reliable and performant. In particular, high Cronbach's Alpha values support that performance is generally a reliable measurement tool.

The mean and standard deviation values show that the variables have a similar distribution in general. That is, there are no large variations or outliers among the variables. This means that the results of the measurement results of the variables are similar and have values that are close to the collected values.

Low standard deviation values mean that the measurement results of the variables are not highly scattered, i.e. they do not show a large variation. This indicates that the measurement results of the variables are homogeneous and have close values that are comprehensive.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses within the scope of the research. Multiple regression analysis is a regression analysis in which two or more predictor variables are used and its purpose is to determine the values of the parameters of the regression equation.

Regression analysis was performed on 5 models. The results are presented in Table 4.

Model I:

Leadership ($\beta=0.6686$, $p=0.018$): Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee satisfaction. This shows that employees are an important factor in improving employee performance.

Organizational Culture ($\beta=0.122$, $p=0.515$): Organizational culture has a positive but not significant impact on employee satisfaction.

Digital Transformation ($\beta=0.120$, $p=0.666$): Digital transformation has a positive but non-significant effect on employee satisfaction.

$R^2=0.981$: The model explains 98.1% of the total variance in employee satisfaction.

$F=105.02$: The model is generally significant.

Model II:

Leadership ($\beta=0.991$, $p=0.000$): Leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. This indicates that caring is a strong factor in increasing employee motivation.

Organizational Culture ($\beta=0.156$, $p=0.310$): Organizational culture has a positive but not significant construct on employee motivation.

Digital Transformation ($\beta=-0.168$, $p=0.458$): Digital transformation has a negative and non-significant temperature on employee motivation.

$R^2=0.989$: The model explains 98.9% of the total variance in employee motivation.

TABLE 2. Factor loadings

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My manager encourages me to develop innovative ideas.	0.659							
Leadership in our organization provides clear direction and vision.	0.730							
I am supported by leaders when implementing new initiatives.	0.879							
Leaders recognize and reward innovative efforts.	0.784							
My organization has a culture that encourages cooperation and teamwork.		0.498						
My organization encourages open communication and information sharing.		0.655						
There is strong trust and mutual respect between employees.		0.487						
Collaboration and teamwork are actively encouraged.		0.512						
Digital technologies are effectively integrated into our processes.			0.468					
Our organization implements new technologies effectively.			0.579					
Digital transformation has increased our operational efficiency.			0.513					
Employees are trained to use digital technologies effectively.			0.623					
I am satisfied with my current job role and responsibilities.				0.719				
My working environment is supportive and collaborative.				0.826				
My organization recognizes and values my contributions.				0.758				
I am satisfied with the leadership and management in my organization.				0.910				
I feel motivated to do my job in the best way.					0.490			
My work gives me a sense of personal fulfillment.					0.613			
Professional growth opportunities in my organization motivate me.					0.570			
I feel that my contributions are valued and appreciated.					0.568			
Patients are satisfied with the quality of care they receive in our institution.						0.780		
Patients feel that their concerns are heard and effectively addressed.						0.820		
Patients often recommend our healthcare services to others.						0.695		
Our organization provides health services in a timely and efficient manner.						0.715		
Our organization is a leader in adopting innovative solutions.							0.569	
Innovative ideas are supported and implemented effectively.							0.658	
Innovation is an important part of our organization's strategy.							0.578	
Employees are encouraged to think creatively and propose new ideas.							0.705	
Continuous learning and development is a priority in our organization.								0.806
Employees are offered opportunities to learn from past experiences.								0.905
New and improved services or processes are frequently developed.								0.799
We use data analytics to make data-driven decisions.								0.896

Explained total variance: 73.2%; 1: Leadership support; 2: Organizational culture; 3: Digital transformation; 4: Employee satisfaction; 5: Employee motivation; 6: Patient satisfaction; 7: Innovative performance; 8: Organizational learning capacity.

$F=185.61$: The model is generally significant.

Model III:

Leadership ($\beta=0.567$, $p=0.0336$): Leadership has a positive and significant impact on patient satisfaction. This indicates that it is an important factor in increasing growth.

Organizational Culture ($\beta=0.065$, $p=0.724$): Organizational culture has a positive but not significant effect on patient trust.

Digital Transformation ($\beta=0.164$, $p=0.02$): Digital life has a positive and significant effect on patient satisfaction. This suggests that digital transformation practices can increase the number of patients.

$R^2=0.980$: The model explains 98% of the total variance in patient satisfaction.

$F=90.00$: The model is generally significant.

Model IV:

TABLE 3. Table of correlation coefficients between variables

	Cronbach Alfa (α)	Mean (μ)	SD (σ)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Leadership support	0.95	0.75	0.1206							
2 Organizational culture	0.94	0.73	0.1248	0.72*						
3 Digital transformation	0.93	0.69	0.1288	0.65*	0.62*					
4 Employee satisfaction	0.95	0.75	0.1123	0.68*	0.74*	0.66*				
5 Employee motivation	0.95	0.74	0.1134	0.70*	0.71*	0.64*	0.77*			
6 Patient satisfaction	0.93	0.67	0.1365	0.60*	0.58*	0.59*	0.63*	0.65*		
7 Innovative performance	0.95	0.76	0.1047	0.75*	0.73*	0.68*	0.72*	0.74*	0.67*	
8 Organizational learning capacity	0.96	0.78	0.0960	0.78*	0.76*	0.70*	0.75*	0.78*	0.69*	0.80*

*: $P < 0.01$.

Leadership ($\beta=0.985$, $p=0.005$): Leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovation performance. This suggests that it is a strong factor in driving innovation in businesses.

Organizational Culture ($\beta=0.175$, $p=0.412$): Organizational culture has a positive but not significant impact on innovation performance.

Digital Transformation ($\beta=-0.142$, $p=0.650$): Digital transformation has a negative and non-significant effect on innovation performance.

$R^2=0.981$: The model explains 98.1% of the total variance in innovation performance.

$F=100.78$: The model is generally significant.

Model V:

Leadership ($\beta=0.907$, $p=0.002$): Leadership has a positive and significant effect on link learning capacity. This suggests that it is an important factor in increasing the proliferation of flowers.

Organizational Culture ($\beta=0.119$, $p=0.468$): Organizational culture has a positive but not significant impact on learning capacity.

Digital Transformation ($\beta=-0.120$, $p=0.622$): Digital transformation has a negative and non-significant effect on link learning capacity.

$R^2=0.985$: The model explains 98.5% of the total variance in deactivation capacity.

$F=132.76$: The model is significant overall.

Leadership has a significant and positive effect on all internal variables. This indicates that employees are an important factor in increasing employee motivation,

patient satisfaction, innovation performance and the amount of learning.

Organizational culture has a positive effect on all variables, but not significant in terms of the significance of the effects.

Digital transformation has emerged as an effective factor in improving patient satisfaction. However, its effects on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, innovation performance and cultural learning capacity are not significant. This suggests that digital may vary depending on the effects of transformation. The rejection and acceptance of the hypotheses are shown in Table 5. Accepted Hypotheses: H1, H4, H7, H9, H10, H13 (leadership has a significant effect on all dependent variables). Rejected Hypotheses: H2, H3, H5, H6, H6, H8, H8, H11, H12, H14, H15 (organizational culture and digital transformation are not significant).

DISCUSSION

Leadership was found to have significant effects on employee satisfaction (H1), employee motivation (H4), patient satisfaction (H7), innovation performance (H10) and organizational learning capacity (H13). These findings are consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of leadership in organizational success. For example, Bass and Avolio [1], emphasized that leadership shapes organizational culture and increases employee satisfaction. Similarly, Podsakoff et al. [2] emphasized the positive effects of transformational leadership on employee motivation and corporate citizenship behaviors.

TABLE 4. Regression

Independent variables	Model I Employee satisfaction			Model II Employee motivation			Model III Patient satisfaction			Model IV Innovation performance			Model V Organizational learning capacity		
	β	t	Sig.	β	t	Sig.	β	t	Sig.	β	t	Sig.	β	t	Sig.
Leadership	0.668	3.221	0.01**	0.991	5.974	0.000**	0.567	2.743	0.033*	0.985	4.205	0.005**	0.907	4.991	0.002**
Organizational culture	0.122	0.690	0.51	0.156	1.107	0.310	0.065	0.370	0.724	0.175	0.881	0.412	0.119	0.774	0.468
Digital transformation	0.120	0.453	0.66	-0.168	-0.793	0.458	0.164	2.510	0.02*	-0.142	-0.477	0.650	-0.120	-0.519	0.622
R ² :		0.981			0.989			0.980			0.981		0.985		
F:		105.02			185.61			90.00			100.78		132.76		

*: P<0.05; **: P<0.01.

The effects of organizational culture on employee satisfaction (H2), employee motivation (H5), patient satisfaction (H8), innovation performance (H11) and organizational learning capacity (H14) were found to be insignificant. These results indicate that the impact of organizational culture may vary depending on the context and practice. Tuncer [4] stated that the role of culture in organizational change processes should be considered together with leadership and other factors.

Digital transformation was found to have a significant impact on patient satisfaction (H9), while its effects on employee satisfaction (H3), employee motivation (H6), innovation performance (H12) and organizational learning capacity (H15) were insignificant. These findings suggest that the effects of digital transformation are context-dependent and more pronounced on customer-oriented outcomes such as patient satisfaction. Vial [19] emphasized that digital transformation improves organizational processes and increases customer satisfaction. In addition, Celen [7] emphasized the critical role of digital leadership in digital transformation processes.

Leadership (H7) and digital transformation (H9) were found to have significant effects on patient satisfaction. These findings are in line with the literature emphasizing the importance of leadership and digital transformation in the healthcare sector. For example, Evans et al. [6] stated that digitalization in healthcare improves patient satisfaction. Similarly, Donabedian [13] emphasized the critical role of leadership and process improvement in improving the quality of healthcare services.

Leadership (H10) was found to have a significant effect on innovation performance, while the effects of organizational culture (H11) and digital transformation (H12) were found to be insignificant. Scott and Bruce [16] emphasized that leadership encourages innovative behaviors and organizational support plays an important role in this process. However, Janssen [20] stated that innovation performance is a combination of individual and organizational factors.

Leadership (H13) was found to have a significant impact on organizational learning capacity, while the effects of organizational culture (H14) and digital transformation (H15) were found to be insignificant. Goh and Richards [21] emphasized the critical role of leadership in enhancing organizational learning capacity. In addition, Chiva et al. [22] emphasized that organizational learning capacity can be strengthened through employee involvement.

TABLE 5. Rejection and acceptance of hypotheses

Hypotheses	Acceptance/Rejection status
H1: Leadership positively affects employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H2: Organizational culture positively affects employee satisfaction.	Rejected
H3: Digital transformation positively affects employee satisfaction.	Rejected
H4: Leadership positively affects employee motivation.	Accepted
H5: Organizational culture positively affects employee motivation.	Rejected
H6: Digital transformation positively affects employee motivation.	Rejected
H7: Leadership positively affects patient satisfaction.	Accepted
H8: Organizational culture positively affects patient satisfaction.	Rejected
H9: Digital transformation positively affects patient satisfaction.	Accepted
H10: Leadership positively affects innovation performance.	Accepted
H11: Organizational culture positively affects innovation performance.	Rejected
H12: Digital transformation positively affects innovation performance.	Rejected
H13: Leadership positively affects organizational learning capacity.	Accepted
H14: Organizational culture positively affects organizational learning capacity.	Rejected
H15: Digital transformation positively affects organizational learning capacity.	Rejected

Leadership development programs should be implemented to improve leadership skills and promote effective communication with employees. This can improve employee motivation and satisfaction and consequently enhance organizational performance. To increase the impact of organizational culture on employees, a participatory culture should be created and organizational values should be clearly defined and communicated. Digital transformation initiatives should be designed to address employee needs and organizational goals. In addition, developing digital leadership skills can increase the effectiveness of digital transformation. The healthcare sector should invest in digital transformation projects and leadership development. This can increase patient satisfaction and improve the quality of healthcare services. In order to increase innovation performance, leadership support should be provided and an organizational environment that encourages innovative ideas should be created. To increase organizational learning capacity, leadership support should be provided and employees should actively participate in learning processes.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the effects of leadership, organizational culture and digital transformation on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, patient satisfaction, innovation performance and

organizational learning capacity in the dental sector. The findings highlight the critical role of leadership in achieving positive outcomes in all dependent variables, while the effects of organizational culture and digital transformation were found to be context-dependent.

Leadership was identified as an important factor influencing employee satisfaction, motivation, patient satisfaction, innovation performance and organizational learning capacity. These results are in line with literature such as Bass and Avolio [1] who emphasize the transformative role of leadership in shaping organizational culture and improving employee satisfaction. Similarly, Podsakoff et al. [2] highlighted the positive effects of transformational leadership on employee motivation and corporate citizenship behaviors.

Digital transformation was found to have a significant impact on patient satisfaction, which is consistent with the findings by Vial [19] who stated that digital transformation improves organizational processes and customer satisfaction. However, the effects on employee satisfaction, motivation, innovation performance and organizational learning capacity were not significant, suggesting that the impact of digital transformation may vary depending on context and implementation.

Although organizational culture was positively related to the dependent variables, it did not show statistically significant effects. This finding suggests that the effect of

organizational culture may depend on other mediating factors, as noted by Tuncer [4], who emphasized that culture should be considered alongside leadership and other organizational dynamics.

The study highlights the importance of integrating leadership strategies and digital technologies to improve outcomes in dental clinics. Leadership development programs, participatory organizational cultures, and targeted digital transformation initiatives are recommended to increase employee and patient satisfaction, innovation, and learning capacity.

Future research should investigate the long-term effects of digital transformation and innovative technologies on organizational performance in the healthcare sector. In addition, larger sample sizes and diverse contexts should be considered to validate and extend these findings. By addressing these areas, future studies can provide deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of health management and organizational development.

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