



Original Article

# Primary School Management and Culture in Digital Transformation

Nguyen Thanh Ly\*

*VNU University of Education, 144 Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the opinions of managers, teachers and parents on organizational values and on management practices in enhancing these values in primary schools in Hanoi during digital transformation. The study involves 356 participants, including managers, teachers, and parents, in various educational primary institutions. By examining the real situation of these values and management practices, this research aims to provide insights into effective leadership approaches that can facilitate successful digital transformation in schools. The findings highlight the importance of aligning management practices with the core values of the school culture to foster a supportive and innovative environment for all stakeholders involved. Implications for practitioners and recommendations for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** School culture, digital transformation, Organizational Values, management practices, school managers, teachers, parents.

## 1. Introduction

The Communist Party of Vietnam issued Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW on September 27, 2019 on a number of guidelines and policies to actively participate in the fourth industrial revolution, which emphasizes the urgent need to accelerate the digital transformation. Recognizing that digital transformation is an inevitable trend in the world today, the government released the Action Program to implement Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW, and the

prime minister simultaneously released Directive 01/CT-TTg dated January 14, 2020 on "Promoting development of the Vietnamese economy through digital technology and Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg dated June 3, 2020 approving the "National digital transformation program to 2025, orientation to 2030" [1].

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, primary schools are facing the challenge of incorporating technology into their educational practices. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the role of organizational values and management practices in facilitating successful digital transformation. This paper aims to investigate

\* Corresponding author.

*E-mail address:* [lynt@vnu.edu.vn](mailto:lynt@vnu.edu.vn)

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the perspectives of managers, teachers, and parents regarding supportive organizational values for digital transformation and the impact of management practices on enhancing these values in primary schools in Hanoi.

By delving into the opinions and experiences of managers, teachers, and parents, this study contributes to the existing literature on organizational values and management practices during digital transformation in primary schools. It sheds light on the critical role that effective leadership plays in driving successful digital integration and highlights the significance of aligning management strategies with the core values of school culture. Ultimately, this research aims to provide actionable insights that can empower educational institutions to navigate the digital landscape while staying true to their fundamental values.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Digital Transformation

There are numerous definitions of digital transformation in use today, including the use of technology to alter business models, generate new opportunities and values, assist companies in increasing sales, and quicken the pace of business growth [2]. According to M. M. Gobble [3], digital transformation is the profound transformation of business and organizational activities, processes, capabilities, and models to maximize the transformation of changes and opportunities in the technology mix and its rapid impact on society in a strategic and prioritized manner.

It is possible to define digital transformation as the process of changing present and future organization practices in order to capitalize on the opportunities and changes that new digital technologies provide, as well as the impact they have on society. According to Fichman et al., [4] and Hess et al., [5] digital transformation is the change that IT enables in businesses through the digitalization of their products, services, core business

processes, customer touch points, and business models. Digital transformation occurs when we have digitized data and employ technologies like AI and Big Data to evaluate it, alter it, and generate new values [6, 7].

For an organization, digital transformation is defined as the process by which a company goes from a non-digital state to a digital state by using and disseminating digital technology [8]. An organization's performance can be dramatically increased and company processes can be greatly improved by implementing new digital technology. However, the difficulty of adapting to develop in the context of globalization with increasingly ferocious competition is also present.

To better structure the efforts of innovation in education, Kaminskyi et al., [9] contend that the digital transformation of the university education system for schools should have a larger focus and incorporate the modernization of corporate IT architecture management. In an effort to capture and model the interrelated activities necessary to integrate digital technologies in teaching, learning, and organizational practices, Fleaca [10] hypothesizes that contemporary developments in the area of modernizing educational systems with the aid of ITC technology and applied process thinking principles. Bounfour supposes that using digital artifacts, systems, and symbols inside and outside of an organization while updating an existing culture or developing a new one is a crucial process known as digital transformation [11].

### 2.2. School Culture in Digital Transformation

According to Wagner et al. organizational culture refers to "shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to student, teacher, and work learning, teaching leadership, and the quality of relationships inside and outside the school" [12]. Herbig and Dunphy [13] define culture as a comprehensive system of spoken, nonverbal, and written communication related to human biological and technical actions. A society's members are supposed to share certain

behaviors, beliefs, values, languages, and lifestyle habits, which collectively make up culture. It is the culmination of common beliefs, traits, or actions among locals. According to Kreitner and Kinicki [14], culture is a set of fundamental beliefs that are transmitted to new group members and used to develop similar attitudes and perceptions of similar situations. Managers create an existing culture and teach it to organizational members through their own actions [15].

The organizational culture cannot be disregarded during the organizational reform process. The management of norms that reflect the attitudes, beliefs, presumptions, and expectations of employees inside an organization, as well as the actions that shape people's behavior and interactions with one another, is what is known as organizational culture identifier [16]. The overall beliefs and actions of an organization, as well as the underlying presumptions that support team learning in both internal and external adaptive solutions, are referred to as organizational culture. The underlying concept that influences employees' and customers' actions and decisions can be described as organizational culture. Organizational culture is, generally speaking, the manner in which tasks are completed inside an organization or a sign of how the organization functions [17].

Technology and people's interactions are rearranged in digital culture, demonstrating how both dimensions can be used interchangeably as the subject and object of cultural expression. According to culture theory [18-20], culture is made up of common values, presumptions, beliefs, laws, and social activities that give rise to meaning and identity. According to Castells [21] and Snyder & Acker-Hocevar [22], there is a growing need for us to reflect on our perceptions, behaviors, values, and norms in light of the current state of learning and living on a worldwide scale. What are the implications when we view technology in education from a socio-cultural perspective of learning, and how is our life changed by our encounters with technology? As our human connections become

more and more made with and through technology, we need to understand what's going on with our perceptions, norms, values, behaviors, and customs because these are all related to how we shape meaning. The speed of connection and information exchange also contributes to changing perceptions, behaviors, and expectations. Because of this, creating a supportive and creative atmosphere for all parties participating in the digital transition requires an understanding of how management practices and school cultural values interact.

### *2.3. Managing School Culture in Digital Transformation*

Digital transformation encompasses more than just the use of digital technologies to digitize goods and services [23]. Comprehensive reform is necessary to enable significant progress in schools. Organizations must attach existing organizational circumstances, such as structure, procedure, and most importantly, culture, in addition to transforming and digitizing the entire process [24, 25].

Organizational culture can be a source of resistance to change, as was evident in the case of Kodak's digitization [26] even though it is frequently viewed as a valuable strategic asset capable of supporting business transformation and leveraging digital technology [27, 28]. Cultural change is regarded as crucial for successful organization transformation in both study and practice, particularly in reaction to disruptive upheavals brought on by new technology [25, 28, 29].

To promote digital transformation, organizational culture needs to establish a framework for accepting and adapting to change. To achieve digital transformation, radical adjustments must be made to organization culture, strategy, and leadership. The leadership, strategy, and culture of successful orga should maximize their potential for the digital transition [30]. Without a considerable adjustment in organizational culture and procedures, digital transformation

may be challenging to implement and necessitate a change in strategy [31].

Change is a necessary component of organizational development in this situation [32]. For the goal of encouraging individual development and enhancing organizational performance, it is a planned and purposeful process that makes sure an organization is on track and achieving the desired new state. Members of the organization can alter their work behaviors [33, 34], and they are key players in this process [35]. The behavior system at these people's workplaces is altered in a way that helps the organization transition to a new state or operating model, one in which the organization is strengthened and made more efficient [32]. Leaders and managers may not be able to implement the intended change due to considerable employee opposition without thorough planning and efforts to build a change-ready environment in the organization [36]. The difficulties now lie in how to supervise, lead, and empower personnel, create a supportive culture, and align performance with objectives, plans, and organizations rather than just buying equipment, setting up infrastructure, and having basic operational skills. These adjustments highlight the need for educated leadership that welcomes difficulties so that staff members are free to experiment and take technological risks [37]. It was stressed by Baggia et al., [38] and Hernandez [39] that managers are in charge of influencing good employee attitudes toward digitization.

According to Kane et al., [40], a clear digital strategy coupled with a culture and leadership ready to lead the transformation is what sets apart digital leaders from the competition. Success depends on the interplay of culture, authority, and leadership [41]. The great majority of works on organizational culture and change discuss the importance of leaders in comprehending and managing change, particularly transformative leadership [42-45]. It is possible to assert that an organization's culture and the tendencies of its personnel directly influence the success of any transformation process [46]. Therefore, in order

to reform organizations, leaders must have a thorough understanding of the actual organizational structures, procedures, and cultures [47].

### 3. Methodology

The sample consisted of 356 school managers, teachers, and parents from primary schools in Hanoi. A simple random sampling strategy (probability sampling) was used to draw the sample. For the present study, participants ages ranged between 25 and 60 years. Those employees who were willing to participate in the study were included in the study. A questionnaire of twelve identified cultural values resulting from an exploratory Delphi study with 25 research and industry experts developed by Hartl and Hess [48] was used in this study. And a questionnaire of four items on cultural value management activities in digital transformation using Henri Fayol's P-O-L-C framework [49]. These questionnaires are on a five-point Likert scale.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Opinions about the Importance of Organizational Values in Primary Schools

In evaluating the above 12 values, the mean and SD of parents are higher than those of managers and teachers. Specifically, the general mean is 3.68 and 3.54, respectively, and the mean SD is 0.12 and 0.11, respectively. Three contents highly appreciated by all 356 participants are: *Participation: the organization's support of open, non-hierarchical discussion and the democratization of decision processes*; *Willingness to learn: the organization's pursuit of continuous advancement through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge* and *Customer centricity: the organization's orientation of all activities to meet customer needs: products and processes are designed with focus on customer needs and continuously adapted to changes them*.

Table 1. Opinions about the importance of organizational values

Themes	Managers, teachers			Parents		
	Mean	SD	Order	Mean	SD	Order
Openness towards change: the organization's openness towards new ideas and its readiness to accept, implement and promote change	3.50	0.11	9	3.65	0.11	10
Customer centricity: the organization's orientation of all activities to meet customer needs: products and processes are designed with focus on customer needs and continuously adapted to changes thereof	3.57	0.11	4	3.73	0.13	3
Innovation: the organization's pursuit of improvement and growth through the development of innovations	3.52	0.11	8	3.55	0.11	12
Agility: the organization's willingness to work, act and re-structure and be flexible and adaptable in order to react to change	3.45	0.09	10	3.59	0.11	11
Willingness to learn: the organization's pursuit of continuous advancement through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge	3.63	0.11	2	3.73	0.12	2
Trust: refers to the mutual trust between the organization, its leadership and members, as well as the organization's trust in its external partners	3.57	0.11	5	3.70	0.12	6
Entrepreneurship: the organization's intention to promote the empowerment of its members to act proactively and independently, and take responsibility	3.56	0.11	7	3.70	0.12	6
Tolerance towards failure: the organization's tolerant attitude towards reasonable mistakes and support of learning from failure	3.57	0.11	5	3.67	0.12	9
Communication: the organization's intention to build internal and external networks for knowledge and information sharing	3.44	0.11	11	3.72	0.12	4
Risk affinity: the organization's willingness to take risks and make decisions under uncertainty	3.58	0.11	3	3.68	0.12	8
Participation: the organization's support of open, non-hierarchical discussion and democratization of decision processes	3.72	0.13	1	3.77	0.13	1
Cooperation: the organization's positive stance towards teamwork, cross- functional collaboration, and readiness for cooperation with external partners (e.g. customers)	3.41	0.10	12	3.71	0.12	5
	3.54	0.11		3.68	0.12	

Incidentally, the item "Participation: the organization's support of open, non-hierarchical discussion and democratization of decision processes" was highly appreciated by all 356 managers, teachers, and parents, ranking highest with a mean of 3.72 and 3.77 and SD of 0.13, respectively. Similarly, "Willingness to learn: the organization's pursuit of continuous advancement through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge" was also highly appreciated by all 3 participants at level 2, with a mean of 3.63 and 3.73, respectively; SD is 0.11 and 0.12. "Customer centricity: the organization's orientation of all activities to meet customer needs: products and processes are designed with focus on customer needs and continuously adapted to change them" was ranked 4th by managers and teachers with a mean of 3.57 and a SD of 0.11, and parents ranked it 3rd with a mean of 3.73 and a SD of 0.13.

Two contents "Trust: refer to the mutual trust between the organization, its leadership and members, as well as the organization's trust in its external partners" and "Entrepreneurship: the organization's intention to promote the empowerment of its members to act proactively and independently, and take responsibility" are rated by all three groups of participants at an

average level with a rank of 5, 6, and 7. "Agility: the organization's willingness to work, act and re-structure and be flexible and adaptable in order to react to change" has not been highly rated by all three groups of participants. Especially the content "Cooperation: the organization's positive stance towards teamwork, cross-functional collaboration, and readiness for cooperation with external partners (e.g., customers)" and "Innovation: the organization's pursuit of improvement and growth through the development of innovations" both included managers; teachers and parents were rated at the lowest level.

#### 4.2. Opinions about Increasing in the Functioning of the Symbols, Values and Rituals, and the Duty and Responsibilities of the School Administrators

According to the evaluation of managers and teachers, the item "Planning: The school builds a vision, mission, strategic plan, and goals to promote core cultural values in digital transformation" is number one with a mean of 3.51 and a SD of 0.09, while parents rank this item at 3<sup>rd</sup> with a mean of 3.64 and a SD of 0.11.

Table 2. Opinions about increasing in the functioning of the symbols, values and rituals, and the duty and responsibilities of the school administrators

Themes	Managers, teachers			Parents		
	Mean	SD	Order	Mean	SD	Order
<i>Planning: the school builds a vision, mission, strategic plan, and goals to promote core cultural values in digital transformation</i>	3.51	0.09	1	3.64	0.11	3
<i>Organizing: the school organizes activities and builds networks to promote values, symbols, and rituals</i>	3.37	0.08	4	3.61	0.11	4
<i>Leading: the school directs, makes decisions, communicates, organizes groups, and motivates to strengthen symbols, values, and rituals</i>	3.38	0.08	3	3.72	0.12	1
<i>Controlling: the school controls both the system and the process, strategic resources to advance symbols, values, and rituals</i>	3.42	0.08	2	3.68	0.12	2
	3.42	0.08		3.66	0.12	

The item "*Controlling: The school controls both the system and the process, strategic resources to advance symbols, values, and rituals*" was rated at 2 by both managers, teachers, and parents, with a mean of 3.42 and 3.68 and a SD of 0.08 and 0.12, respectively.

Item "*Leading: The school directs, makes decisions, communicates, organizes groups, and motivates to strengthen symbols, values, and rituals*" was ranked 1st by parents with a mean of 3.72 and a SD of 0.12; managers and teachers ranked this item 3rd with a mean of 3.38 and a SD of 0.08. Another similarity is that the item "*Organizing: The school organizes activities and builds networks to promote values, symbols, and rituals*" is rated at 4 by managers, teachers, and parents with a mean of 3.37 and a SD of 0.08 and 0.11, respectively. Thus, the management function that schools do not do well is the organizing function; the school has not organized activities and has not built a system to promote values, symbols, and rituals.

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3.37 and a SD of 0.08 and 0.11, respectively. Thus, the management function that schools do not do well is the organizing function; the school has not organized activities and has not built a system to promote values, symbols, and rituals.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this research shed light on the significance of aligning management practices with the core values of the school culture. It emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and innovative environment for all stakeholders involved, including managers, teachers, and parents. By fostering a culture that values collaboration, adaptability, and continuous learning, schools can enhance their ability to navigate the challenges and opportunities brought about by digital transformation. The implications of this study for practitioners are considerable. It highlights the need for school leaders to prioritize the development and implementation of management practices that reflect the core values of the institution. This includes fostering open communication, promoting professional development opportunities, and actively involving parents in the decision-making process. Such actions can contribute to a positive and inclusive school culture that supports successful digital transformation.

In conclusion, this paper highlights the importance of aligning management practices with the core values of the school culture to facilitate successful digital transformation in primary schools in Hanoi. By considering the opinions of managers, teachers, and parents, this study provides valuable insights for practitioners and offers directions for future research. Ultimately, by embracing effective leadership approaches and fostering a supportive and innovative environment, schools can navigate the digital transformation journey successfully and ensure positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

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