

DISSERTATION – PROPOSAL

LCBB6000

BA (HONS) BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID (LONDON  
CAMPUS)

PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE:

**REMOTE WORKING DYNAMICS:  
EXPLORING THE TRANSITION FROM  
LEADERSHIP TO E-LEADERSHIP IN UK  
ORGANISATIONS**

SUBMITTED BY:

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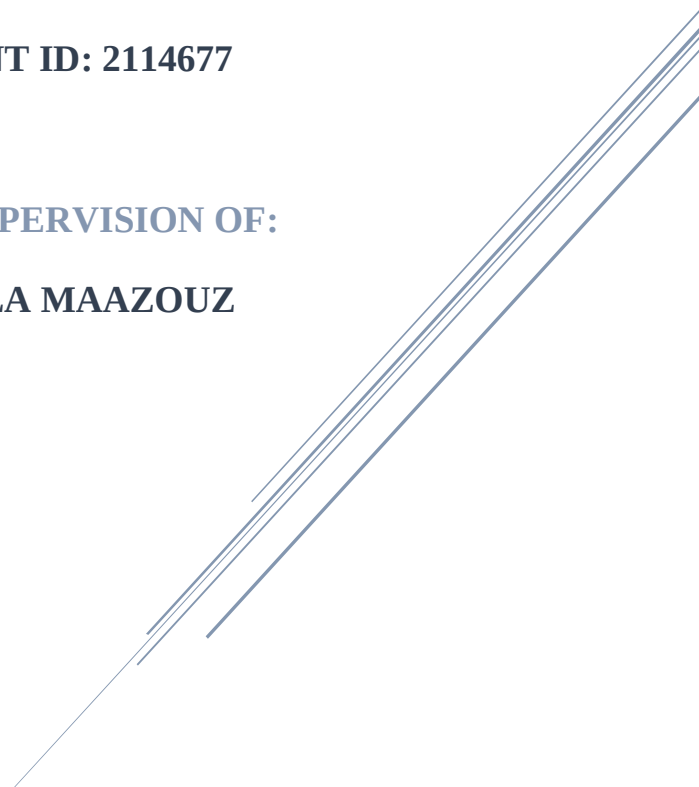
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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The world of work has undergone an enormous transformation in recent years, largely driven by the growth of technological processes and the growth of remote working. Leaders are increasingly faced with the challenge of managing geographically dispersed teams, requiring a transition from traditional leadership approaches to e-leadership tactics. As organisations such as the UK increasingly embrace remote working, understanding the dynamics of this transition from conventional to digital leadership becomes critical to organisational effectiveness and employee well-being.

This transformation has led unprecedentedly to numerous reflections on the role of leaders in managing remote employees, where leaders find themselves in new 'situations' where there is a working environment called digital that requires new skills and new strategies to lead their teams to success (Contreras, et al., 2020).

### Aim

The purpose of this research proposal is to investigate how leadership has evolved in response to the increasing adoption of remote working and digital technologies in UK organisations. It explores the challenges and opportunities associated with the transition from traditional leadership to e-leadership in the context of remote working and assesses the impact of digital on the styles of leaders within this new organisational environment. Finally, offer practical recommendations and guidelines for leaders in UK organisations wishing to successfully transition to digital leadership in remote working environments. This includes identifying potential pitfalls to avoid, highlighting effective strategies to implement, and providing actionable information based on inductive findings and best practices.

### Objectives

The research aims to explore the transition from traditional leadership to digital leadership and gain an understanding of remote working and the term e-leadership today, particularly within UK companies.

The research objectives to:

- Examine the key drivers and challenges associated with remote working in UK organisations, including the extent of adoption, common practices and challenges faced.
- Explore the evolution of leadership in response to the dynamics of remote working, understand traditional leadership styles and how they translate into remote working environments.
- Explore the challenges faced by leaders in adapting to e-Leadership practices and remote team dynamics.
- Identify challenges and opportunities for e-leadership.

### Research questions

To understand the transition from a physical to a virtual working environment and how this change affects the leaders of UK organisations, it is necessary to conduct research on the following question:

1. What are the dynamics that are emerging in organisations for remote working?
2. What are the main challenges faced by leaders in adapting their styles to e-Leadership practices and effectively managing remote teams?
3. What are the key factors that facilitate the transition from leadership to e-Leadership in remote work environments?
4. How do leaders respond to this new remote situation?

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

With advances in technology and global circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergence of remote working has driven much of the emergence of e-leadership, which has transformed traditional paradigms of organisational dynamics, where the context of leadership. As organisations face the complexity of remote working arrangements, the transition from traditional leadership models to e-leadership has become a research focus (Ahuja, et al., 2023).

Studies have investigated the implications of remote working on productivity, employee satisfaction and organisational performance. For example, research by Kulshreshtha & Sharma (2021) demonstrated a significant increase in productivity among remote workers, which was attributed to factors such as reduced commuting time and a more flexible work environment. Similarly, the analysis conducted by Torre & Sarti (2020) found positive associations between teleworking and job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and work-life balance, where the result of increased efficiency on the part of workers is leading to greater success for organisations.

With the shift to remote working, leaders are faced with a fundamental change in the way they manage and interact with groups, representing a transition from traditional leadership to e-leadership. As Wang, et al., (2023) argues, e-leadership encompasses the use of digital technology tools that employ virtual communication and management channels to facilitate effective leadership processes in remote contexts. The difference between traditional leadership and e-leadership is that the former relies heavily on face-to-face interactions and hierarchical structures, while the latter emphasises virtual collaboration, trust building and the use of online tools for decision-making and coordination.

Xiao & Li's (2023) research introduced the concept of e-leadership as a key component of virtual group effectiveness, highlighting the importance of e-leadership behaviours in fostering group connection and goal achievement in remote contexts for success. In addition, Torre & Sarti's (2020) studies identified the specific needs of e-leaders required for effective e-leadership, including technological competence, communication skills and the ability to foster a sense of community among 'online' team members.

Research has shown that UK organisations have rapidly transitioned to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, highlighting the need for effective e-leadership practices to support remote teams (Overton, 2023). Furthermore, studies by Ahuja, et al(2023) and Torre & Sarti(2020) found that in order to foster successful remote working in UK contexts, it is important to assess the role of leadership styles within this digital environment emphasising the importance of approaches.

Drawing on this information from the existing literature, this research proposal seeks to explore the evolving role of digital leadership within UK organisations to identify the new

situation in which leaders need to operate and find best practices and strategies to improve effectiveness in remote working environments.

One theory that will be evaluated is situational leadership theory, which offers a valuable framework for examining leadership effectiveness in various contexts, such as the digital environment.

Situational leadership theory is a leadership model that emphasises the importance of adapting leadership styles according to the situation in the work environment. Where this suggests that there is no single 'excellent' leadership style, but rather effective leaders are those who must adapt their approach according to the specific situation (Guah, 2021).

Thus, the leader in this 'situation' finds himself leading the team without physical contact and continuous 'control', so he must go and adapt his styles and behaviours to lead the team to success. Here we will investigate the application of situational leadership theory in e-leadership practices, establishing the styles that leaders must employ in this new digital realm.

## Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology

### Research philosophy

Epistemology deals with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge, in other words, it deals with how we know what we know and what constitutes valid knowledge (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

Exploring epistemology would involve examining the underlying assumptions, beliefs and methodologies that shape our understanding of e-leadership in the context of the dynamics of remote work. This could include questioning traditional notions of leadership and how they apply or need to be adapted in a remote work environment.

### Research paradigm

Interpretivism, according to Saunders & Thornhill (2019), is the philosophy that emphasises understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the individuals involved.

Interpretivism is suitable in this research because it focuses on exploring the dynamics of remote working and the transition to e-leadership, where it will analyse individuals who have been given remote working experiences.

Interpretive approaches will explore the complexities of remote working within UK organisations, examining how leaders perceive and cope with the transition to e-leadership in the context of remote working. With the help of interviews, it is possible to gather rich and detailed insights into the lived experiences of remote leaders.

### Research approach

The inductive research method is not rigid and is the best and most practical approach to research, where the analysis of data and information is carried out using a qualitative method, in which general dimensions and factors can be analysed (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

Using an inductive research approach for this research would involve collecting empirical data and deriving theories or generalisations from observed patterns and phenomena. That is, it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions and behaviours that will go into evaluating leadership change in e-leadership.

### Research methodology

Qualitative research aims to understand the motives, motivations and underlying behaviour of individuals. It involves methods such as interviews, focus groups and observations to collect rich and descriptive data. Qualitative research is suitable when we want to explore complex phenomena in depth and understand participants' subjective experience (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

In this research we will deepen our understanding of the subjective experiences, perceptions and behaviour of leaders involved in managing remote teams.

### Research strategy

Structured interviews or also called quantitative research interviews are conducted by the researcher using completed questionnaires, these questionnaires are sets of identical and

standard questions. Where these must be read exactly as written and in the same tone of voice, so as not to alter or influence the answers (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

Conduct interviews with leaders to explore their subjective experiences and perceptions regarding the transition from traditional to digital leadership in remote working contexts. This proposal allows for the examination of e-leadership practices within different organisational contexts.

### Sampling methods

Sampling methods are techniques used to select a subset of individuals or items from a larger population. These methods are fundamental in research as they allow researchers to collect data efficiently and draw conclusions about the population without having to study each individual or element within it. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics and then randomly selecting participants from each stratum (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

In this research, samples will be chosen from 12 to 15 leaders based on the size of the organisation or industry sector in the UK, ensuring a diverse sample representing different types of leaders.

### Data collection methods/tools

Interviews are a powerful qualitative research method to gather insights, opinions, and perspectives from participants (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

In this research, structured interviews will be conducted with leaders to gather qualitative insights into their experiences with remote working and leadership transitions. Tools such as Microsoft Teams can be used to conduct remote interviews.

### Interpreting data

Qualitative analysis involves the interpretation of non-numerical data as text to identify themes, patterns, and insights. Techniques such as content analysis, thematic analysis and grounded theory are commonly used in qualitative research (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

In this research, we will interpret the data that will be obtained from the interviews and assess the situation in which leaders now find themselves in the digital world.

### Time prospects of the research (Gantt chart)

It is important to devote time to research so that the results are used at the right time for organisations. Since the research topic is broad, a time frame for efficient research must be developed and adhered to. The time frame of the research includes the tasks to be performed in the research (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

#### *Work Schedule – Gantt Chart*

|                                         | WEEK<br>1 | WEEK<br>2 | WEEK<br>3 | WEEK<br>4 | WEEK<br>5 | WEEK<br>6 | WEEK<br>7 | WEEK<br>8 | WEEK<br>9 | WEEK<br>10 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
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| <b>COLLECTING ALL<br/>REQUIRED DATA</b> |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |
| <b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |
| <b>DISCUSSION/<br/>CONCLUSION</b>       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |
| <b>REVISION</b>                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |

### Ethical consideration of the research

Ethical considerations are fundamental in any research activity, ensuring respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of all individuals involved. This must be carried out according to basic principles that may include informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, risk of harm and communication of results (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019).

In this research, documents will be filled out by the researcher and all persons who will be interviewed to protect themselves from any possible risk during the research and inform them of the privacy and confidentiality of all data that will be collected.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

In conclusion, this research proposal aims to investigate the dynamics of remote working and the transition from traditional to digital leadership within UK organisations. The shift to remote working has become a prevalent trend that requires a deeper understanding of its impact on leadership dynamics. Exploring the challenges and opportunities presented by remote working for leaders who find themselves in a new situation in how they lead their teams to success.

Through a qualitative interview approach, this research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of how leaders are adapting their behaviours in a virtual environment, examining which strategies and practices facilitate organisational success in remote working contexts.

Furthermore, focusing specifically on UK organisations, this research proposal recognises the contextual nuances and factors that may influence the dynamics of remote working and digital leadership approaches in this context. By clarifying these complexities, the findings of this study can offer practical recommendations for leaders to improve remote working strategies and promote positive outcomes for both employees and organisations.

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