

## **E-LEADERSHIP SYSTEM: A FUTURISTIC VISION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper aims at defining the concept of electronic leadership, its role in supporting higher leadership and the transformation of traditional leaders into effective electronic leaders who are able to exploit effort, time and space for the purpose of organizational development. This paper emphasizes, in particular, the trend of transformation of organizations, which use old systems, into ones that use E-Leadership, which will become an effective strategic factor within these organizations.*

**KEYWORDS:** E-Leadership, System, Vision

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is an art which cannot be perfected by everyone. It is a mixture of an instinctive talent and specific personal characteristics combined with knowledge, experience, persistence and ability to lead. All these are mixed in a “melting-pot” which may be described as the pot of “consciousness” of the self and the surroundings. It is the ability to influence people and reality.

The paper defines the concept of leadership and its role in the development of the organization by examining E-Leadership systems. Traditional leadership lacks the effectiveness to determine the vision for the organization (Takavarasha, Hapanyengwi, Rupere, & Zanamwe, 2012). Numerous evidence points to the fact that current standards are unable to deal with the most important apprehensions of organizations. That is why transformation to E-Leadership systems is essential (Abrahams, Burke, 2012; Min, 2011).

The technological revolution has resulted in the development of the various life facets in all fields. Parallel to the change and development of organizations, whether private or public sectors or whether profit-based or philanthropic, the need for leaders who are technologically inclined has snowballed. In fact, future leadership will be dependent on technology to perform all activities. The best future leaders will be those who distinguish themselves in the major fields of leadership manifested in personal leadership, strategic leadership, communicative leadership, motivational leadership, and finally electronic leadership. It will be difficult to imagine that a prominent future leader can be genuinely effective if he doesn't capitalize on E-leadership. Thus, effective E-leadership is an essential component of the holistic leadership which enjoys all required leadership traits (Karahanna, Watson, 2006; Ibieta, 2006; Zhang, Liu, Tian, Brian, 2006).

Many organizations have tried to develop their leadership approaches randomly for they have laid emphasis on one aspect of leadership only believing that this would be sufficient. This has been proven to be untrue; leadership is more complex than that. On the other hand, many others believe that leadership is a rare talent which can be only acquired by the lucky few. The truth is that nobody is born with this “leadership talent.” Individuals develop and enhance this “talent” by benefitting from the lessons they have had in life. Those who are able to utilize the best methods to learn from their life experiences will be able to become effective leaders.

Thus, the integration of technology into leadership practices requires irrefutable transformation of the vision of the leader and of all types of leadership activities. This new vision manifested in E-leadership will change the leader’s role and reduce dependency on him. It will also cause changes in the approaches used to lead the organization especially in the fields of planning, monitoring and follow-up.

Utilization of E-leadership within organizations will play a vital role in the commitment to adhere to the right methodology when performing work activities, such as strategic planning for the organization’s future or when trying to overcome the problems it faces. Most leaders face numerous difficulties, most important of which are monitoring and follow-up, prioritizing, time investment, change management, and blurred future vision. Accordingly, most E-leadership systems aim at resolving these difficulties. In addition, failure to achieve mandatory integration of E-leadership systems within the organization will result in loss of material resources and the inability to benefit from the costly investments in technology.

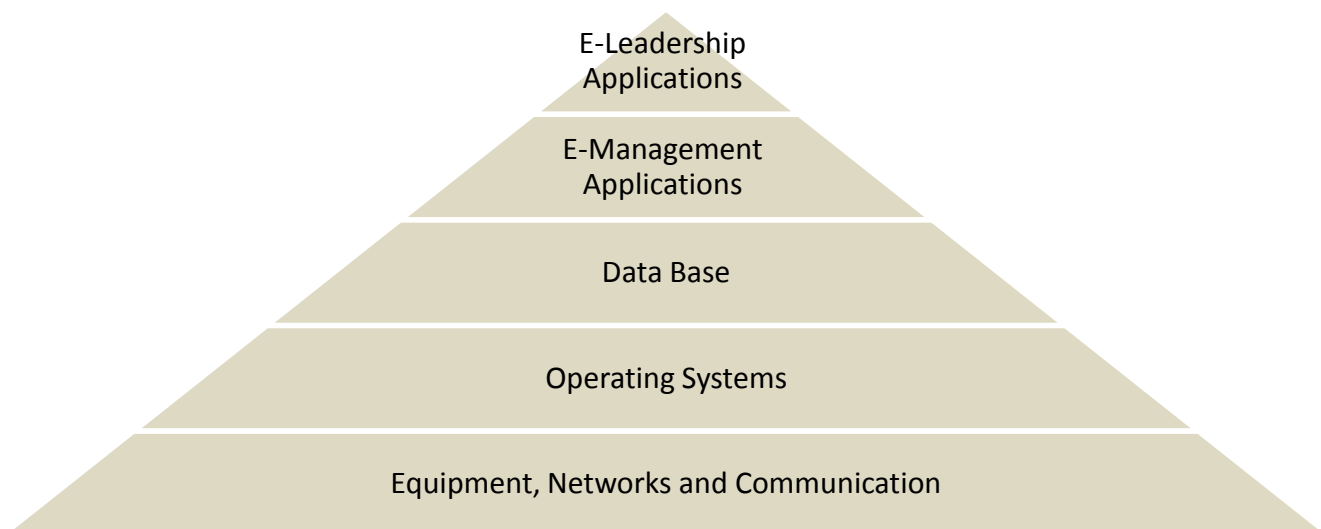
The problem that faces the application of E-leadership is not shortage of equipment or programs, but the leaders' personality types, the culture and the unwillingness to change. Many leaders who have easy access to technology do not use it because they are quite satisfied with their traditional methods in leadership which depend on personal experience. Moreover, they feel that the use of technology in leadership entails problems and complications. They also believe that we cannot depend on technology to solve problems, make decisions and determine future vision. Technology, for them, has not reached a stage that would enable us to achieve E-leadership. It can take us no further than e-management. Due to the above, we find that organizations which are committed to utilize technology in leadership, need to take proper action to ensure integrating technology in leadership in an official mandatory manner especially if the organization seeks to achieve ambitious objectives which can only be effectively achieved by utilizing technology. Even leaders who are willing and anxious to use technology in leadership face problems related to the volume of work they have and meetings they have to attend whereas effective use of technology requires time and proper integration of various skills and competencies, the absence of which renders these leaders unsuccessful investors in technology.

Table (1) uses some standards to hold contrast between traditional leadership and e-leadership. The table shows that e-leadership excels in speedy implementation, follow-up, monitoring employees, and increase in employee productivity. As a result of costly equipment and programs, cost can be considered as the only disadvantage. The increase in productivity, however, will make up for most of the cost incurred.

**Table (1): Traditional Leadership and Electronic Leadership.**

Standard	Traditional Leadership	Electronic Leadership
Implementation	Slow	High
Follow-up	Slow	High
Employee monitoring	Normal	High
Employee productivity	Normal	High
Cost	Limited	High

Figure (1) represents the information technology pyramid where the base is the computer and communication equipment and networks. The next layer is the operating systems which are used to operate these equipment to serve data base and applications. The third layer is the data base which contains all information and data types. The next layer is the applications specific to electronic management, most important of which are: HR systems, budget system, finance system, purchasing system, warehousing system, administrative communications system, archives, housing system, transportation system, and maintenance system. At the top of the pyramid are the electronic leadership applications, which is the topic at hand.

**Figure (1) : IT Pyramid.**

### The relationship between management and leadership

There is a great difference between management and leadership. Leadership provides us with motivation and vision while management determines work procedures and competencies. Leadership enables us to do the right things; whereas management shows us how to do things the right way. Leadership endows us with the challenge to be the best while management provides us with training and support to become the best (Mayer, 2005). At the same time, a strong relationship exists between leadership and management. Leadership depends on management to perform duties while management depends on leadership in setting direction and goals. An ideal organization which uses technology finds it necessary to use machines to perform work duties whether administrative and regular duties or leadership activities, mentioned in this essay. These include systems and applications, such as meetings management systems, change systems, performance monitoring systems, or future studies systems.

The authority level of the leader within the organization is considered an important factor in determining the extent of the actual need for electronic management and leadership system (Liu, Zhang, Tian, & Peng, 2006). The higher the leader's authority level in the organization, the more the dependency on electronic leadership, as shown in Figure (2) below. The essay at hand claims importance due to its emphasis on developing electronic leadership systems and measuring the feasibility of such projects for the organization in various areas.

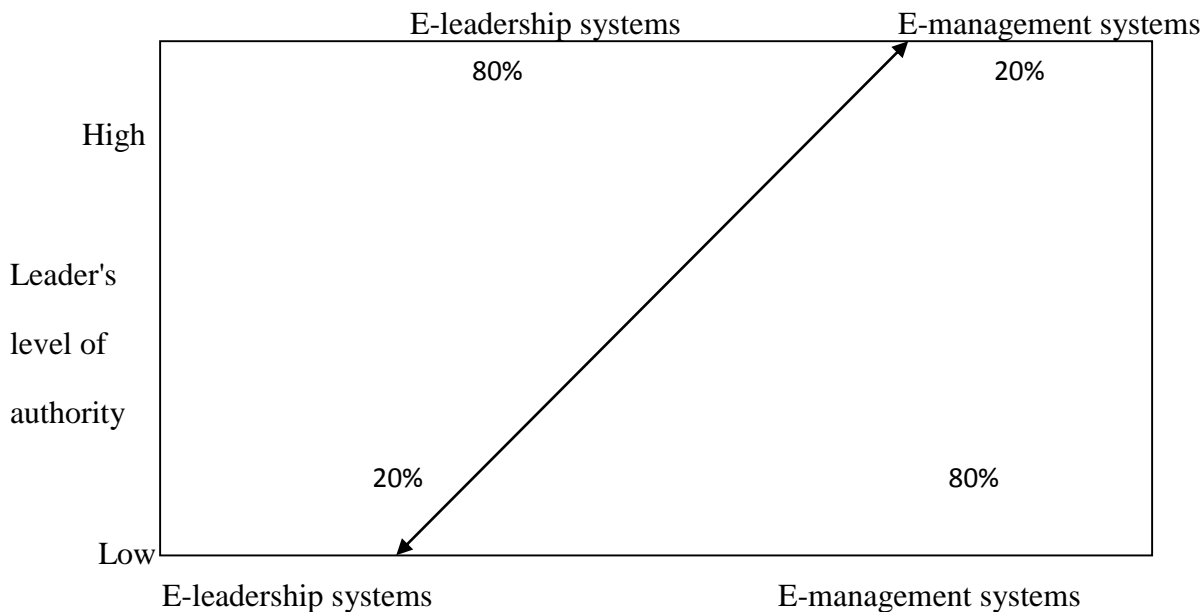


Figure (2): Level of authority and the degree of applying electronic leadership and management systems.

## **Electronic Leadership Systems**

Organizations go the extra mile in their efforts to invest in information technology and activate the technology role in growth across-the-board. They make necessary plans and mobilize human and material resources using different means, one of which is the development of electronic leadership systems. Utilization of electronic leadership systems means leaders' discipline in all decision making processes. Leaders do not make decisions based on limited personal experience or likes and dislikes.

A new concept of leadership is needed in the globalization age in which geographic borders have disappeared. The future leaders are a different genre. They are type who has the capacity and abilities to use electronic leadership; the leader who owns the main systems which support electronic leadership. Effective electronic leadership is our future destiny necessary to accommodate the changes that technology has caused in scientific life.

The concept of electronic leadership is represented as the ability to utilize technology to perform the duties and the jobs of the leader which increase productivity of the organization by follow-up and monitoring of every activity in the organization whether big or small. Electronic leadership can be defined as the use of technology to save effort, time and money for higher management to achieve the objectives of the organization. Accordingly, the effective electronic leader can be defined as the leader who employs technology in leadership activities to achieve the best results.

It is a natural reaction to resist change to electronic leadership systems due to fear of the unknown. So, it is necessary for the leadership to have conviction that this new inclination towards electronic leadership systems is right and, at the same time, the old behavior exemplified in dealing with issues based on personal experience is not necessarily all wrong. Most leaders fail to achieve change towards electronic leadership because they are ignorant of the changes they need to make.

This research presents the best ten support systems which can be used by the leader in performing his duties. These systems develop varying importance with regards to the nature of each organization and are not all necessarily needed to be applied. The systems are:

### **a. Meetings Management System**

This system deals with the basics of meetings management with emphasis on how to effectively conduct meetings and terminate unnecessary ones. The system includes how to plan a typical meeting and gives useful suggestions with regards to alternatives to meetings. It also deals with dates of meetings and gives instructions related to how to manage virtual meetings which are distance meetings. This system can be developed by companies specialized in the field and does not need to be developed in the organization.

**b. Projects Management System**

This system is considered one of the most important systems a leader needs because it shows how projects are conducted which enable us to find out the extent these projects are progressing or faltering. In addition, the system provides useful statistics and illustrations. This system is available in the market and does not need to be developed in the organization.

**c. Planning Management System**

This system deals with areas related to strategies, such as vision, mission, values, points of strength, needs for improvement, objectives, and performance indicators. It provides various reports and illustrations which assist the leader in the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the strategies and plans of the organization. It also assists the leader in identifying and developing the organization's objectives, strategies, organizational chart and the assignment of proper incumbents in positions. Currently, various planning management systems are available in the market and these can cater for most of the organization needs.

**d. Image Monitoring System**

This system enables the leader to monitor work location, whether offices or other sites, by camera which enables him to know the physical condition of the sectors which are under him and can utilize systems to monitor vehicles and identify their geographic locations. In the future, electronic monitoring needs to be used to effectively monitor performance in organizations which depend on the actual sight-observing of the work site, which is known as image monitoring. This system is developed by various specialized companies and is available in the market.

**e. Decision Support System**

The decision support system is considered one of the most important systems the leader needs since decision making is one of most important competencies the leader requires in modern leadership. The decision support system shows the various methods to make decisions and the way to choose the best decision that benefits the organization. Decision support systems differ according to the nature of the organization. Currently, there is no one system that can satisfy all the decision support requirements. So, organizations need to develop the system internally so that they will ensure satisfying all their specific needs.

**f. Staff Development System**

This system aims at enhancing employees' skills and increasing their knowledge to improve their performance. The system lays emphasis on the importance of determining the suitable methods and approaches to develop employees. This includes training, feedback and achieving proper balance between the need and professional ambitions of employees. The system presents tools and proposals to support employee retention. The system which can

satisfy the specific needs of organizations is currently unavailable. So, organizations depend on internal resources to develop it.

**g. Results Management System**

This system deals with basic principles of employee management with special emphasis on the role of the leader in increasing employee productivity by knowing the nature of each employee's productivity and how to motivate this employee to increase it. This system is one of the most useful systems for the leader since it shows the actual field of productivity of each employee whether it is performing specific duties, transactions, customer service or sales. Some specialized companies have developed this system, but it is preferred that each organization develop its own system which caters for its specific needs.

**h. Change Management System**

The system aims at managing change and deals with the extent people react to change which is one of the most problematic issues that face the leader. It assists in predicting change and the reaction of people, customers or employees to this change when it takes place. It provides recommendations and procedures which can be implemented to facilitate change and reduce decline of productivity which tends to occur during change periods. The system shows how to deal with the four stages of change, which are rejection, resistance, adaptation and adherence. This system is developed by specialized companies and can cater for most of the needs of the organization, but it is preferred that the organization develop the system which caters for its specific needs.

**i. Differences Management System**

This system assists in enhancing the leader's skills in conflict resolution and how to prevent these conflicts and differences. It also assists the leader in nurturing the constructive aspects and restraining the negative ones. The system has many benefits since conflict prevention will bring about a healthy work environment which leads to increase in productivity. The system is not available in the market, so most organizations develop their own systems which meet their specific needs.

**j. Future Studies System**

This system assists the leader in dealing with a major challenge which many organizations face. This challenge entails identifying future expectations of the organization, the direction it is going to embark on, and its future vision, which is one of the most important endeavors for a leader. This system is currently unavailable in the market. Numerous specialized researches have been conducted pertaining to various fields of specialization to develop a system that can support the leader in dealing with this challenge.

Table (2) below shows the ten most important traits a successful leader is required to have and the role of electronic leadership in assisting and supporting him.

**Table (2): Electronic leadership systems and their role in supporting leader's traits.**

Electronic Leadership Systems											
N o.	Leader's Traits	Meetings Management System	Projects Management System	Planning Management System	Image Monitoring System	Decision Support System	Staff Development System	Results Management System	Change Management System	Differences Management System	Future Studies System
1.	Has vision and mission			<input type="radio"/>							<input type="radio"/>
2.	Acts according to plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>							<input type="radio"/>
3.	Manages change					<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4.	Makes decisions	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5.	Monitors all activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6.	Considers failure a new beginning					<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	Has innovative solutions		<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
8.	Organized and good investor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>			
9.	Develops teams	<input type="radio"/>					<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
10.	Ensures retention of good performance						<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	



**Table (3): Electronic leadership systems and development sources.**

Electronic Leadership Systems											
N o.	Develo pment sources	Meetin gs Management System	Projects Management System	Plannin g Management System	Image Monito ring System	Decisio n Support System	Staff Develo pment System	Results Management System	Change Management System	Differ ences Mana geme nt System	Future Studies System
1.	outsour ce provide rs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
2.	outsour ce & internal ly					<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3.	Being researc hed & under						<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table 3 shows sources and developers of electronic leadership systems. Some of these systems are developed by specialized international providers. These systems cater for all the needs of the organization, so there is no need to develop them internally. Other systems need to be developed in the organization to ensure their suitability to meet the organization requirements, as is shown in the above table. Some electronic leadership systems are still being researched, an example of which is the future studies system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Having studied and applied electronic leadership systems, the researcher recommends the following to promote effective electronic leadership systems applications:

- a. Electronic leadership should be endorsed and its effective role in the development of organizations should be acclaimed.
- b. Research and projects related to electronic leadership should be encouraged and supported, the same way as electronic management systems are.

- c. Scientific conferences and training courses specialized in the development of electronic leadership systems need to be held.
- d. Establishment of a scientific society which sponsors and provides financial and moral support to electronic leadership.
- e. Publicize the importance of electronic leadership in providing support and assistance to leaders in making decisions based on accurate clear facts.
- f. Confirm that electronic leadership systems are successful means to achieve development and survival of the organization in a competitive environment.
- g. Ensure that electronic leadership systems serve the organization and assist in the development of the management processes carried out by the higher management of the organization, and not to cause coMPLICATIONS WHEN APPLIED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper is to predict future development of the leadership at the higher management level by utilizing technology to perform management processes. This can be achieved by providing systems which assist and support in decision making, follow-up and monitoring of plans and projects, change management and future vision. In addition, this paper shows the importance of electronic leadership and assists, as a scientific reference, researchers who develop electronic leadership systems.

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