

ABSTRACT

Improving the quality and efficiency of academic services requires study programs in higher education institutions to manage operational performance in an adaptive, integrated, and digitally driven manner. Universitas XYZ has implemented various digital systems to support academic service processes and management; however, their utilization remains suboptimal. This is indicated by limited system integration, dominance of manual processes, and low use of data for decision-making. These conditions highlight the importance of strengthening digital culture, implementing digital leadership (E-Leadership), and enhancing digital capabilities.

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital culture and E-Leadership on the operational performance of study programs, with digital capability as a mediating variable. The research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method involving 120 respondents from 40 study programs at Universitas XYZ. The sampling technique applied was quota sampling. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.

The results show that digital culture and E-Leadership have a positive and significant influence on operational performance, with E-Leadership exerting the strongest effect. Digital culture and E-Leadership also significantly influence digital capability. However, digital capability does not significantly mediate the effect of digital culture or E-Leadership on operational performance, although it still plays a supportive role in indirectly enhancing performance.

These findings provide practical implications for managing study programs in higher education institutions, emphasizing the importance of simultaneously strengthening E-Leadership and digital culture to improve operational performance. Furthermore, this study contributes to the theoretical discourse on the role of intangible resources in shaping dynamic capabilities in the digital transformation era, while also opening opportunities for further research by considering external factors and longitudinal study designs.

Keywords: *Digital Culture; E-Leadership; Digital Capability; Operational Performance; Study Program.*