



# Chapter 10

## Reimagining Leadership and Organizational Culture in Digitally Native Firms: Distributed Leadership, Digital Trust, and Resilience Building in the E–Economy


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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter develops the Digital Resilient Leadership Culture (DRLC) framework to analyse how digitally native firms structure leadership, trust, and organizational*

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*culture in remote-first, platform-governed environments. Drawing on four theoretical foundations—distributed leadership, digital trust, adaptive culture, and sociotechnical systems thinking, the chapter demonstrates how these firms co-produce resilience through infrastructural, ethical, and participatory mechanisms. Using a multi-method design combining conceptual synthesis, case analysis of six global firms, and document-based thematic coding, it reveals that resilience emerges not from isolated practices but from the interaction between system-embedded leadership, trust-by-design, and modular culture. This reconceptualization offers both scholarly and practical insights for designing human-centred, inclusive, and adaptable work environments in the e-economy.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of digitally native firms represents a paradigmatic shift in how organizations are structured, governed, and experienced (Stark & Pais, 2020). Unlike traditional enterprises that have incrementally integrated digital tools into legacy systems, digitally native firms are conceived and scaled entirely through digital infrastructures (Kadolkar, Kepes, & Subramony, 2024). These organizations operate in environments characterized by algorithmic coordination (Mbare, Perkiö, & Koivusalo, 2024), remote-first work models (De Souza Santos & Ralph, 2022), and fluid platform-based workflows. As such, the foundational assumptions of leadership and organizational culture, once grounded in hierarchical control, physical proximity, and bureaucratic processes are proving inadequate in addressing the realities of digitally mediated work.

This transformation is not merely technological but sociotechnical, as it reshapes the interaction between human behaviour and digital systems (Kandane Arachchige Don, Richter, & Tate, 2024). It poses critical challenges and opportunities for Human Resource Management scholarship and practice. Traditional leadership paradigms, including transactional and transformational models, often fall short in contexts where authority is distributed, communication is asynchronous, and psychological autonomy is high (Höddinghaus, Nohe, & Hertel, 2023). Moreover, the erosion of physical co presence and face to face collaboration necessitates novel mechanisms for cultivating trust, enabling cohesion, and fostering resilience in teams that are geographically and temporally dispersed (Degbey & Einola, 2020). Digitally native firms differ fundamentally from hybrid or digitally transformed organizations. Their structures and cultures are not adaptations of industrial era models but are born from digital logic itself. This reality calls for a reconceptualization of leadership and organizational culture that is attuned to digital environments (Asfahani, 2025). To address this need, the chapter draws on distributed leadership theory, digital trust

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