

# Monarch Business School Switzerland Professional Doctoral Research Plan

Managing The Evolution To A Digital Organization Culture: The Experience Of The Mobile Telephony Industry In Ghana

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#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	CONTENTSBREVIATIONS	
ABSTRACT.		. III
1.0 INTROD	UCTION & BACKGROUND	1
2.0 PROVISI	IONAL RESEARCH QUESTION	3
3.0 RESEAR	RCH METHODOLOGY	4
4.0 STAKEH	OLDER SCHEMA & PARTICIPANTS	7
5.0 LITERAT	URE TRIANGULATION	8
5.1 TH	HEORIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	9
	HEORIES ON CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION & LEADERSHIP	
5.3 TF	HEORIES ON DIGITAL CULTURE	11
6.0 TIMELIN	E & BUDGET	13
7.0 RESEAR	RCH PLAN APPROVAL	15
BIBLIOGRAI	PHY	16
	LIST OF FIGURES	
FIGURE 1:	METHODOLOGICAL TRIANGUALTION	4
FIGURE 2:	MONARCH STANDARD RESEARCH PROCESS FLOW	5
FIGURE 3:	LITERATURE REVIEW INTEGRATION	9
	LIST OF TABLES	
TABLE 1:	LEVEL OF ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA	8
TABLE 2:	PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH TIMELINE	14
TABLE 3:	RESEARCH BUDGET	15

Page | i

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FINTECH Financial Technology

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GSMA GSM Association

ITU International Telecommunications Union

MTI Mobile Telephony Industry

NCA National Communication Authority

SME Small and Medium Enterprises

TELCOs Telecommunication Companies

VUCA Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous

#### **ABSTRACT**

Organizational culture and effective change are regarded as vital for organizational transformations including digital culture transformations (IGI Global, 2021). According to Henley (2021) adaptive cultures contribute positively to digital transformation. A McKinsey study by Goran, LaBerge and Srinivasan (2017) further highlights that cultural and behavioral practices were rated as the highest and the most significant challenge to attain digital priorities in organizations. The government of Ghana has prioritized digital transformation as a critical national program for national growth and development in partnership with the mobile telephony industry (MTI) (Ministry of Communication and Digitalization, 2021). According to the Ghana Statistical Services (2020), the Information & Communication sector which is predominantly the mobile telephony industry (MTI), income growth contribution grew from 67.6% in guarter one of 2019 to 77.4% in guarter one of 2020. According to Parviainen et al. (2017), digitalization has been identified as one of the major trends changing society and business. The essential component of culture for digitalization in organizations that operate in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environments is important for understanding the MTI transformation.

The contemplated research examines the Ghana MTI digital culture evolution through an analysis of research associated with organizational culture, change, transformation management, leadership, and digital culture. The research will seek to develop a new framework for digital culture essentials to assist a sustainable transformation in the mobile telephony industry in Ghana. Additionally, the research will analyze the impact that a digitally evolved TELCO could have on employee productivity, a digital mindset, adoption to new ways of working, and impact execution. This will be analyzed through a triangulated research method by studying existing academic literature together with company data and interviews of relevant stakeholders.

Keywords: Ghana, mobile telephony industry, change management, digital culture, organizational culture, digital transformation, organizational transformation, culture change.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Recent digital transformative changes across industries have provided leverage for organizations to seek continuous improvement while redefining how they generate, deliver and capture value (Loonam et al., 2018). Digital transformation has been gaining traction in Ghana due to its expected impact towards unlocking sustainable growth (GSMA Report, 2017). Both academia and business leaders question whether a multidisciplinary approach to digital transformation as well as a focus on leadership and culture is being prioritized in digital transformation (Kane et al., 2015). Talin (2020), indicates that people are at the center of digital transformation and the right digital culture is a prerequisite for organizational sustainability.

As stated in the World Bank Ghana Digital Economy Diagnostics (2019), digital skills, digital platforms, digital infrastructure, digital financial services and digital entrepreneurship are foundational for a successful and inclusive digital economy and a minimization of the digital divide in Ghana. Currently, the MTI delivers financial services, digital forms of identity, productivity for farmers, healthcare access, water and energy efficiency technology (Hatt, James & Lucini, 2017). It is argued that the MTI should adopt a sustainable approach to attain a digital workplace culture as the industry lies at the core of Ghana's digital economy and culture is paramount for accelerating the sector's digital evolution (World Bank Ghana Digital Economy Diagnostics, 2019). As reported by Statista Research Department (2022), Ghana's digital ecosystem and mindset index was rated at -52 compared to Nigeria at 58 and Cote d'Ivoire at 98. According to the International Telecommunications Union (2021), 38% of Ghanaians use the internet compared to 26% in Nigeria and 36% in Cote

Page | 1

d'Ivoire. The International Telecommunications Union (2021) concluded that, limited access to broadband infrastructure, electricity, affordability and skills contribute to the digital divide in Africa. Solomon & van Klyton (2020) indicate that a 1% increase in individual digital usage index growth is predicted to increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth by about 0.25% on average and by inference an overall positive GDP impact of further individual digital usage uptake in Ghana.

In agreement with Ozyurt (2019) the MTI in Ghana is dominating the financial technology (FINTECH) space resulting in multi-regulation. According to the CEO of the Telecoms Chamber, the challenges of the MTI in Ghana include an increasing cash cow mentality, high cost of operations, and limited government incentives (Ghana web, 2020). As reported by Deloitte (2014), African MTIs were experiencing a high demand for managed third-party data service. This resulted in operators being required to expand the richness of connectivity and IT offerings (Deloitte, 2014). As stated by Hatt, James & Lucini, (2017) in the GSM Association (GSMA) country overview for Ghana, the industry continues to evolve beyond its core business of connectivity to propel the government agenda for an inclusive digital society. The MTI can support private-public sector collaboration by accelerating socioeconomic development and national development goals (Hatt, James & Lucini, 2017). In the Government of Ghana Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (2019), a commitment was made to adopt seventeen Sustainable Development Goals that seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by leveraging digital technology.

Ampah & Sudan (2016) indicate that the government of Ghana has been advocating

an e-government public-private partnership for digitalization. In the first quarter of 2021, a government ministry was established in Ghana to prioritize digitalization (Ministry of Communication and Digitalization, 2021). Verhoef et al (2021) state that a multidisciplinary discussion is required for digital transformations to be sustainable as strategy, technology, processes & practices have to evolve in tandem.

With the above under consideration, the contemplated research will seek to:

- Examine the nexus within the academic literature on theories relating to leadership, organizational culture, digital culture and change management;
- 2. Examine the impact of current practices on culture change initiatives and what is required for sustainable transformations that can deliver on digital culture;
- Develop a new conceptual framework that may support employee
  productivity, a digital mindset, adoption to continuous change, and impact
  execution for sustainable digital organizational outcomes.

It is believed that the scope of this research has not been completed elsewhere which provides an opportunity to contribute original knowledge to the domain of digital organizational culture research in Ghana.

#### 2.0 PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the above discourse, a provisional research question has been developed as:

"What are the essential elements of an organizational culture framework that
may facilitate an effective leadership driven digital culture transformation
within the Mobile Telephony Industry in Ghana?"

Page | 3

#### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Figure 1 shows the aim of the contemplated research is to respond to the provisional research question by way of a triangulation of research data, being: 1. literature review of existing seminal academic authors (desk research); 2. Content analysis of existing corporate data (desk research), and; 3. interviews with primary stakeholders in industry (field research). The contemplated research will employ a qualitative methodological approach to data collection. This will allow for in-depth context as referenced by Tinsley (2019). Interviews will be conducted with managerial employees within the MTI.

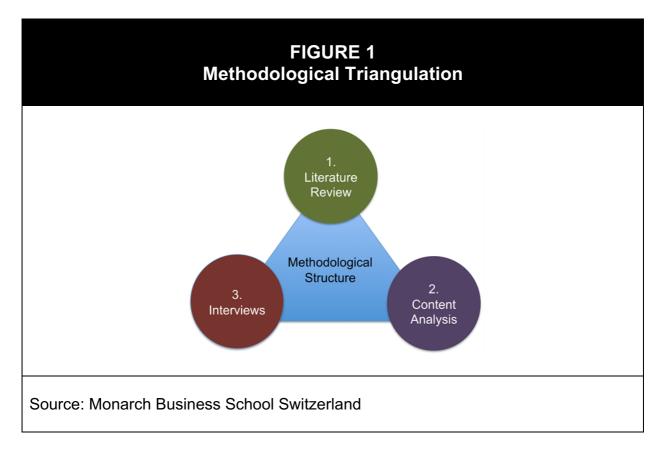
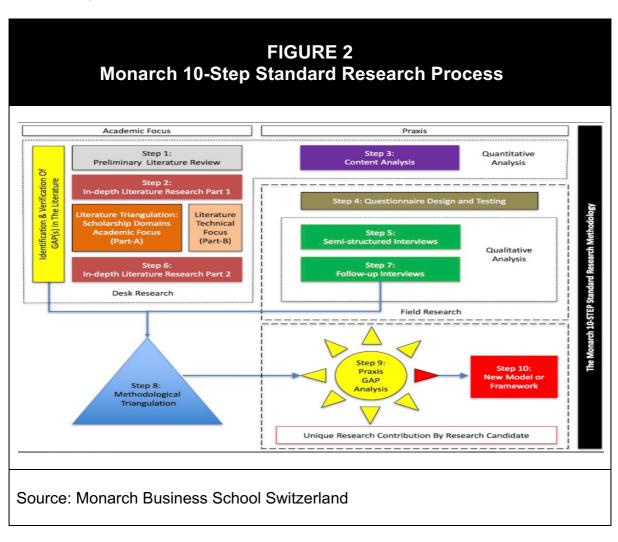


Figure 2 illustrates the 10-steps within the Monarch Standardized Research Process Flow that will be followed within the contemplated research as:

Step 1: Preliminary Literature Review: The research begins with a survey and review of the works of the seminal authors within the academic scholarship domains identified in Section 5.0 which include: Organizational culture, Leadership, Change and Transformation Management and Digital culture. The preliminary literature review provides a framework to the contemplated research, identifies key concepts and theories and develops a better understanding of the nexus of the academic scholarship domains.



<u>Step 2: In-Depth Literature Review – Part 1</u>: An in-depth review and critique of the works of the seminal academic authors and quasi-academic works within the three

academic scholarship domains will be completed to provide a solid academic foundation to the contemplated research. The "Gap in the Literature" will be presented and clearly identified in relation to the Provisional Research Question.

Step 3: Content Analysis: An analysis based on data obtained from annual reports, white papers, supporting commercial documents and other commercial data sources will be examined as well as information found in professional journals, published manuscripts and documents.

Step 4: Questionnaire Design & Testing: The development of the interview questionnaire will be informed by the review of the academic literature and technical documents. The interview questionnaire will be tested with several volunteers in advance of the interviews to perfect the document from a flow and timing standpoint and ensure that questions are clear, concise and have a direct bearing on the focus of the contemplated research.

Step 5: Semi-Structured Interview Process: All interview participants are expected to be knowledgeable with respect to the contemplated research. A total of 50 face-to-face interviews will be conducted with participants representing a sample from each selected stakeholder group (see Table1). Interviews are expected to be thirty to forty-five minutes in length and will be recorded electronically or manually.

Telephone or video interviews will be used if face-to-face interviews are not possible.

<u>Step 6: In-Depth Literature Review – Part 2</u>: To add more specificity and currency to the research analysis, a second in-depth literature review will be completed. The Part 2 literature review will also be informed by the interview responses.

Step 7: Follow-Up Interviews: To achieve a more specific view informed by the first interviews and the second literature review, a sub-set of 25 respondents representing a sample from each selected stakeholder group, selected from the first-round interview sample will participate in follow-up interviews. The timing and interview protocols will be similar to those listed in Step 5.

Steps 8 and 9: Triangulation of the Data and Gap Analysis: A triangulation of the research data informed by the literature review, content analysis and interview responses will be completed. This will assist in determining whether the existing academic knowledge is congruent with the practical application in the field. The result of this analysis should determine whether a Praxis Gap exists between the academic (theoretical) and the practical (applied) domains.

Step 10: Development of New Conceptual Model or Framework: Building on the Gap Analysis completed in Step 9, an analysis of the existing models and frameworks within the academic domain will be considered. This analysis will evaluate whether the frameworks or models sufficiently address the requirement for practical application within the industry or whether they should be improved or modified. Recommendations will be established based on findings of the research.

#### 4.0 STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA & PARTICIPANTS

The field research component consists of a two-part semi-structured interview process. Due to limitations with respect to timing and resources, the field research component and interviews will be limited to the Macro and Meso sub-group as shown below.

TABLE 1 Level of Analysis & Stakeholder								
Level	Туре	Group 1	Group 2	Stakeholders				
MACRO	Societal	15	5	Telecommunications Chamber, Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana, University Faculty, Think Tanks, Ministry of Finance				
MESO	Organizational /Institutional	35	20	Executives, Business Unit Leaders, Managers				
MICRO	Individual	-	-					

Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland

50

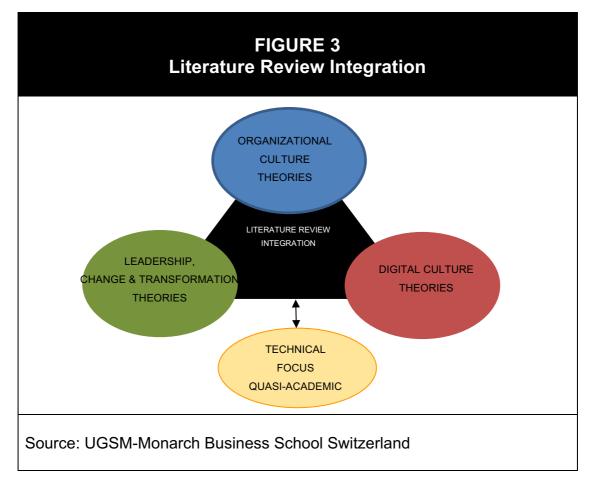
Total Respondents→

Participants for the Macro and Meso levels will be individuals considered knowledgeable in the study domain with a minimum of five years management experience. Informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation will be required for participants in the contemplated research. Participant anonymity and privacy will be granted upon request.

25

#### 5.0 LITERATURE TRIANGULATION

The theoretical framework will be structured by leveraging an integrative literature review approach as shown in Figure 3. The selection of this distinctive form of research will support the generation of new knowledge on the culture essentials for evolving the MTI in Ghana to Digital TELCOs. The academic areas considered as important to the research question are Theories on Organizational Culture, Theories on Change and Transformation, and Theories on Digital Culture. The choice of specific theories is based on relevance to the proposed research question.



An analysis of the intersection of the three domains of knowledge, the nexus of the research will be of critical importance to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon. The above-mentioned domains present a reinforcing relationship and it is believed that the interaction of the research theory domains may assist in uncovering new knowledge.

#### 5.1 THEORIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

According to Barney (1986) and Cameron & Quinn (2005), a healthy organizational culture provides a competitive advantage for organizations. Healthy cultures are recognized as contributing to organizational performance (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992). According to Ravasi & Schultz (2006), organizational culture is a set of

shared assumptions that guide appropriate behavior for various situations in organizations. Schrodt (2002) indicates that organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders.

Several theories on organizational culture have been developed over the years. The Handy model of organizational culture focuses on four types of culture and the link between organizational culture and organizational structures (Handy, 1976). Power, task culture, person culture, and role culture may be followed by organizations (Handy, 1976). Cultural dimensions theory focuses on cultures that might influence business behavior from a national and regional perspective (Hofstede, 1991). The Three levels of Culture/Iceberg model by Schein focuses on the assessment of culture from the standpoint of an observer and the effect of external adaptation and internal integration via three distinct levels; artifacts, values, and assumptions (Schein, 1991). The Dennison culture model focuses on four general dimensions; mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency as fundamental to behaviors that shape culture in organizations (Dennison, 1991). Understanding culture theories from a national, structural, observer, leadership and external impact perspective should assist in framing the essentials required to further develop the Ghanaian MTI. The work of seminal authors on organizational culture theory including O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, Deal and Kennedy, Gerry Johnson, Stanley Harris, Stephen McGuire and Robert Cooke will be reviewed.

5.2 THEORIES ON CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION AND LEADERSHIP

Moran and Brightman (2001) indicate that organizational change is managed with a

constant renewal of an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to aid the ever-changing needs of stakeholder. The central role of leadership and change management are important for any digital transformation vision (Mansaray, 2019). According to Kotter (1996), the people most affected by a change should be the focus in managing change. Lewin (1958) referred to the three steps of unfreezing. change, and refreezing in the Lewin change model as important for identifying the factors that tend to influence a situation especially a social situation. The McKinsey 7S Framework (Peters & Waterman, 1982) provides a management framework centered on seven core elements for organizational change. The McKinsey 7S framework seeks to identify where change and repositioning are required as well as the strengthening of each element for performance. Lewin, Lipitt & White (1939), indicate that authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles impact performance and decision making. Understanding leadership styles in additional to change and transformation from the Kotter eight step change process model, Lewin change model, and McKinsey 7S Framework may contribute to identifying gaps and opportunities within the digital culture evolution of the MTI in Ghana. The work of seminal authors on change theory including William Bridges, Jeffrey Hiatt and William Deming will be reviewed.

#### 5.3 THEORIES ON DIGITAL CULTURE

According to Soto-Akosta (2020), economies are becoming more digital because of emerging digital technologies. These technological changes also affect how the workplace culture evolves and adapts. Laudon & Laudon (2019) and Soto-Acosta et

al (2016), describe digital organizations as fully or partially deploying digital processes in the management of substantial business processes and relationships with its stakeholders including customers, suppliers, and employees. According to Porter's (1985) value chain, differentiating between primary and support activities is relevant in a digital culture. According to Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), adopting a framework that revises the business model of a company enables it to leverage digitalization positively for both horizontal and vertical value chains and is an enabler for effective digital transformations.

Technology and the internet continue to shape how we interact as humans, behave, think, and communicate within society (Allen, 2019). Meier (2019) describes digital culture as the shared attributes common as to how digital organizations think and act. Notably, the stages of the digital culture change framework as described by Hinchcliffe (2016) highlights the value in adopting a balanced view on technology and change management to shift both the technological foundation and the people in an organization towards both planned goals and emergent opportunities. According to Levin & Mamlok (2021), digital culture change can be triggered by digital technologies both internally and externally.

Digital technologies alter the environment and forces organizations to develop an organizational culture that will allow them to operate (Van Wageningen, 2017). A triangulation of cases studied by Hartl (2019) in regards to the evolution to successful digital cultures, provide insight that could contribute to the shift in the culture of the MTI in Ghana. Based on an understanding on how the change was implemented and managed, a focus on both internal and external technology triggers

and the ability to identify new ways of working as well as stakeholder management in Ghana MTI is critical. As stated by Baculard (2017), a 360-degree approach to managing future adoption to change and agility in a VUCA environment is required for sustainable outcomes. According to Gupta (2018), organizations could experience internal strategic or operational barriers in their evolution to a digital culture. These internal barriers include an unclear company vision, an unclear goal for the transformation itself, leader behaviors, poor human resource practices and ownership, ineffective project management, and middle managers lacking the relevant skills (Gupta, 2018). In order to gain further understanding on digital culture change in global high performing digital TELCO's, Dion Hinchcliffe's stages of digital culture change framework will be assessed against practices in the MTI in Ghana (Hinchcliffe, 2016). The work of seminal authors on digital culture theory including Vincent Miller, Michael Solomon, Swen Nadkarni and Reinhard Prugl will be reviewed.

#### 6.0 TIMELINE AND BUDGET

The contemplated research is expected to be completed over a 36-month period. The research will include a field research interview from September 2023 to October 2023 for Stage one and January 2024 to February 2024 for Stage 2 following which the data will be analyzed and the manuscript completed. Face-to-face interviews are expected to last a maximum of 45 minutes. Telephone and video recording technology will be used if face-to-face interviews are not possible. Interviews will be conducted in English in the cities of Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi in Ghana.

TABLE 2 Provisional Research Timeline													
			Yea	ar 1		Year 2					Yea	ar 3	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Initial Literature Search Main Literature Search - Part 1					-							
A	Research Plan												
PART,	Section 1 - Background												
	Section 2 – Supporting Literature												
	Content Analysis												
Official Submission of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Slide Presentation To Obtain Authorization To Continue On To Field Research													
	Interviews Part 1												
	Main Literature Search - Part 2												
PART B	Interviews Part 2												
	Section 3 - Synthesis												
	Section 4 - Recommendations												
	Manuscript Perfecting &												
	Submission				1			1		1	1	1	

Table 2 illustrates the duration of each task anticipated within the research process.

Although every effort will be made to implement the steps within the research timeline, variation in the plan may be encountered due to variables beyond the control of the researcher. Variables that may have a significant effect on the research timeline which are beyond the control of the researcher are resource availability, accessibility, and availability of participants. These variables could result in a modification of travel schedules and prolongation of the field research stages.

The research will be privately funded. No additional resources or funding will be requested of UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland. No funds will be

Managing The Evolution To A Digital Organization Culture:
The Experience Of The Mobile Telephony Industry In Ghana
received from any public body in carrying out the contemplated research. The total

budget of the research as exhibited in Table 3 is approximately 5,500 Euros. The budget is presently fully funded, and research may begin immediately upon approval.

TABLE 3 Research Budget									
	In Euros								
Books and articles purchases	800								
Questionnaire Production	400								
Travel and accommodation expenses	2,500								
Manuscript publication	400								
Statistical Software	600								
Miscellaneous	800								
TOTAL	5,500								

#### 7.0 RESEARCH PLAN APPROVAL

The contemplated research has been approved by the Administration and the Candidate may commence the research immediately. The Candidate is not to deviate from the proposed research plan unless expressly confirmed by both the Supervisor and the Administration in written form.

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Approved by The Administration on 21-September-2022 in Zug-Switzerland By: Dr. Jeffrey Henderson, D.Phil.

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