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Strategic Factors of Gen Z's Leadership in Technology-Mediated Student Protests: Empirical Insights from the July Movement in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how Generation Z (Gen Z) exercised leadership during technology-mediated student protests in Bangladesh (July–August 2024), focusing on the communication strategies that enabled collective action for Justice and Institutional Strength. Drawing on survey data from 2,120 participants across schools, colleges, and universities, ten leadership dimensions were assessed using a five-point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis were employed to examine the relationships between leadership traits and digital mobilization tactics. Findings indicate that Adaptive and Resilient Leadership (ARL) serves as the central mechanism driving effective protest leadership, with key contributors including Emotional and Value-Based Leadership (EAVBL), Crowdsourcing and Collective Intelligence (CCI), Global Connectivity and Networked Leadership (GCNL), Rapid Information Dissemination and Crisis Management (RIDCM), and Transparency via Digital Platforms (TATDP). Digital tools such as hashtags, viral campaigns, and narrative storytelling were found to mediate collective action through crowdsourced intelligence, highlighting how technology facilitates decentralized coordination, rapid mobilization, and emotionally resonant leadership. The study develops a conceptual framework integrating leadership strategies and technological engagement, offering empirical insights into how Gen Z leverages digital tools to orchestrate effective, socially transformative protest movements. These findings contribute to scholarship on digital-era leadership, youth activism, and technology-mediated collective action, providing actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and scholars interested in participatory, digitally driven social change.

Keywords: GenZ, Technology-mediated protest, Digital activism, SDG-16, Social media platforms, Adaptive leadership, Peace, Justice and Institutional Strength.

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INTRODUCTION

Students' movement has had a pivotal role in shaping the political and social landscape not only in Bangladesh but in many countries. The role played by the 1952 language movement (bhasha andolan) in East Pakistan (Hussain, 2012) in the development of a Bengali nationalist discourse (Alam, 1991), student movement of 1968-69 in Pakistan (then East Pakistan) against the authoritarian rule (Khan, 2022) , and the bloodiest liberation war leading to the creation of an independent Bangladesh on December 16, 1971 (Christiansen, 2019; Maniruzzaman, 1980) are few of the examples. Even after the liberation war several students' movements played crucial role in Bangladesh history including mass protest against the military dictatorship in 1990 (Nasrin & Rahman, 2019), the quota reform movement for the Civil Service Job in 2018, the road safety movement for enforcement transport sector regulations, safety standard as well as traffic management system in 2018 (Ghosh, 2024; Tanjeem & Fatima, 2023) and the very recent July movement in 2024 (Azim & Zaman, 2024). The use of social media such as Facebook; hashtags, live videos, memes and images helped to amplify the movement's reach, making it a national and international issue (Ta'amneh & Al-Ghazo, 2021; Hasan et al., 2020; Afrin, 2024).

Globally, technology-mediated protests have demonstrated how digital tools reshape leadership and collective action. In the United States, student-driven activism during the civil rights era; Greensboro-sit-in of 1960 (Anderson, 1997), protest in France (Seidman, 2004) and Vietnam War (Hall, 2008) relied heavily on face-to-face networks, whereas more recent youth mobilizations—such as Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, Chile's student uprisings, and Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution—were characterized by hashtags, live-streaming, and decentralized digital coordination (Donoso, 2013; Donoso et. al, 2023; El-Ghobashy, 2012; Wang, 2023). Social media platforms have emerged as critical infrastructures for rapid information dissemination, narrative framing, and the crowdsourcing of collective intelligence, thereby enabling distributed leadership in highly fluid protest environments (Breuer et al., 2015).

Students' protests have also played a vital role in Egypt during the 2011 Arab Spring; student unions, informal networks, and social media platforms played key roles in mobilizing, organizing demonstrations, disseminating information about government abuses and human rights violations (Tadros, 2012). Same happened in Tunisian revolutionary movement, commonly referred to as the Jasmine Revolution, which took place in late 2010 and early 2011

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(El-Khawas, 2012; Dobbs, 2021) in Nepal (Acharya, 2024), in Sudan in 2019 (Bakhit, 2023; Handique, 2020; Gizouli, 2019) in Sri Lanka (Obeyesekere, 1974; Moore, 1993); particularly during the protest of 2022 to alleviate economic crisis and political mismanagement and suppression, corruption in public administration, inflation and social justice (Fernando, 2023). Youth move from social activities to political activities (Coe et al., 2016). Again, students utilized social media platform, and they were instrumental to mobilize public opinion against the government (Singh & Bhargavi, 2024).

Bangladesh's July 2024 student protests—referred to as the "July Revolution"—exemplify this shift toward digitally mediated mobilization. Sparked by the Supreme Court's reinstatement of a 30% quota for descendants of freedom fighters in civil service recruitment, students across schools, colleges, and universities organized under the banner of the Discrimination-Free Student Movement. What distinguished this protest from earlier movements was not only its scale and intensity but also its reliance on digital platforms as spaces for coordination, storytelling, and tactical decision-making. Facebook groups, hashtags, viral campaigns, and live video feeds functioned as digital arenas for mobilization, while encrypted chats and crowdsourced intelligence allowed for decentralized planning of marches, blockades, and shutdowns. Technology thus blurred the boundary between online activism and offline action, creating a feedback loop of visibility, legitimacy, and sustained momentum.

This shift also reconfigures the nature of leadership. Rather than depending solely on hierarchical student organizations, the July Revolution highlighted how Generation Z leaders employed adaptive and resilient leadership strategies rooted in technological fluency, collective intelligence, and values-driven engagement. As Bessant and Watts (2025) argue, young people increasingly demand a "politics as equals," using digital infrastructures to assert agency and reshape power relations. In Bangladesh, Gen Z leaders demonstrated how emotional resonance, rapid crisis response, and transparent digital communication could converge to produce effective, networked leadership during moments of democratic contestation.

Against this backdrop, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining how strategic and technological determinants shape leadership in technology-mediated protests. Specifically, it investigates how adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) emerged as the central mechanism enabling student leaders to leverage digital technologies for collective action. By analysing leadership dimensions such as emotional and value-based leadership, crowdsourcing

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and collective intelligence, global connectivity, and crisis management, the study aims to develop a conceptual framework for understanding how youth activism is reshaped in the digital era for justice and strong institutions.

To address this aim, the study explores the following research questions:

1. How does Generation Z exercise adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) during technology-mediated student protests in Bangladesh?
2. What role does digital technology play in shaping leadership strategies and mobilization tactics in youth movement?
3. How do leadership dimensions such as emotional and value-based leadership, crowdsourcing and collective intelligence, and global connectivity interact to facilitate protest outcomes?
4. In what ways do digital tools such as hashtags, viral campaigns, rapid information dissemination, and storytelling mediate collective action through leadership mechanisms?

To address these questions, the study defines the following objectives:

1. Examine how adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) enables Generation Z to leverage digital technologies for collective action during the 2024 student protests in Bangladesh.
2. Identify the digital tools, platforms, and networked strategies that enhance or constrain leadership effectiveness in technology-mediated protests for justice.
3. Investigate the role of crowdsourcing, collective intelligence, and online networks in supporting decentralized decision-making and coordinated mobilization.
4. Evaluate how digital campaigns, hashtags, storytelling, and rapid information dissemination mediate the relationship between leadership dimensions and successful protest outcomes.

Develop a conceptual framework by integrating technological engagement with leadership strategies, offering insights into how Gen Z mobilizes and sustains digitally mediated collective action for institutional strength.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Leadership is inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations (Burns, 1978), the capacity to translate vision into reality (Bennis, 1989) and

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leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell, 1998). Generation Zoomers (GenZ), the youth leadership, is the very concurrent phenomenon. Leaders from this generation are more likely to align their leadership with causes they are passionate about, such as climate change, social justice, and equality (Liveris, 2023). They prioritize social justice, environmental sustainability, and ethical behaviour in their leadership practices (Seemiller & Grace, 2016) with agility and leveraging technology to address challenges (Rainer & Rainer, 2018). GenZ's leadership is typically more decentralized, inclusive and collaborative often seen in grassroots movements (Bas & Riggio, 2006; Philips, 2024). Thus, GenZ leadership reflects the unique traits, values, approaches and strategies of the generation born between 1997 and 2012, who are characterized by their digital fluency, desire for authenticity, and emphasis on social justice.

Leadership strategy often includes identifying key issues, engaging stakeholders, formulating clear objectives, and using effective communication channels to galvanize support. Sharp (2005) highlights that nonviolent resistance approach with patterns being grassroot organization (Christens et. Al., 2021), coalition building (Smith, 2024), digital activism (Cheng et. al., 2024) and mobilization (Saka, 2017) are strategically planned to desired outcomes (Snow et. al., 2004). Therefore, some strategic factors of student movement of the July Revolution are identified through exploring various experts' opinions in extant literatures and are discussed below.

Adaptive and Resilient Leadership (ARL)

During the 36 days long movement, the students changed their quota reform protest to nine-point demands, and later nine-point demands was compressed into one-point demand for ousting the government. The leaders demonstrate adaptability and resilience, particularly in dynamic environments where they must respond quickly to changes or challenges (Heifetz, 1994). During the Zapatista movement, leaders adapted to governmental crackdowns by using alternative communication channels, showing resilience in the face of adversity (Cleaver, 1998). GenZ's strategies were flexible adapting to changing political and social landscape and pivoting tactics in response to government crackdowns. So, the success of the student protest relied on adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) of Gen Z students who participated the movement directly or indirectly.

Emotional Appeal and Value-Based Leadership (EAVBL)

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Emotional appeal and value-based leadership made leaders seek to connect with followers on a personal level by aligning with shared values and emotions (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). This approach mirrors the tactics used during the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, where leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. employed emotional and value-based rhetoric to galvanize support and action (Carson, 2003). Based on this discussion the proposed hypothesis can be defined as**:**

H1*: Emotional appeal and value-based leadership (EAVBL) positively influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z student protest.*

Crowdsourcing and Collective Intelligence (CCI)

Crowdsourcing is a key tactic used by leaders to gather ideas, resources, and solutions from a broad base of participants, enhancing decision-making through collective intelligence (Howe, 2006). Funding from across the organizations and professions uphold the movement to its utmost height through community resource utilization and collective intelligence evidenced by the Egyptian revolution in 2011 (Alexander & Aouragh, 2011). Influence of crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI) on adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) can be stated as

H2*: Crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI) positively influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z student protest.*

Global Connectivity and Networked Leadership (GCNL)

Cross-Sector Cooperation is found through in GenZ's leadership through collaborating with international NGOs and organizations. As a result, #KeepItOn coalition, a global network of over 300 civil society organizations across 105 countries worldwide, appeal to the highest authority to end internet shutdown added an extra momentum to this movement. The anti-globalization protests utilized global networks to coordinate actions across multiple countries, reflecting the interconnected nature of modern activism (Tarrow, 2005) and the open political strategy (Barron & Coulombel, 2024). The leadership style is characterized by global connectivity, leveraging networks that transcend national boundaries to build coalitions and share resources (Castells, 2010) and it crosses the boundary of borders as it moves from Spain to England becoming transnational (Rubio et al., 2018). This phenomenon dives the hypothesis.

H3*: Global connectivity and networked leadership (GCNL) positively influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z student protest.*

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Rapid Information Dissemination and Crisis Management (RIDCM)

By combining rapid information dissemination with robust crisis management practices, student movements can enhance their resilience and achieve their objectives more effectively (Tilly & Wood, 2009; Tufekci, 2017). A vital aspect of crisis management is ensuring medical support and legal support for arrested participants (Ganz, 2010; Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005. For instance, during the 2019-2020 protests in Chile, student groups organized first-aid stations and had medical volunteers ready to assist injured demonstrators (Somma et al., 2020); same happened to the protesters here. Blood donors', financial support as well as legal support providers' contact numbers are posted. It resembles with the use of WhatsApp during the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate relief efforts and disseminate accurate information demonstrates the efficiency of digital tools in crisis management (Merchant & Lurie, 2020). So, a hypothesis that states the importance of rapid information dissemination and crisis management is:

H4: *Rapid information dissemination and crisis management (RIDCM) positively influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z student protest.*

Transparency and Accountability through Digital Platforms (TATDP)

Transparent leadership ensures that the goals, strategies, and decisions of the movement are openly communicated to all members, reducing the chances of misinformation and internal conflicts (Morris, 1984) and promote a culture of honesty, ethical behaviour and integrity (Miao et al., 2013; Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Eisenbeiss, 2012). This youth leadership strategies create a foundation of trust and legitimacy (Tilly & Wood, 2009; Pfeffer, 2010). In this movement, students getting shot by police in the streets, fire from the Helicopter to the protested students, massacre in police stations etc. ignite the mass community to be united. As in the 2019 Hong Kong protests the use of Telegram and Twitter (Xinyue, 2023) with live-streaming during protests, provided real-time accountability and transparency in leadership actions. Based on the above discussion the proposed hypothesis is:

H5*: Transparency and Accountability through Digital Platforms (TATDP) positively influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z student protest.*

Decentralized and Collective Mobility (DCML)

Gen Z leadership is characterized by a decentralized and collaborative approach, often referred to as "shared leadership" (Dinh et al., 2014). Gen Z has identified a group-based approach to

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leadership, even the terminology, to identify different group leaders are called in an innovative term Coordinator (Shomonnayok) or Coordinator of Coordinators irrespective the need for a central leader (Lee et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2020). Their decentralized and collective approach where social media played a crucial role in organizing protests without a central leadership figure (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Arafa & Armstrong, 2016). Based on the above discussion the following hypothesis can be proposed:

H6*: Decentralized and Collective Mobility (DCML) influences emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL) and crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI) which in turn influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) of Gen Z movement.*

Digital Activism and Mobilization (DAM)

Gen Z leaders are digital natives, and their fluency with digital tools is a defining factor of their leadership, communication strategies and digital technologies (Prensky, 2001; Faraj & Leonardi, 2022). The use of hashtags, viral videos, and online petitions during the July Revolution exemplifies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The students leveraged platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp for real-time updates, resource sharing, and organizing protests (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). This integration of AI and advanced technology (Madanchian, et al., 2024) all resemble the use of social media during the Occupy Wall Street movement bypassing traditional media (Castells, 2012). Based on this discussion the proposed hypothesis is:

H7*: Digital activism and mobilization (DAM) influences emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL) and crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI) which in turn influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z movement.*

Use of Hashtags and Viral Campaigns (UHVC)

Hashtags are a powerful tool in Gen Z's communication arsenal, used to create viral campaigns that amplify their messages and mobilize support (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). The #BlackLivesMatter movement which advocates for justice and equality (Taylor, 2016), gained traction through the use of hashtags (Jackson et al., 2020; Rickford, 2016) to reach to a global audience (Cox, 2017) and created huge impact of the movement. #StudentProtests, #SaveBangladeshiStudents, #Bangladesh became prominent source of information during the students protest in July 2024 in Bangladesh. Three essential points are obvious: creative protests employing symbolic online tactics, digital culture incorporating memes (Shifman,

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2014) evidenced by the 2019 Chilean protests (Valenzuela, 2019). The importance of UHVC in students protest and Gen Z movement postulates the hypothesis:

***H8**: Use of hashtag and viral campaigns (UHVC) influences emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL), crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI), and global connectivity and network leadership (GCNL) which in turn influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z movement.*

Narrative and Storytelling in Digital Communication (NSDC)

The GenZ leaders and members developed compelling narratives for local and international audiences. The use of storytelling and narrative techniques are to frame the movements and communicate effectively with diverse audiences across digital platforms (Baker & Gower, 2010). During the Hong Kong protests, activists shared personal stories on social media to humanize their cause and garner international support (Chan & Lee, 2020). Storytelling and narrative techniques in digital communication facilitated emotional and value-based leadership, global connection, and crowdsourcing. This factor thus forms a hypothesis that states:

***H9**: Narrative and storytelling in digital communication (NSDC) enhances emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL), crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI), and global connectivity and network leadership (GCNL) which in turn influence the adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) in Gen Z movement.*

Based on the prior studies and context, the hypotheses are developed and placed. Sampling frame is subsequently designed and statistical tools of data processing are determined. Therefore, the data and methodology are discussed in next section.

Data Collection and Methodology

Primary data was collected from students who directly or indirectly participated in the July Movement 2024. Sampling frame was formed with students studying in high schools, colleges and universities across Bangladesh, and a random sampling method was used to collect data from selected high schools, colleges, and universities. Based on ten leadership and communication strategy factors, fifty questions are prepared to conduct the survey. Respondents were contacted to fill the survey form via lead contact persons of student movement from selected educational institutions. Although 2,438 students were invited to fill

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the Google form of the survey, only 2,120 inputs were collected between August 11 and September 10, 2024.

Item responses were measured by using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from "1" to "5", where "1" represented "Strongly Disagree" and "5" represented "Strongly Agree". Nine hypotheses are developed and tested by using PLS-SEM in R software. PLS-SEM is particularly well-suited for analysing data that does not follow a normal distribution and is not subject to sample size restrictions (Willaby et al., 2015). Given that a sample size of 2,120 has been used in our study, PLS-SEM is an ideal analytical tool for exploratory studies. A two-stage SEM approach has been adopted in this study: the first stage validates the measurement model, and the second stage validates hypotheses in a structural model. Factor loading (FL), Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are estimated and examined for the reliability and validity of constructs in the model. Given that the reliability and validity of the model are ensured, in the second stage of SEM, the structural model is tested to validate the hypotheses proposed in this study.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

In the following discussion results from the statistical analyses are shown with interpretations.

Statistical properties of data

Statistical software R has been used to analyse data collected from 2,120 respondents. Demographic information of respondents is provided in Table 1 shows that 86.6% of respondents are 20-26 years old, 53.21% of respondents directly participated in the student movement, 35.52% of respondents are female, and higher direct participation of males (64.52%) compared to females (32.67%). Thus, the study covers both male and female students of different ages who have directly or indirectly participated the July Movement 2024.

Table 1: *Demographic information of respondents*

Gender	**Participation**		**Age**		
	Direct	**Indirect**	**13-19**	**20-26**	**27+**
Male	882	485	107	1203	57
Female	246	507	86	633	34
Total	1128	992	193	1836	91

The common method bias and variance inflation factor (VIF) to check the data quality to perform the PLS-SEM are tested. A post hoc Harman's single factor test of common method

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bias examines that the first factor does not account for more than 50% of the total variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The result reveals that the first factor accounts only 36.31% of the total variation, well-below the recommended highest cut-off value of 50%, and common method bias is highly unlikely to distort the result. The VIF values for collinearity in data is examined as well. Any VIF value less than 5 indicates no significant collinearity (Hair et al., 2017). All VIF values shown in Table 2 are less than 5 and there is no significant collinearity in data. Thus, the data used in this study less likely to distort any result due to common method bias and collinearity issues, and this dataset is utilized for assessment of both measurement and structural models.

Assessment of the measurement model

Validity and reliability of the constructs are examined for the measurement model. To establish the reliability of constructs, both CR and α values need to be higher than the cut-off value 0.70 for all constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Since α values of all constructs range between 0.73 and 0.85, and CR values fall between 0.84 and 0.89 (Table 2), all measures exhibit internal consistency reliability. Fornell and Larcher (1981) recommended that AVE and FL above 0.5 satisfy the conditions for convergent validity. Results in Table 2 show that all AVE values range between 0.50 and 0.62, and results in Table 3 show that all FL values fall within the range of 0.70 to 0.79. Thus, both the AVE and FL criteria are satisfied to ensure the convergent validity of constructs.

Table 2: *Measurement items (questionnaire) and estimates for loadings, reliability and validity measures*

Construct	Item	Loadings	VIF	AVE (CRS)
Adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL)	ARL1. Our movement's leaders are quick to adapt to changing political environments.	0.7603	1.6778	0.6235 (0.8922)
	ARL2. Resilience in the face of adversity is a defining characteristic of our leadership.	0.7959	1.8267	
	ARL3. Our leadership effectively manages crises, such as government crackdowns on protests.	0.7843	1.7490	
	ARL4. Flexibility in our strategies has allowed us to maintain momentum despite challenges.	0.8072	1.9068	

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	ARL5. Our movement is prepared to pivot and shift tactics in response to new obstacles.	0.7995	1.8533	
Crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI)	CCI1. Our movement regularly seeks input from supporters to guide decision-making.	0.7235	1.5076	0.5781 (0.8724)
	CCI2. Crowdsourcing ideas has led to innovative strategies in our protests.	0.7870	1.7064	
	CCI3. Collective intelligence from our community drives the success of our movement.	0.8020	1.8046	
	CCI4. Public feedback is crucial in shaping our movement's actions and strategies.	0.7216	1.5295	
	CCI5. Our movement values the contributions of every participant in developing our plans.	0.7641	1.6308	
Digital activism and mobilization (DAM)	DAM1. Digital platforms are crucial for organizing and mobilizing protest actions.	0.6385	1.3854	0.5356 (0.8511)
	DAM2. Our movement effectively uses social media to spread information rapidly.	0.7617	1.7540	
	DAM3. Online campaigns are a major driver of participation in our protests.	0.7803	1.6863	
	DAM4. Digital activism has significantly increased our movement's reach.	0.8065	1.8237	
	DAM5. Tech-savvy leaders play a vital role in the success of our movement.	0.6566	1.2291	
Decentralized and collective leadership (DCML)	DCML1. Our movement's leadership structure is decentralized, allowing all members to have a voice.	0.6811	1.3597	0.4986 (0.8275)
	DCML2. Collective decision-making is essential to the success of our protest efforts.	0.6664	1.2917	
	DCML3. Leadership roles in our movement are shared among diverse individuals.	0.7202	1.3665	
	DCML4. Our movement thrives on collaboration between different student groups.	0.7012	1.3623	
	DCML5. Decentralized leadership has made our movement more resilient and adaptable.	0.7291	1.4183	

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Emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL)	EAVBL1. Our movement is driven by strong emotional appeals to justice and fairness.	0.6686	1.3583	0.5317 (0.8498)
	EAVBL2. Leaders in our movement prioritize human rights in all decisions and actions.	0.7452	1.5762	
	EAVBL3. Value-based leadership has attracted a diverse group of supporters to our cause.	0.7811	1.6298	
	EAVBL4. Emotional resilience is key to sustaining our movement under pressure.	0.6915	1.3840	
	EAVBL5. Ethical standards guide all aspects of our leadership and protest activities.	0.7535	1.5415	
Global connectivity and network leadership (GCNL)	GCNL1. Our movement benefits from connections with global activist networks.	0.7693	1.6047	0.6003 (0.8825)
	GCNL2. International solidarity has strengthened our local protest efforts.	0.7676	1.6886	
	GCNL3. Global partnerships have provided valuable resources and support to our movement.	0.7963	2.0148	
	GCNL4. Leaders in our movement regularly collaborate with international organizations.	0.7827	1.9010	
	GCNL5. Our movement's message resonates with global audiences, helping to build widespread support.	0.7575	1.5432	
Narrative and storytelling in digital communication (NSDC)	NSDC1. Crafting compelling stories has been vital to the success of our movement.	0.6979	1.3844	0.5475 (0.8580)
	NSDC2. Our leaders are skilled at using digital platforms to share powerful narratives.	0.7513	1.5489	
	NSDC3. Storytelling helps to connect our movement with both local and global audiences.	0.7700	1.6397	
	NSDC4. Digital communication has made it easier to amplify the voices of marginalized groups in our movement.	0.7283	1.4852	

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	NSDC5. The use of personal stories in our messaging has increased public support for our cause.	0.7503	1.5266	
Rapid information dissemination and crisis management (RIDCM)	RIDCM1. Our movement is capable of quickly disseminating information in response to crises.	0.7664	1.5897	0.5836 (0.8749)
	RIDCM2. Crisis management strategies are regularly updated to handle new challenges.	0.7794	1.6751	
	RIDCM3. Rapid response efforts have been effective in maintaining our movement's momentum.	0.8178	1.8983	
	RIDCM4. Our movement relies on technology to coordinate emergency responses.	0.7218	1.5623	
	RIDCM5. Quick and accurate information sharing has been key to our movement's resilience.	0.7303	1.5180	
Transparency and accountability through digital platform (TATDP)	TATDP1. Digital platforms help ensure transparency in our movement's leadership.	0.7290	1.5380	0.6134 (0.8879)
	TATDP2. Our leadership is accountable to the broader movement through regular updates and communication.	0.7967	1.7834	
	TATDP3. Transparency in decision-making processes builds trust within our movement.	0.8210	2.0145	
	TATDP4. Our movement uses digital tools to keep supporters informed and engaged.	0.7929	1.8407	
	TATDP5. Public accountability is a core principle of our leadership.	0.7733	1.7056	
Use of hashtag and viral campaign (UHVC)	UHCV1. Hashtags have been essential in uniting our supporters under a common cause.	0.7126	1.6801	0.5586 (0.8633)
	UHCV2. Viral campaigns have significantly boosted our movement's visibility online.	0.7764	1.6216	
	UHCV3. Creative use of hashtags has helped to spread our message beyond our immediate network.	0.7921	1.9331	

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	UHCV4. Memes and digital culture play an important role in engaging younger audiences in our movement.	0.7272	1.5093	
	UHCV5. Our movement has successfully leveraged viral trends to gain media attention.	0.7256	1.4798	

All scales were used on five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). AVE: the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE), CRS: composite reliability score, and VIF: variance inflation factor.

Table 3: *Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity*

	ARL	CCI	DAM	DCML	EAVBL	GCNL	NSDC	RIDCM	TATDP	UHVC
ARL	**0.7896**									
CCI	0.7011	**0.7603**								
DAM	0.5000	0.4960	**0.7319**							
DCML	0.5732	0.5694	0.5265	**0.7000**						
EAVBL	0.6283	0.6262	0.5913	0.6269	**0.7291**					
GCNL	0.6536	0.6470	0.4462	0.4727	0.5649	**0.7748**				
NSDC	0.6078	0.5934	0.6355	0.5469	0.6531	0.5851	**0.7400**			
RIDCM	0.6919	0.7110	0.5276	0.5428	0.5914	0.5881	0.6134	**0.7639**		
TATDP	0.6770	0.7311	0.5418	0.5538	0.6138	0.5833	0.6108	0.7675	**0.7832**	
UHVC	0.6048	0.5907	0.5755	0.5038	0.5839	0.6012	0.6779	0.6003	0.5930	**0.7474**

The square root of AVE and correlations between constructs for discriminant validity are examined. Table 3 shows that the square root of AVE is more significant than the correlations between constructs supporting discriminant validity of constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio smaller than 0.90 in Table 4 also supports discriminant validity of all constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, the discriminant validity is supported by both the Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria.

Table 4: *The HTMT ratio of correlations for discriminant validity*

	ARL	CCI	DAM	DCML	EAVBL	GCNL	NSDC	RIDCM	TATDP
CCI	0.8394								

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DAM	0.6062	0.6133							
DCML	0.7222	0.7301	0.6881						
EAVBL	0.7704	0.7813	0.7527	0.8247					
GCNL	0.7720	0.7789	0.5331	0.5960	0.6946				
NSDC	0.7397	0.7349	0.8024	0.7123	0.8297	0.7137			
RIDCM	0.8234	0.8658	0.6612	0.6942	0.7379	0.7024	0.7609		
TATDP	0.7996	0.8812	0.6652	0.7001	0.7564	0.6895	0.7474	0.9239	
UHVC	0.7306	0.7273	0.7187	0.6530	0.7360	0.7286	0.8473	0.7390	0.7199

Assessment of the structural model

The outcomes of the structural model are presented through standardized path coefficients (β) along with their statistical significance. To examine significance of path coefficients, bootstrap estimates of path coefficients (β) along with the bootstrap standard deviation, t-statistic, and p-values are computed from 1,000 bootstrap replications. Summary results shown in Table 5 examines whether the hypothetical path is statistically supported (statistically significant) or not. The analysis finds that only DAM → CCI, DAM → GCNL, DAM → ARL, and NSDC → ARL paths are not supported by our data analysis mimicking that the digital activism and mobilization (DAM) does not directly affect the crowdsourcing and collective intelligence (CCI) and global connectivity and network leadership (GCNL). Similarly, DAM (digital activism and mobilization) and NSDC (narrative and storytelling in digital communication) do not directly affect the ARL (adaptive and resilient leadership). The study finds that DCML, UHCV, CCI, EAVBL, GCNL, RIDCM, and TATDP positively affect the ARL.

Table 5: *Structural model results*

Structural Path	Original Est. (β)	Bootstrap Est. (β)	Bootstrap SD	T-Stat.	P-VALUE	Supported
DAM → CCI	0.0486	0.0492	0.0264	1.8396	0.0735	No
DAM → EAVBL	0.1666	0.1664	0.0282	5.9125	0.0000	Yes
DAM → GCNL	-0.0052	-0.0045	0.0253	-0.2039	0.3906	No
DAM → ARL	-0.0196	-0.0193	0.0205	-0.9601	0.2515	No

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DCML → CCI	0.2868	0.2867	0.0226	12.6810	0.0000	Yes
DCML → EAVBL	0.3160	0.3166	0.0247	12.7808	0.0000	Yes
DCML → GCNL	0.1544	0.1547	0.0225	6.8602	0.0000	Yes
DCML → ARL	0.1000	0.0987	0.0214	4.6775	0.0000	Yes
NSDC → CCI	0.2256	0.2250	0.0280	8.0451	0.0000	Yes
NSDC → EAVBL	0.2799	0.2786	0.0294	9.5285	0.0000	Yes
NSDC → GCNL	0.2716	0.2717	0.0297	9.1372	0.0000	Yes
NSDC → ARL	0.0454	0.0458	0.0279	1.6269	0.1062	No
UHVC → CCI	0.2654	0.2656	0.0275	9.6370	0.0000	Yes
UHVC → EAVBL	0.1393	0.1412	0.0291	4.7835	0.0000	Yes
UHVC → GCNL	0.3422	0.3415	0.0300	11.3954	0.0000	Yes
UHVC → ARL	0.0740	0.0729	0.0346	2.1359	0.0409	Yes
CCI → ARL	0.1781	0.1780	0.0325	5.4773	0.0000	Yes
EAVBL → ARL	0.1043	0.1048	0.0264	3.9434	0.0002	Yes
GCNL → ARL	0.1959	0.1951	0.0254	7.7000	0.0000	Yes
RIDCM → ARL	0.1916	0.1936	0.0306	6.2628	0.0000	Yes
TATDP → ARL	0.1052	0.1047	0.0319	3.2930	0.0018	Yes

Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed test) and the arrow sign (→) refers to the direction of the relationship.

Assessment for Mediation

Direct and indirect effects are examined based on the guideline provided in Hair et al. (2016) to assess the mediation effects of latent variables. Results in Table 6 reveals that a full mediation of DAM is observed through the EAVBL to the ARL. Thus, digital activism and mobilization (DAM) does not contribute to adaptive and resilient leadership (ARL) directly, rather DAM influences emotional and value-based leadership (EAVBL) which in turn contributes to adaptive and resilient leadership.

Table 6: *Mediation Analysis*

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Factor	Structural Path	Original Est.	Bootstrap Mean	Bootstrap SD	T Stat.	p-value	Supports	Mediation
DAM	DAM→CCI→ARL	0.0087	0.0087	0.0050	1.7393	0.0879	No	Full mediation
	DAM→EAVBL→ARL	0.0174	0.0175	0.0054	3.2235	0.0023	Yes	
	DAM→GCNL→ARL	-0.0010	-0.0009	0.0050	-0.2026	0.3907	No	
	DAM→ARL	-0.0196	-0.0193	0.0205	-0.9601	0.2515	No	
DCML	DCML→CCI→ARL	0.0511	0.0510	0.0102	5.0033	0.0000	Yes	Partial multiple mediation
	DCML→EAVBL→ARL	0.0329	0.0332	0.0089	3.7156	0.0004	Yes	
	DCML→GCNL→ARL	0.0303	0.0302	0.0061	4.9576	0.0000	Yes	
	DCML→ARL	0.1000	0.0987	0.0214	4.6775	0.0000	Yes	
NSDC	NSDC→CCI→ARL	0.0402	0.0400	0.0086	4.6530	0.0000	Yes	Full multiple mediation
	NSDC→EAVBL→ARL	0.0292	0.0292	0.0082	3.5706	0.0007	Yes	
	NSDC→GCNL→ARL	0.0532	0.0530	0.0090	5.9391	0.0000	Yes	
	NSDC →ARL	0.0454	0.0458	0.0279	1.6269	0.1062	No	
UHCV	UHVC→CCI→ARL	0.0473	0.0474	0.0105	4.4956	0.0000	Yes	Partial multiple mediation
	UHVC→EAVBL→ARL	0.0145	0.0147	0.0047	3.0901	0.0034	Yes	
	UHVC → GCNL → ARL	0.0671	0.0667	0.0109	6.1781	0.0000	Yes	
	UHVC → ARL	0.0740	0.0729	0.0346	2.1359	0.0409	Yes	

ARL = Adaptive and resilient leadership, CCI = Crowdsourcing and collective intelligence, DAM = Digital activism and mobilization, DCML = Decentralized and collective leadership, EAVBL = Emotional and value-based leadership, GCNL = Global connectivity and network leadership, NSDC = Narrative and storytelling in digital communication, RIDCM = Rapid information dissemination and crisis management, TATDP = Transparency and accountability through digital platform, and UHVC = Use of hashtag and viral campaign.

Partial multiple mediation is observed both for DCML and UHVC where each of these two factors not only directly contributes to ARL, but also contributes via the other factors CCI, EAVBL, and GCNL. Thus, DCML enhances CCI, EAVBL, and GCNL, and finally contributes significantly towards ARL. Similarly, UHVC enhances CCI, EAVBL, and GCNL which in turn contribute positively to ARL.

Full multiple mediation of NSDC (narrative and storytelling in digital communication) is observed as this does not directly contribute to ARL, but this contributes to CCI, EAVBL, and GCNL. Thus, the effect of NSDC is transmitted through CCI, EAVBL, and GCNL to enhance ARL. The diagram of the test result is shown in a structural equation model in figure 1.

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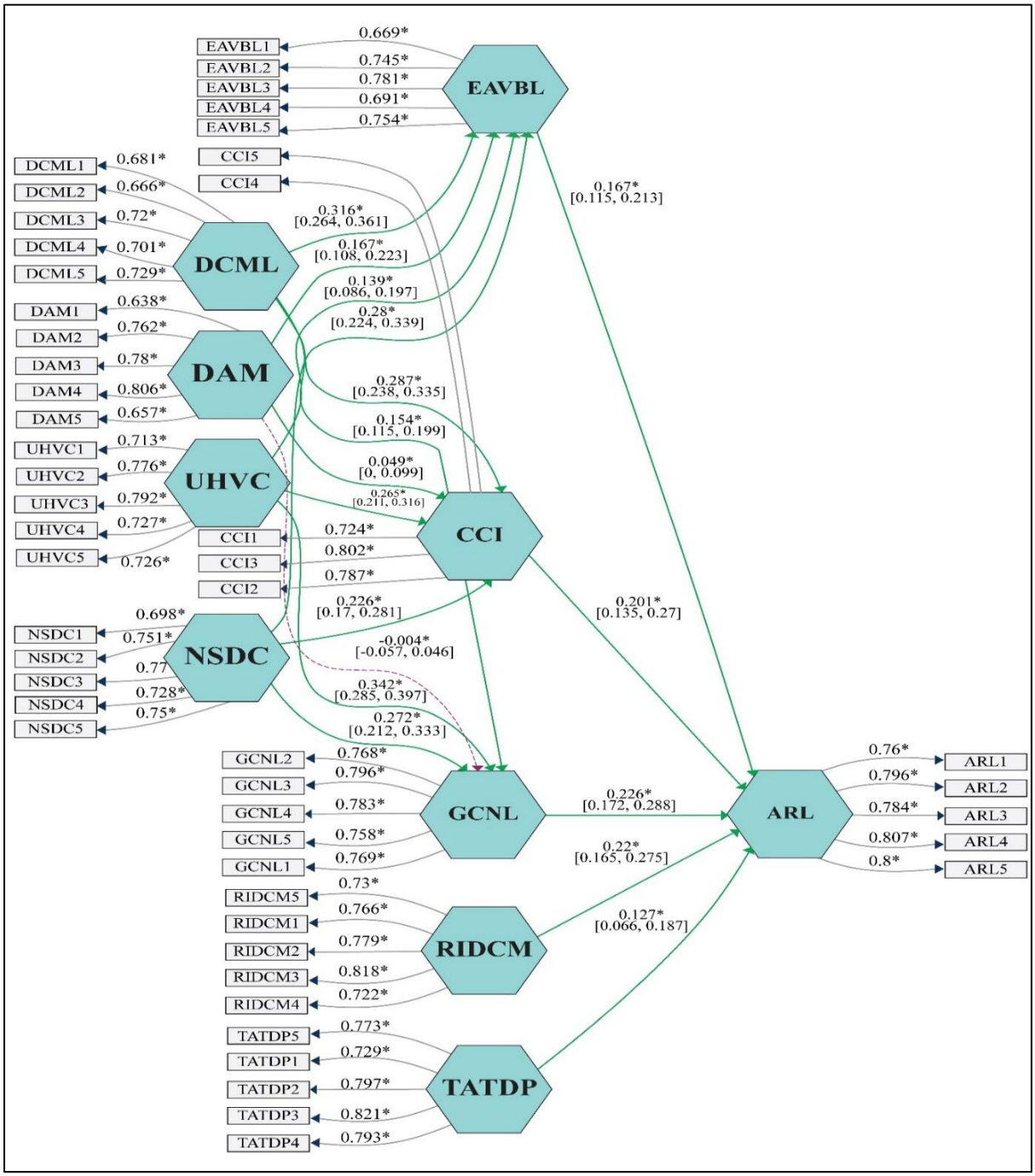

Figure 1: Results and estimated relationships of the structural model

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Youth is at the forefront of change; to promote peace, pursue justice and build strong institution as the SDG-16 which is very much aligned with the movement in the past or in the contemporary history-for climate, political or social conflict, and even for language as

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happened in Bangladesh. Young generation is always updated and upgraded with latest technology combined with classic ideology in planned situation and in emergency.

Adaptive and Resilient Leadership could be achieved in movement through following Value-based leadership. They might seem decentralized and stratified but they are globally connected and prompt in collective intelligence. Youth network of mobilization is too hard to break because of their network; the networked leadership.

Eventually, emergent situation could be managed though strategy and technology. Resilient leadership pattern of emotional appeal and values with rapid communication ensuring transparency and accountability in the network through digital tools might bring significant results; adaptive leadership with effective use of technology make actualization of goals and preparation for the next height.

Theoretical Implications

Contingency theory states that organisations should adapt their structure and strategies to internal and external environment (Tosi & Slocum, 1984; Donaldson, 2001). Unlike transactional leadership its motivation is not oriented to any rewards or benefits or punishment. Their strategic goals to reach the beyond breaking the current obsolete system what confirms the visionary leadership.

Also, the essence of strategic leadership involves the capacity to learn, the capacity to change, use of innovation and information and managerial wisdom (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000) vigorously shaped and sharpened the movement in different stages of the emergent situation (Zahan et al., 2024). Emergent strategies are always realized (Mintzberg & McGugh, 1985) and this could be achieved promptly with rapid communication and information technology.

Practical Implications

Adaptive and Resilience- the criteria are crucial for success of strategic planning of the leaders. The youth showed. Strategy based on information and communication technology could bring new projection to upheaval organizational mission. At the beginning of 4.0 industrial revolution, apart from all leadership phenomenon, any organization must realize the adoption of technology in each of the phased of strategic planning process; for business organization or for the state, from peace to political conflict.

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The young leaders; GenZ conform the meticulous balancing between people and activities through communication. This research explores the factors to build and updated leadership using technology and communication strategies to build an updated leadership framework to resolve power, prosper, moreover the people.

Limitation and future research

Though the results show valid construct to develop the model, sample size cannot be justified. Some technical terms are used in the questionnaire and chances to wrong clarification of the data collectors to their respondents.

Strategic leadership and its exercises through dynamic use of information technology is obviously proven. Education for the youth and role of technology in upheaval of peace and justice for the greatest number of people should be vigorously investigated-not only for the organization but also for the society for its sustainable welfare.

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