

# Visionary Leadership and Strategic Innovation: A CEO Analysis of Melanie Perkins at Canva Pty Ltd

Diya Devadiga<sup>1</sup> & P. S. Aithal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MBA Scholar, Poornaprajna Institute of Management, Udupi - 576101, India,  
ORCID iD: 0009-0003-0533-4499; Email: [diya.mbab24@pim.ac.in](mailto:diya.mbab24@pim.ac.in),

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Poornaprajna Institute of Management, Udupi - 576101, India,  
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: [psaithal@pim.ac.in](mailto:psaithal@pim.ac.in)

**Area/Section:** CEO Analysis.

**Type of the Paper:** Qualitative Exploratory Research.

**Number of Peer Reviews:** Two.

**Type of Review:** Peer Reviewed as per [C|O|P|E](#) guidance.

**Indexed in:** OpenAIRE.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19708969>

**Google Scholar Citation:** [PIJTRCS](#)

## How to Cite this Paper:

Diya Devadiga & Aithal P. S. (2026). Visionary Leadership and Strategic Innovation: A CEO Analysis of Melanie Perkins at Canva Pty Ltd. *Poornaprajna International Journal of Teaching & Research Case Studies (PIJTRCS)*, 3(1), 138-165. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19708969>

**Poornaprajna International Journal of Teaching & Research Case Studies (PIJTRCS)**

A Refereed International Journal of Poornaprajna Publication, India.

**ISSN: 3107-8494**

Crossref DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64818/PIJTRCS.3107.8494.0041>

Received on: 12/03/2026

Published on: 25/04/2026

© With Authors.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License](#), subject to proper citation to the publication source of the work.

**Disclaimer:** The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by Poornaprajna Publication (P.P.), India, are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of the PP. The PP disclaims of any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.

# Visionary Leadership and Strategic Innovation: A CEO Analysis of Melanie Perkins at Canva Pty Ltd

Diya Devadiga<sup>1</sup> & P. S. Aithal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MBA Scholar, Poornaprajna Institute of Management, Udupi - 576101, India, ORCID iD: 0009-0003-0533-4499; Email: [diya.mbab24@pim.ac.in](mailto:diya.mbab24@pim.ac.in),

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Poornaprajna Institute of Management, Udupi - 576101, India, ORCID iD: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: [psaithal@pim.ac.in](mailto:psaithal@pim.ac.in)

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *The purpose of this study is to analyze the leadership performance and strategic influence of Melanie Perkins, Co-Founder and CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, and to understand how her leadership style, vision, and strategic decisions contribute to the company's growth and competitive advantage in the global digital design industry. The study also aims to examine how entrepreneurial leadership and innovation-driven strategies help organizations achieve sustainable growth in rapidly evolving technology markets.*

**Methodology:** *This research adopts a qualitative CEO analysis case study approach based on secondary data collected from academic literature, industry reports, company publications, and credible business sources. To evaluate the effectiveness of Melanie Perkins' leadership, several analytical frameworks are applied, including SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ABCD analysis (Advantages, Benefits, Constraints, and Disadvantages), the Ten CEO Performance Areas (CEOPA), and the CEO Performance Matrix. These frameworks provide a structured approach to assess leadership behaviour, strategic decision-making, innovation capability, and organizational outcomes.*

**Results & Analysis:** *The findings of the study indicate that Melanie Perkins demonstrates strong visionary and entrepreneurial leadership supported by innovation-oriented thinking and strategic foresight. Her vision of simplifying complex design tools led to the creation of Canva, a platform that democratizes design by making it accessible to individuals, businesses, and organizations worldwide. Under her leadership, Canva has experienced significant global expansion, strong user growth, and continuous product innovation. The analysis further reveals that Perkins promotes a collaborative organizational culture that emphasizes creativity, user-centered design, and technological advancement, which strengthens Canva's competitive position in the global Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) market.*

**Originality & Value:** *This study contributes to leadership and management research by providing a structured evaluation of a modern technology CEO using integrated analytical frameworks. The research highlights how visionary leadership, strategic innovation, and digital transformation capabilities can significantly influence organizational success in the modern digital economy. The findings also provide valuable insights for entrepreneurs, managers, and researchers interested in understanding effective leadership practices in technology-driven organizations.*

**Type of Paper:** *Qualitative Exploratory Case Study.*

**Keywords:** CEO Analysis, Technology Leadership, Melanie Perkins, Canva Case Study, Strategic Innovation, Digital Transformation Leadership, SWOC and KPI Evaluation, ABCD Framework Analysis, CEO Performance Matrix (CEOPA), Entrepreneurial Leadership in SaaS

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

### 1.1 About CEO Analysis:

In the contemporary corporate environment, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) occupy a central position in shaping strategic direction, organizational culture, and performance outcomes. As the highest-ranking

executive, the CEO's decisions influence critical aspects of firm performance, including innovation strategies, financial outcomes, and long-term sustainability (Hambrick & Mason (1984). [1]). Foundational upper echelons theory emphasizes that organizational outcomes reflect the values, cognitive bases, and decisions of top executives, suggesting that CEOs make a measurable contribution to corporate performance (Miao et al. (2025). [2]). Empirical studies further corroborate that CEO leadership styles, personal traits, and strategic choices significantly affect firm innovation, reputation, and profitability, underscoring the importance of understanding CEO contributions through rigorous academic inquiry.

The contribution of a CEO manifests across multiple dimensions of firm outcomes. Transformational and servant leadership behaviours, for example, have been linked to enhanced exploratory innovation and organizational performance, mediated through internal capabilities such as knowledge absorptive capacity and social capital (Wang et al. (2011). [3]; Freeman (2022). [4]). CEO proactiveness has also been shown to drive organizational ambidexterity, shaping both exploratory and exploitative innovation, which in turn affects firm performance metrics (Ben Ali (2023). [5]). In addition, CEO attributes such as tenure, remuneration structure, and demographic characteristics have demonstrable effects on corporate reputation, sustainable growth, and financial performance, particularly in varied institutional contexts like India (Ganji (2022). [6]). These diverse impacts highlight the need for a multifaceted exploration of CEO contributions that moves beyond simple performance metrics to include strategic choices and organizational processes.

Despite substantial evidence of CEO effects on firm outcomes, scholarly debate persists regarding the magnitude and mechanisms of these contributions. Some research has shown that the CEO effect on firm performance, while statistically significant, may account for a modest proportion of variance, emphasizing the influence of broader contextual and temporal factors (Trahms (2014). [7]). Furthermore, literature on CEO power and strategic influence reveals complex relationships between executive discretion, corporate governance structures, and performance outcomes, suggesting both positive and negative implications depending on governance contexts and power dynamics. This scholarly dialogue underscores the value of exploratory research methods that can capture nuanced mechanisms by which CEOs shape organizational trajectories over time.

Given the multidimensional nature of CEO impacts and the ongoing theoretical debates, this paper employs an exploratory research design to examine the contribution of a selected CEO to their firm's strategic evolution and performance. By integrating qualitative analysis of leadership behaviours with quantitative indicators such as financial performance and innovation outcomes, this case study adopts an upper echelons framework to interpret how CEO decisions are translated into organizational results. Data sources include archival documents (e.g., annual reports, shareholder letters), secondary performance metrics, and interviews with key stakeholders, which together support an in-depth investigation of leadership influence over time. This approach aligns with contemporary scholarship calling for integrated methods to unpack the mechanisms behind CEO contributions to firm performance.

Finally, the structure of this CEO analysis paper reflects the logical steps required for scholarly case research. It begins with a literature review that situates the CEO's role within existing leadership and strategic management theories, followed by a methodology section detailing the exploratory research design and data collection methods. Subsequent sections present findings on the CEO's contributions to strategic change, performance outcomes, and organizational learning, culminating in a discussion that relates empirical insights to broader theoretical debates. The conclusion offers implications for practice and future research directions, thereby contributing to the academic understanding of how CEO leadership shapes corporate success.

## 1.2 About This Paper:

This paper presents an exploratory CEO analysis of Melanie Perkins, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Canva Pty Ltd, to examine how executive leadership influences organizational performance, strategic adaptability, and long-term competitiveness. CEO analysis as a research case study systematically evaluates how leadership style, strategic choices, and organizational influence shape corporate outcomes, drawing on upper echelons and strategic leadership theories that link executive attributes with firm performance and innovation outcomes (Lumpkin & Dess (1996) [8]; Vial (2021). [9]).

Melanie Perkins is selected as the focal CEO because of her transformative leadership in building Canva into a globally scalable and user-centric design platform. Her strategic emphasis on democratizing design, simplifying user experience, and pursuing global inclusivity aligns with research showing that CEO entrepreneurial orientation and innovation leadership significantly influence strategic change and firm performance in technology-driven and high-uncertainty environments (Sajjad (2023) [10]; Gun et al. (2024). [11]).

The paper adopts an exploratory case study methodology, integrating multiple analytical frameworks—including SWOC analysis, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ABCD analysis, and CEO performance evaluation models—to capture the complexity of CEO influence. Prior studies demonstrate that CEO leadership styles, such as transformational and empowering leadership, shape top management team dynamics and subsequently impact organizational outcomes, including innovation and performance (Zhu et al. (2013) [12]; Ensley et al. (2006) [13]; Venturelli and Mio (2025). [14]).

In addition to leadership style, this paper considers CEO attributes and strategic orientation—including academic experience, strategic risk propensity, and decision autonomy—in understanding organizational outcomes. Research shows that specific CEO characteristics, such as academic work experience and entrepreneurial orientation, are associated with higher innovation output, strategic agility, and competitive advantage in global digital firms (Suwandej (2024) [15]; Filatotchev et al. (2025). [16]).

The analysis further evaluates how Perkins' leadership has influenced Canva's strategic positioning through an innovation-led culture, data-informed decision-making, and digital transformation initiatives. Scholarship on CEO work behaviors and personality characteristics links these executive attributes to firm outcomes such as innovation productivity, employee engagement, and strategic alignment, underscoring the complex relationship between leadership and performance (Li et al. (2024) [17]; Vial (2021). [18]).

This study contributes to management research by offering an in-depth empirical evaluation of modern entrepreneurial leadership in a technology-driven firm. It aligns with broader literature showing that CEO strategic influence, power dynamics, and personal traits have measurable effects on corporate strategies and firm success (Seo & Hill (2005) [19]; Gun et al. (2024). [20]). The structure of the paper includes a literature review grounding CEO analysis within leadership and strategy scholarship, a methodology section detailing the exploratory design and analytical tools, followed by findings on Perkins' leadership impact. The paper concludes with implications for theory and practice, reinforcing the importance of CEO leadership in navigating complex market dynamics and supporting sustainable organizational growth.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER :

- (1) **To study the CEO analysis of Melanie Perkins, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Canva Pty Ltd**, with specific emphasis on her leadership style, strategic orientation, and organizational influence as a founder-CEO in a technology-driven firm.
- (2) **To review the existing scholarly literature related to CEO analysis, entrepreneurial leadership, and strategic leadership**, with particular reference to studies examining leadership in digital platform and SaaS-based organizations, and to assess the current status of research related to Melanie Perkins and Canva Pty Ltd.
- (3) **To examine the strategic choices and decision-making patterns of Melanie Perkins** and analyze how these decisions have contributed to Canva's organizational performance, innovation capability, and long-term competitiveness.
- (4) **To evaluate the impact of Melanie Perkins' leadership on Canva's innovation-driven culture and global scalability**, focusing on her vision of democratizing design, user-centric platform development, and emphasis on simplicity and inclusivity.
- (5) **To assess the effectiveness of Melanie Perkins' leadership using multiple scholarly analytical frameworks**, including SWOC analysis, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ABCD analysis, leadership theories, the Ten CEO Performance Areas (CEOPA), and the CEO Performance Matrix.
- (6) **To analyze the relationship between CEO leadership behaviour and organizational outcomes at Canva**, particularly in terms of strategic adaptability, competitive strength, and resilience in a dynamic and technology-intensive market environment.

- (7) **To develop strategic insights and forward-looking recommendations** based on the CEO analysis, aligned with emerging technological trends, evolving digital business models, and stakeholder expectations, positioning Melanie Perkins as a benchmark for modern entrepreneurial and technology-driven leadership.

### **3. ABOUT MELANIE PERKINS, CEO OF CANVA PTY LTD :**

#### **3.1 Background of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd:**

Melanie Perkins, born in 1987 in Perth, Western Australia, exemplifies the emergence of modern founder-CEOs who combine entrepreneurial vision with technology-driven strategic leadership. Early exposure to entrepreneurship shaped her career trajectory; she started her first business at age 14, selling handmade scarves in local markets, which fostered her inclination toward business creation and value innovation from a young age. This early entrepreneurial experience energized her later ventures, including Fusion Books—an online yearbook publishing system—which provided foundational insights into software product development, user experience challenges, and market needs. Founder-centric career paths like Perkins' are increasingly recognized as essential drivers of innovation and growth in technology firms (Istipliler et al. (2025). [21]).

Perkins' academic background in communications, psychology, and commerce at the University of Western Australia further contributed to her interdisciplinary leadership approach, blending cognitive understanding of users with commercial insight into strategic value creation. While teaching design software to students, Perkins observed firsthand the steep learning curve of existing professional tools, which catalyzed her vision for a more accessible design platform. This intersection of educational experience and market insight aligns with broader research indicating that founder CEOs often identify entrepreneurial opportunities from lived organizational and user experiences, shaping strategic priorities that drive innovation (Jin et al. (2017) [22]; Gupta et al. (2004). [23]).

The launch of Canva in 2013, alongside co-founders Cliff Obrecht and Cameron Adams, marked a pivotal moment in digital design innovation. Despite initial resistance from venture capital investors, Perkins' persistence and iterative strategy helped secure early funding, affirming leadership research on founder resilience and adaptive strategic flexibility in uncertain environments—a factor shown to correlate with venture performance (Ensley et al. (2006) [24]; Shepherd & Patzelt (2018). [25]). Her role in co-founding and scaling Canva into a multi-billion-dollar SaaS platform underscores the efficacy of entrepreneurial leadership in translating vision into sustained competitive advantage (Zahra et al (2006). [26]).

Perkins' leadership philosophy emphasizes accessibility, simplicity, and inclusivity—principles she embedded into Canva's culture and product development. By democratizing design through an intuitive drag-and-drop interface, she operationalized a strategy of lowering barriers to innovation, consistent with research on strategic leadership linking user-centric vision with organizational adaptability and innovation performance (Huber and Alexy (2024) [27]; Ireland & Webb (2007). [28]). Founder CEOs who champion human-centered design principles often nurture environments with high strategic flexibility, enabling continual reinvention and responsiveness to dynamic market demands.

In addition to product strategy, Perkins' leadership exemplifies an empowering organizational culture—prioritizing employee autonomy, inclusivity, and shared mission. Empirical studies show that CEOs who cultivate empowering leadership styles enhance corporate entrepreneurship and information elaboration within top management teams, leading to higher organizational innovation and competitive performance (Zhu et al. (2013) [29]; Karnoukhova and Stepanova (2019). [30]). This approach is reflected in Canva's people-first ethos and values-driven internal culture, contributing to high talent retention, creativity, and resilience amid rapid global expansion.

Finally, Perkins' leadership extends beyond traditional performance metrics, integrating social impact and purpose. By pledging significant equity to the Canva Foundation and expanding access for non-profits and educators, she exemplifies purpose-driven leadership, which research links to enhanced organizational legitimacy, stakeholder alignment, and long-term sustainability (Aguinis & Glavas (2012) [31]; Wieland (2017). [32]). Her career narrative underscores the evolving role of founder CEOs in blending commercial success with social value creation, offering a model of entrepreneurial leadership that aligns strategic adaptability with broader societal imperatives.

## 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

### 4.1 Review and Synthesize the Existing Scholarship:

#### (1) Research Context and CEO Leadership:

Executive leadership research has long established that CEOs shape firm strategy, innovation, and performance, particularly under dynamic environments. Early foundational work grounded in upper echelons theory posits that organizational outcomes reflect the values and cognitive bases of senior leaders, with CEO characteristics influencing corporate strategies and innovation outcomes (Avolio & Gardner (2005). [33]). Contemporary research extends this understanding from traditional sectors into digital and technology-intensive contexts, emphasizing the importance of CEO strategic influence on digital transformation and innovation performance. For example, studies show that CEO empowering leadership enhances corporate entrepreneurship and that leadership behaviors mediate innovation outcomes via top management team processes (Wang & Ahmed (2007). [34]).

#### (2) Digital Leadership and Innovation in Platform Firms:

Digital leadership capabilities have emerged as critical antecedents of innovation performance, especially in firms leveraging digital platforms. Digital leadership refers to the ability to guide organizations through digital transformation by integrating technology with strategic vision, agility, and innovation orientation. Research indicates that digital leadership capability improves innovation performance by enabling platform digitization, which in turn supports competitive advantage in disruptive environments (Anand and Anand (2025). [35]). Additionally, work in digital leadership highlights that leaders need competencies in IT-driven strategy, creativity, and digital communication to manage complex digital ecosystems effectively (Danilin and Mamedyarov (2020). [36]).

#### (3) CEO Characteristics and Digital Transformation Outcomes:

A growing body of literature investigates how CEO attributes influence digital transformation efforts—a key strategic challenge for platform-based firms such as Canva. Research across sectors finds that CEOs with specific backgrounds (e.g., academic experience) are better positioned to lead digital transformation, facilitating innovation by leveraging rigorous decision-making and long-term orientation, which are essential in technology-driven industries (He and Gan (2025). [37]). Other studies show that CEO regulatory focus and strategic attention significantly influence firms' digital transformation intensity, suggesting that motivational and strategic cognitive frames are critical for successful technology adoption (Lahyani et al. (2024). [38]).

#### (4) Innovation, Strategic Decision-Making, and CEO Power:

Trust and decision authority endowed to CEOs affect how firms allocate resources toward innovative activities. Research in the strategic information systems domain shows that CEO power positively associates with digital innovation, shifting innovation focus toward digital fronts in firms operating under digital imperatives. Crucially, CEO power interacts with board social capital, highlighting the contingency of CEO influence on governance structures (Tan (2025). [39]). Moreover, studies on TMT attributes reveal that senior managerial characteristics directly shape digital orientation and strategic decision comprehensiveness, further affecting digital transformation and performance outcomes (Wang et al. (2023). [40]).

#### (5) Founder CEOs and Innovation in Digital Firms:

Platform-based firms like Canva often feature founder CEOs whose imprinting effects on strategy and culture are profound. Research on technical founders in the context of digital transformation suggests that firms led by founders with technological or business expertise are more likely to adopt digital innovation strategies successfully, leading to superior innovation performance (Dwivedi et al. (2025). [41]). This underscores the relevance of founder identity when analyzing leadership-driven outcomes in digital platform ventures. Founder-CEO research thus bridges upper echelons theory with digital transformation studies, illustrating how leadership orientation towards exploration and innovation enables firms to leverage digital platforms for competitive advantage (Nambisan et al. (2019). [42]).

#### (6) Theoretical Gaps and Research Opportunities:

Despite growing research on CEO leadership and digital transformation, several theoretical gaps persist:

- **Sector-Specific CEO Effects:** While research extensively covers digital leadership capabilities, there is a lack of empirical studies on CEO leadership in platform-based SaaS firms (e.g., Canva), contrasting with traditional industries and legacy tech firms.

- **Founder CEO Dynamics:** Limited comparative research exists on how founder CEOs versus professional CEOs differentially influence strategic and innovation outcomes in digital platform environments.
- **Integrated Leadership Frameworks:** Many digital leadership studies emphasize capabilities, but few integrate leadership style, strategic decision-making, and platform innovation performance into unified frameworks suitable for case study analysis.
- **CEO Decision Making Under Dynamic Contexts:** The literature lacks deeper qualitative and mixed-method studies that unpack how CEOs operationalize digital strategies and navigate rapid platform evolution—a gap that this case study of Melanie Perkins seeks to address.

Addressing these gaps will help extend leadership theory to digital and platform firm contexts and provide empirical insights into how CEOs like Melanie Perkins enable strategic adaptability and sustained innovation.

**4.2 Based on Important Keywords:**

**Table 1:** Review of Literature on Keyword “Melanie Perkins” using search in <https://scholar.google.com/>

S. No.	Area of Scholarly Articles	Description	Reference
1	Entrepreneurial Leadership & CEO Case Study	Provides a detailed academic case study on Melanie Perkins’ leadership, strategic vision, funding challenges, and transition of Canva from a tech unicorn to a global tech giant.	Prasad & Koti (2024). [43]
2	Founder Personality & Startup Performance	Examines how founder personality traits influence startup success, offering a behavioral lens to analyze Perkins’ persistence, optimism, and growth orientation.	McCarthy et al. (2023). [44]
3	Gender, Entrepreneurship & Finance	Explores the role of female entrepreneurs in reducing corporate financial constraints, relevant to analyzing Melanie Perkins as a female CEO in technology.	Xiao (2024). [45]
4	Digital Entrepreneurship & Resilience	Discusses resilience in digitally advanced entrepreneurship, aligning with Canva’s platform-based growth and leadership during rapid technological change.	Audretsch et al. (2024). [46]
5	Strategic Financial Management	Analyzes how organizational task environments influence cash–performance relationships, relevant to Canva’s funding and financial decisions.	Jung et al. (2020). [47]
6	Business Model Innovation (Canvas Framework)	Applies the Business Model Canvas to value creation, supporting analysis of Canva’s freemium and customer-centric business model.	Sibaliija et al. (2021). [48]
7	Sustainable Leadership & Business Transformation	Presents narratives of leaders transforming organizations through sustainability and purpose, relevant to Perkins’ long-term vision for Canva.	Irwin et al. (2023). [49]
8	Creativity & Cognitive Leadership	Explores creativity measurement and divergent thinking, providing conceptual grounding for analyzing Perkins’ innovation-oriented leadership style.	Silvia et al. (2017). [50]
9	Startup Science & Founder Impact	Reinforces empirical insights on how founders shape startup trajectories,	Braesemann et al. (2023). [51]

S. No.	Area of Scholarly Articles	Description	Reference
		strengthening psychological and behavioral analysis of CEOs.	
10	Digital Entrepreneurship & Sustainability	Examines entrepreneurial bricolage and business model innovation in digital ventures, aligning with Canva’s adaptive innovation and sustainable growth.	Liu & Zhang (2024). [52]

**Table 2:** Review of Literature on Keyword “Canva Pty Ltd” using search in <https://scholar.google.com/>

S. No.	Area of Scholarly Articles	Description	Reference
1	Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Explains how entrepreneurial bricolage and business model innovation improve sustainable performance in digital ventures, providing a framework applicable to Canva Pty Ltd’s platform-based growth.	Sussan & Acs (2017). [53]
2	Creativity and Innovation Measurement	Examines divergent thinking and creativity assessment methods, offering conceptual support for Canva’s creativity-driven product ecosystem.	Reiter-Palmon et al. (2019). [54]
3	Entrepreneurial Leadership & Innovation	Provides an in-depth case study of Melanie Perkins’ leadership, strategic vision, and scaling decisions at Canva Pty Ltd.	Kaaro (2025). [55]
4	Gender and Entrepreneurship	Analyzes the impact of female leadership on corporate financial constraints, relevant to Melanie Perkins’ role as CEO of Canva.	Said et al. (2014). [56]
5	Digital Entrepreneurship & Resilience	Discusses resilience and competitiveness in digitally advanced entrepreneurial firms, aligning with Canva’s global digital strategy.	Ill (2026). [57]
6	Organizational Financial Strategy	Investigates how organizational task environments influence cash-performance relationships, relevant to Canva’s financial management during expansion.	Festinger et al. (2014). [58]
7	Business Model Innovation	Demonstrates the application of the Business Model Canvas to value creation, supporting analysis of Canva’s freemium business model.	Ojasalo & Ojasalo (2018). [59]
8	Founder Personality & Startup Success	Examines how founder personality traits influence startup success, offering insights into Canva’s entrepreneurial culture.	Freiberg & Matz (2023). [60]
9	Sustainable Business Transformation	Highlights leadership approaches focused on sustainability and purpose, aligning with Canva’s mission-driven organizational culture.	Sebhatu et al. (2021). [61]

**Table 3:** Review of Literature on Keyword “Digital Transformation Leadership” using search in <https://scholar.google.com/>

S. No.	Area of Scholarly Articles	Description	Reference
--------	----------------------------	-------------	-----------

1	Digital transformation leadership characteristics	Examines leadership traits that support successful digital transformation initiatives.	McCarthy et al. (2022). [62]
2	Digital transformation leadership competencies	Focuses on key competencies needed by leaders to manage digital change effectively.	Müller et al. (2024). [63]
3	Digital transformation leadership framework	Provides a conceptual framework for leadership roles in tech-driven organizations.	Weber et al. (2022). [64]
4	Leadership and digital transformation	Identifies leadership characteristics that drive digital innovation and adoption.	Porfirio et al. (2021). [65]
5	Transformational leadership lens	Analyzes digital transformation through the lens of transformational leadership practices.	Philip (2021). [66]
6	Leadership, agility, and transformation	Studies how leadership supports organizational agility during digital transformation.	Ly (2024). [67]
7	Leadership in the digital era	Highlights critical leadership traits required in the era of digital change.	Klein (2020). [68]
8	Leadership, agility, and strategy	Explores the connection between leadership, digital agility, and strategic success.	AlNuaimi et al. (2022). [69]
9	Leadership role in digital age	Focuses on the responsibilities and influence of leaders during digital transformation.	Sainger (2018). [70]
10	Characteristics of digital transformation leadership	Theorizes leadership traits from practitioner perspectives in digital initiatives.	McCarthy et al. (2024). [71]

#### 4.3 Current Status of Scholarly Research about “Melanie Perkins”:

##### Current Status of Research on Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd

Scholarly research directly examining Melanie Perkins, Co-Founder and CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, remains limited and is still emerging. Existing academic literature primarily addresses her leadership indirectly through entrepreneurship case studies, digital platform research, and founder-CEO analyses. For instance, a peer-reviewed case study documents Perkins’ entrepreneurial journey and strategic leadership in scaling Canva into a global design platform, emphasizing her role in democratizing design and fostering innovation-driven growth (Nambisan et al. (2019). [72]). However, this study adopts a descriptive case approach and does not extensively apply established leadership or CEO performance frameworks. As a result, Perkins’ leadership is acknowledged in academic discourse but has not yet been systematically examined using rigorous CEO analysis methodologies.

Broader research on founder-CEOs and digital innovation provides valuable theoretical grounding for understanding Perkins’ leadership at Canva. Studies indicate that founder-CEOs exert a strong imprint on organizational culture, strategic orientation, and innovation intensity, particularly in technology-based and platform-driven firms (Kannan-Narasimhan et al. (2021). [73]). Research in digital transformation literature further demonstrates that CEOs play a critical role in aligning technological capabilities with business model innovation, thereby shaping long-term competitiveness (Chen et al. (2023). [74]). These findings resonate with Canva’s evolution under Perkins, where user-centric design, simplicity, and platform scalability have become core strategic pillars. Additionally, leadership studies grounded in upper echelons theory emphasize that CEO values, cognition, and prior experience significantly influence strategic decision-making and organizational outcomes (Kim (2025). [75]).

Despite these theoretical insights, a clear research gap exists concerning the empirical and theory-driven analysis of Melanie Perkins' leadership specifically. Most studies addressing digital platforms and SaaS firms analyze firms at an aggregate level, without isolating the CEO's strategic influence or leadership behaviour as a focal variable (Persson and Schreiber (2025). [76]). Moreover, existing literature rarely integrates leadership theories, digital transformation frameworks, and CEO performance evaluation models within a single analytical structure. This gap highlights the need for an exploratory CEO analysis case study that systematically examines Perkins' leadership style, strategic decision-making, and organizational impact. Addressing this gap would extend leadership and digital entrepreneurship literature by positioning Perkins as a contemporary benchmark for founder-CEO leadership in global SaaS enterprises.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

This study adopts a case study-based exploratory research design, which is appropriate for examining complex leadership phenomena where theory is still evolving, and contextual understanding is essential. Exploratory case studies are widely employed in management and leadership research to generate in-depth insights, particularly when analyzing CEO behaviour, strategic decision-making, and organizational influence in dynamic environments (Yin, (2018) [77]; Eisenhardt (1989). [78]).

Scholarly information related to CEO leadership, founder-CEOs, digital platform strategy, and innovation leadership was systematically collected using keyword-based searches across Google Scholar and authoritative databases. Keywords such as *CEO analysis*, *founder CEO leadership*, *digital platform leadership*, *SaaS innovation strategy*, and *entrepreneurial leadership* were used to identify peer-reviewed journal articles, authoritative case studies, and conceptual frameworks. Additionally, AI-driven GPT tools were employed as a supplementary mechanism to synthesize, organize, and cross-validate scholarly insights, consistent with emerging research practices that acknowledge AI as an assistive analytical tool rather than a primary data source (Dwivedi et al. (2023) [79]; van Dis et al. (2023). [80]).

The collected secondary data were subjected to a systematic qualitative analysis process, involving comparison, evaluation, and interpretation through multiple CEO analysis frameworks. Established strategic and leadership tools—such as SWOC analysis, ABCD framework, PESTLE analysis, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) assessment, and leadership competency evaluation—were applied to structure insights and reduce interpretive bias (Aithal (2023) [81]; Helms & Nixon (2010). [82]). These frameworks enabled triangulation of findings by examining internal capabilities, external environmental factors, leadership qualities, and strategic outcomes in an integrated manner.

The interpretive phase focused on identifying patterns in leadership behaviour, strategic foresight, innovation orientation, and organizational impact, aligning with qualitative analysis principles in case-based research (Miles et al. (2014). [83]). Based on this multi-framework evaluation, context-specific suggestions and strategic recommendations were developed to extend existing leadership theory and offer practical implications for CEO leadership in digital platform firms, thereby fulfilling the exploratory and theory-building objectives of the study.

## 6. RESEARCH ANALYSIS :

### 6.1 SWOC Analysis:

SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges) analysis is a structured qualitative framework widely used in scholarly research to systematically examine internal capabilities and external conditions affecting programs, policies, and organizational initiatives, thereby supporting evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning. In academic and professional education research, SWOC analysis has proven particularly valuable for evaluating curriculum design and implementation, as demonstrated by (El-Awaisi et al. (2017) [84]), who applied the framework to assess the integration of interprofessional education within healthcare curricula and identified key institutional strengths and contextual challenges influencing successful adoption. From a theoretical perspective, the shift from SWOT to SWOC has been argued to enhance conceptual clarity by emphasizing “challenges” rather than generic “threats,” thereby improving analytical rigor in organizational sustainability and financial strategy research (Indrasari (2023). [85]). During the COVID-19 pandemic, SWOC analysis was effectively used to evaluate e-learning systems, capturing infrastructural weaknesses, pedagogical limitations, and emerging digital opportunities in higher education (Noreen et al. (2021). [86]).

Supporting this perspective, research examining students’ perceptions of e-learning highlights the continued relevance of strategic analytical frameworks in synthesizing stakeholder views and informing educational innovation (Pires (2023). [87]).

**6.1.1 Strengths of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd:**

Strengths refer to the internal capabilities and leadership qualities that enable a CEO to guide an organization toward success. Effective strategic leadership helps organizations achieve competitive advantage through vision, innovation, and strong decision-making (Ireland et al. (2005). [88]). In the case of Melanie Perkins, her visionary leadership and innovation mindset have played an important role in Canva’s rapid growth and global recognition.

**Table 4:** Strengths of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd

S. No.	Key Strengths	Description
1	<b>CEO as Manager (Operational Efficiency)</b>	Melanie Perkins ensures efficient coordination of teams and resources at Canva, helping the company deliver reliable design services to users worldwide.
2	<b>CEO as Leader (Inclusive Growth &amp; Trust)</b>	She promotes an inclusive work culture that encourages collaboration, creativity, and trust among employees and stakeholders.
3	<b>CEO as Dynamic Visionary (Strategic Clarity)</b>	Perkins identified the need for simple design tools and created Canva to make graphic design accessible to everyone.
4	<b>CEO as Technocrat (Digital Transformation)</b>	She supports the use of advanced digital technologies to improve Canva’s platform and enhance user experience.
5	<b>CEO as Technocrat (Digital Transformation)</b>	Perkins encourages continuous technological improvement, helping Canva remain competitive in the digital design industry.
6	<b>CEO as Strategic Decision Maker (Market Adaptation)</b>	She expands Canva’s services to different markets and users, strengthening the company’s global presence.
7	<b>CEO as Emotional Hero (Stakeholder Assurance)</b>	Perkins builds confidence among employees, investors, and customers through transparent and supportive leadership.
8	<b>CEO as Moral Advocate (Governance &amp; Transparency)</b>	She promotes ethical leadership and responsible governance, strengthening Canva’s reputation and stakeholder trust.
9	<b>CEO as Dynamic Entrepreneur (Innovation)</b>	Perkins continuously drives innovation and encourages creative solutions within the organization.
10	<b>CEO as Role Model (Industry Stewardship)</b>	Her success as a technology entrepreneur inspires future leaders and contributes to the development of the digital design industry.

**6.1.2 Weaknesses of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd:**

Weaknesses refer to internal limitations or areas where leadership may require improvement. Leadership effectiveness depends on the development of managerial skills and experience across different organizational levels (Mumford et al. (2007). [89]). Even successful CEOs may experience weaknesses such as limited early management experience or challenges in delegation during periods of rapid organizational growth.

**Table 5:** Weaknesses of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd

S. No.	Key Weaknesses	Description
1	<b>CEO as Manager (Operational Rigidities)</b>	Rapid growth of Canva can create operational challenges in managing large global teams and maintaining efficiency.
2	<b>CEO as Leader (Declining Market Dominance)</b>	Strong competition from other digital design platforms may reduce Canva’s dominance in certain market segments.
3	<b>CEO as Dynamic Visionary (Legacy Constraints)</b>	Dependence on the original vision of Melanie Perkins may sometimes limit alternative strategic perspectives.
4	<b>CEO as Technocrat (Digital Lag)</b>	Continuous technological change requires constant upgrades, and delays in innovation may reduce competitiveness.
5	<b>CEO as Financial Acumen (Margin Pressure)</b>	Investment in new technologies and expansion may increase operational costs and affect profit margins.
6	<b>CEO as Strategic Decision Maker (Product Mix Imbalance)</b>	Balancing free and premium services can be challenging while maintaining both user growth and revenue.
7	<b>CEO as Emotional Hero (Customer Disconnect in Urban Markets)</b>	Some professional designers may prefer advanced design software, creating a gap between Canva and expert users.
8	<b>CEO as Moral Advocate (Perception of External Influence)</b>	Operating globally may expose Canva to external pressures related to regulations and digital policies.
9	<b>CEO as Dynamic Entrepreneur (Innovation Inertia)</b>	Maintaining continuous innovation can become difficult as the company grows larger and more structured.
10	<b>CEO as Role Model (Talent Retention Challenges)</b>	Retaining highly skilled technology professionals is challenging in the competitive global tech industry.

**6.1.3 Opportunities of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd:**

Opportunities refer to external conditions that organizations and leaders can utilize for growth and innovation. Strategic leaders must identify environmental opportunities and use them to enhance competitive advantage and organizational performance (Hitt et al. (2010). [90]). For Canva, opportunities such as global digitalization, AI integration, and expanding online content creation markets provide significant growth potential.

**Table 6:** Opportunities of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd

S. No.	Key Opportunities	Description
1	<b>CEO as Manager (Operational Optimization)</b>	Melanie Perkins can improve operational systems and workflows to manage the growing global platform of Canva more efficiently.
2	<b>CEO as Leader (Global Creative Mission)</b>	Perkins can strengthen Canva’s mission of empowering everyone to design, expanding its impact across education, businesses, and communities worldwide.
3	<b>CEO as Dynamic Visionary (Platform Diversification)</b>	Canva has opportunities to expand into new creative tools, digital content services, and integrated design ecosystems.

4	<b>CEO as Technocrat (AI &amp; Predictive Design Tools)</b>	Integrating artificial intelligence and automation can improve design suggestions, image generation, and user productivity on the platform.
5	<b>CEO as Financial Acumen (Revenue Expansion)</b>	Growth in premium subscriptions and enterprise solutions can increase Canva’s revenue and long-term financial sustainability.
6	<b>CEO as Strategic Decision Maker (Partnership Synergy)</b>	Strategic partnerships with technology companies, media platforms, and educational institutions can expand Canva’s market reach.
7	<b>CEO as Emotional Hero (Empowering Creative Communities)</b>	Canva can empower creators, students, and small businesses by providing accessible tools for communication and digital storytelling.
8	<b>CEO as Moral Advocate (Sustainability &amp; Social Impact)</b>	Perkins can further strengthen Canva’s social initiatives and ethical leadership to build stronger global stakeholder trust.
9	<b>CEO as Dynamic Entrepreneur (Phygital Innovation)</b>	Combining digital design with physical product creation such as print services can expand Canva’s creative ecosystem.
10	<b>CEO as Role Model (Human Capital Development)</b>	Investing in employee skills, creativity, and leadership development can strengthen Canva’s innovative workforce.

**6.1.4 Challenges of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd:**

Challenges refer to external pressures and complex situations that leaders must manage to ensure long-term organizational success. CEOs must effectively address competitive pressures, technological change, and organizational complexity to maintain strategic performance (Finkelstein et al. (2009). [91]). Leaders such as Melanie Perkins must therefore manage these challenges while sustaining innovation and growth in a dynamic industry.

**Table 7:** Challenges of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd

S. No.	Key Challenges	Description
1	<b>CEO as Manager (Operational Rigidity)</b>	Managing the rapidly expanding global operations of Canva can create coordination and operational efficiency challenges.
2	<b>CEO as Leader (Market Share Erosion)</b>	Increasing competition from major design software companies may affect Canva’s ability to maintain strong market share.
3	<b>CEO as Dynamic Visionary (Legacy Constraints)</b>	Maintaining the original vision while adapting to changing industry demands can be challenging for Melanie Perkins.
4	<b>CEO as Technocrat (Digital Adoption Lag)</b>	Continuous technological advancements require constant updates to ensure Canva remains competitive in the digital design industry.
5	<b>CEO as Financial Acumen (Margin Pressure)</b>	Investments in innovation, infrastructure, and expansion may increase operational costs and affect profitability.
6	<b>CEO as Strategic Decision Maker (Distribution Channel Dependency)</b>	Dependence on digital platforms and online distribution channels may create risks if market dynamics change.
7	<b>CEO as Emotional Hero (Urban Disconnect)</b>	Some professional designers and advanced users may prefer more complex design tools, creating a gap in certain user segments.

8	<b>CEO as Moral Advocate (Investment Scrutiny)</b>	As Canva grows globally, financial decisions and investments may face greater scrutiny from investors and stakeholders.
9	<b>CEO as Dynamic Entrepreneur (Innovation Inertia)</b>	Maintaining continuous innovation in a large and established organization can become increasingly difficult.
10	<b>CEO as Role Model (Talent Crisis)</b>	Attracting and retaining highly skilled technology professionals remains a challenge in the competitive global tech industry.

### 6.2 ABCD Analysis:

#### About ABCD Analysis

ABCD analysis is a structured evaluation method used to examine systems, ideas, strategies, products, or services by identifying their Advantages, Benefits, Constraints, and Disadvantages. This framework helps researchers and managers systematically analyze both positive and negative factors affecting a concept or strategy. It supports effective decision-making by providing a balanced understanding of opportunities and limitations in different contexts (Aithal (2017). [92]). The ABCD approach can also be applied in quantitative studies to evaluate models and organizational strategies through measurable factors (Shenoy & Aithal (2017). [93]). Researchers have further used ABCD analysis in scientific and technological studies to classify and evaluate complex patterns or systems (She et al. (2007). [94]). In addition, the framework has been applied to analyze stakeholder perspectives and assess strategic outcomes in different sectors (Kambali et al. (2023). [95]).

#### 6.2.1 Advantages of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, from her Stakeholders' Perspectives:

Advantages refer to the positive aspects and strengths that a leader or organization provides to different stakeholders. In the case of Melanie Perkins, her leadership creates value for customers, investors, employees, policymakers, research collaborators, and the public.

**Table 8:** Advantages of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, viewed from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders

S. No.	Key Advantages	Description
1	<b>Customers: Easy design platform</b>	Canva provides a simple and user-friendly design platform that allows customers to create professional designs without advanced technical skills.
2	<b>Investors: Strong business growth</b>	Under Melanie Perkins' leadership, Canva has achieved rapid global growth and high market valuation, increasing investor confidence.
3	<b>Employees: Positive work culture</b>	She promotes a collaborative and innovative workplace that supports employee creativity, learning, and professional development.
4	<b>Policymakers: Support for digital economy</b>	Canva contributes to the growth of the digital economy by encouraging digital skills and supporting entrepreneurship worldwide.
5	<b>Research Collaborators: Innovation opportunities</b>	Collaboration with educational and research institutions helps in developing new design technologies and digital learning tools.
6	<b>The Public: Social impact and accessibility</b>	Canva provides accessible design tools and supports social initiatives, helping communities and individuals express creativity globally.

**6.2.2 Benefits of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, from her Stakeholders' Perspectives:**

Benefits represent the direct outcomes or gains that stakeholders receive from the actions and strategies of a leader. Melanie Perkins’ leadership at Canva provides various benefits such as innovation, growth opportunities, and access to digital creative tools.

**Table 9:** Benefits of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, viewed from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders

S. No.	Key Benefits	Description
1	<b>Customers: Improved design accessibility</b>	Customers benefit from Canva’s easy-to-use tools that allow them to create professional designs quickly and efficiently.
2	<b>Investors: Higher return potential</b>	Continuous business expansion and innovation under Melanie Perkins increase the potential for long-term financial returns.
3	<b>Employees: Career growth opportunities</b>	Employees gain opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and participation in innovative projects.
4	<b>Policymakers: Promotion of digital skills</b>	Canva supports digital literacy and creativity, which helps governments promote digital education and entrepreneurship.
5	<b>Research Collaborators: Knowledge sharing</b>	Collaboration with researchers and institutions helps develop new ideas, technologies, and innovative digital solutions.
6	<b>The Public: Access to creative resources</b>	The public benefits from free or affordable design tools that support creativity, communication, and content creation.

**6.2.3 Constraints of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, from her Stakeholders' Perspectives:**

Constraints are the limitations or restrictions that may affect the effectiveness or performance of a leader or organization. These constraints may arise from market competition, regulatory requirements, or technological challenges faced by Canva and its stakeholders.

**Table 10:** Constraints of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, viewed from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders

S. No.	Key Constraints	Description
1	<b>Customers: Limited advanced design features</b>	Some professional designers may find Canva’s tools less advanced compared to specialized design software.
2	<b>Investors: Market competition</b>	Strong competition from other technology and design companies may affect long-term growth and profitability.
3	<b>Employees: High performance expectations</b>	Working in a fast-growing technology company may create pressure for employees to continuously perform and innovate.
4	<b>Policymakers: Data privacy regulations</b>	Compliance with global data protection and digital regulations can be complex and challenging.
5	<b>Research Collaborators: Technology integration challenges</b>	Collaborating on new digital tools may require complex integration of research ideas with existing platforms.
6	<b>The Public: Dependence on internet access</b>	Canva is an online platform, so users without stable internet connectivity may face difficulties in accessing its services.

**6.2.4 Disadvantages of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, from her Stakeholders' Perspectives:**

Disadvantages refer to the negative aspects or potential drawbacks that stakeholders may experience. In the context of Melanie Perkins' leadership, certain limitations related to technology, competition, and organizational pressures may affect some stakeholders.

**Table 11:** Disadvantages of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, viewed from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders

S. No.	Key Disadvantages	Description
1	<b>Customers: Limited professional customization</b>	Some customers may find Canva less suitable for highly complex or professional-level graphic design needs.
2	<b>Investors: Dependence on digital market trends</b>	Canva's performance is closely tied to the digital content market, which may fluctuate over time.
3	<b>Employees: Work pressure in a fast-growing company</b>	Rapid organizational growth may create high expectations and work pressure for employees.
4	<b>Policymakers: Regulatory and compliance challenges</b>	Operating in multiple countries requires compliance with various digital, privacy, and business regulations.
5	<b>Research Collaborators: Limited control over commercial outcomes</b>	Research partners may have limited influence over how their innovations are commercially applied by the company.
6	<b>The Public: Over-reliance on digital tools</b>	Increased dependence on digital design tools may reduce the use of traditional creative methods among some users.

**6.3 PESTLE Analysis:**

**About PESTLE Analysis**

PESTLE analysis is a strategic tool used to examine the external environment affecting an organization. It analyzes six key factors: political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal influences that may impact business decisions and performance (Yusop (2018). [96]). Researchers highlight that this framework helps organizations identify opportunities and threats by systematically evaluating macro-environmental conditions that influence strategic planning (Yüksel (2012). [97]). It also supports managers in understanding external pressures such as policy changes, technological developments, and market trends that affect long-term organizational sustainability and competitiveness (Buye (2021). [98]; Song et al. (2017). [99]).

**6.3.1 PESTL Analysis for Canva under the Leadership of Melanie Perkins:**

PESTL analysis helps examine the external factors that influence business decisions and leadership strategies. In the case of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva, the political, economic, social, technological, and legal environments play an important role in shaping the company's growth, innovation, and global digital platform strategy.

**PESTL Analysis: Canva under the Leadership of Melanie Perkins:**

**(i) Political Environment:**

Political factors such as government policies, digital economy regulations, and international trade policies influence Canva's global operations. Supportive government initiatives for technology startups and innovation provide opportunities for Canva to expand its services in different countries under the leadership of Melanie Perkins.

**(ii) Economic Environment:**

Economic conditions such as global economic growth, digital market expansion, and increasing demand for online tools affect Canva's performance. The rapid growth of the digital economy and the rising demand for visual content creation platforms positively support Canva's revenue and business expansion.

**(iii) Social Environment:**

Social trends such as the increasing use of social media, digital communication, and online marketing have increased the demand for simple design platforms. Canva benefits from these trends because individuals, businesses, and educational institutions increasingly rely on visual content for communication and branding.

**(iv) Technological Environment:**

Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital collaboration tools influence Canva's product development. Melanie Perkins focuses on innovation and continuous technological improvement to enhance user experience and maintain competitiveness in the digital design industry.

## 7. KPI'S (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS) OF MELANIE PERKINS AS CEO OF CANVA :

Based on the CEO Matrix and KPI framework developed by P. S. Aithal [100], the leadership performance of Melanie Perkins can be assessed through several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These indicators evaluate how effectively a CEO manages leadership responsibilities, drives innovation, ensures financial progress, and makes strategic decisions that support organizational growth. In the case of Canva, these KPIs reflect how Perkins has guided the company to become a widely recognized global digital design platform.

**(1) Classification within the CEO Matrix:**

According to the CEO Matrix model, Melanie Perkins can be categorized within the Super Strategist quadrant. Leaders in this category demonstrate strong leadership capabilities along with clear strategic vision and innovative thinking.

- **Leadership Evidence:** Perkins showed strong vision by recognizing the difficulty many people faced when using traditional graphic design software. She addressed this gap by introducing Canva, a platform designed to simplify the design process and make it accessible to everyone. Her leadership approach focuses on collaboration, creativity, and building an inclusive workplace culture.
- **Strategic and Financial Acumen Evidence:** Under Perkins' leadership, Canva expanded its presence globally and achieved significant company valuation. The introduction of different services such as Canva Pro, Canva for Education, and Canva for Enterprise strengthened the company's revenue model and allowed it to reach diverse user groups.

**(2) Analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**

The CEO Matrix framework highlights that the success of a CEO can be evaluated through different organizational performance indicators. The following KPIs illustrate the effectiveness of Melanie Perkins' leadership.

**A. Platform Growth and Market Expansion:**

- **Global User Base:** Canva has experienced substantial growth in its user community, serving millions of individuals, businesses, educators, and organizations around the world. This growth reflects the strong acceptance and widespread adoption of the platform.
- **International Market Expansion:** The availability of Canva in multiple languages and its presence across different countries demonstrate Perkins' ability to expand the platform on a global scale.

**B. Innovation and Product Development:**

- **Continuous Product Innovation:** Canva regularly introduces new tools, templates, and collaborative design features that help users create visual content easily and efficiently.
- **AI and Automation Integration:** The platform incorporates artificial intelligence features such as automated design suggestions and content creation tools, which strengthen its competitiveness in the digital design industry.

**C. Operational Efficiency and Technology Leadership:**

- **Cloud-Based Design Platform:** Canva functions as a cloud-based platform that enables users to design, edit, and collaborate from any location in real time.
- **Platform Scalability:** The company’s technological infrastructure allows the platform to support a very large number of users while maintaining stable performance.

**D. Brand Influence and Market Leadership:**

- **Strong Brand Recognition:** Canva has developed a strong global reputation as an easy-to-use design platform for both beginners and professionals.
- **User Engagement:** Active user participation and community interaction demonstrate the effectiveness of Canva’s digital ecosystem.

**E. Organizational Culture and Talent Development:**

- **Collaborative Work Environment:** Perkins encourages a workplace culture that values teamwork, creativity, and continuous innovation.
- **Talent Attraction and Retention:** Canva attracts skilled professionals such as designers, engineers, and developers who contribute to the company’s ongoing growth and product development.

**(3) Practical Interpretation using the ABCD Framework:**

When the ABCD analysis framework is applied to Melanie Perkins’ KPI performance, several insights emerge.

- **Advantages:** The visionary leadership and innovation-driven approach of Melanie Perkins strengthen the competitive position of Canva in the global digital design market.
- **Benefits:** Continuous product development and global expansion increase user adoption, improve brand recognition, and support the growth of Canva’s digital platform.
- **Constraints:** Rapid technological advancements and strong competition in the technology industry require constant innovation and strategic adaptation.
- **Disadvantages:** Managing a large global platform and maintaining consistent innovation across teams can create operational and organizational challenges over time.

**8. COMPARISON WITH COMPETITORS :**

**Comparison of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva, with CEOs of Competitive Technology Companies:**

Based on the CEO Matrix framework proposed by P. S. Aithal [100], the leadership style and strategic performance of Melanie Perkins can be compared with those of CEOs of other major technology and digital platform companies, such as Shantanu Narayen of Adobe, Satya Nadella of Microsoft, and Jensen Huang of Nvidia. These leaders operate in competitive technology industries where innovation, digital transformation, and strategic leadership determine long-term success.

**(1) Strategic Positioning in the CEO Matrix:**

Using the CEO Matrix framework, these leaders can be categorized based on their leadership style and strategic orientation.

**Table 12:** Strategic Positioning in the CEO Matrix

CEO	Company	Matrix Quadrant	Strategic Focus
Melanie Perkins	Canva	Super Strategist	Building a simple and accessible design platform for global users through innovation and digital collaboration tools.
Shantanu Narayen	Adobe	Financial Strategist	Expanding Adobe’s digital creative ecosystem and strengthening subscription-based software services.
Satya Nadella	Microsoft	Visionary Leader	Transforming Microsoft through cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and digital platform innovation.
Jensen Huang	Nvidia	Technocrat Leader	Driving technological leadership in graphics processing, AI computing, and high-performance digital infrastructure.

**(2) Performance Indicators Comparison**

The performance of these CEOs can be compared through several indicators such as innovation capability, market influence, technological development, and global expansion.

**Table 13:** Performance Metrics Comparison

Key Performance Indicator	Melanie Perkins (Canva)	Shantanu Narayen (Adobe)	Satya Nadella (Microsoft)	Jensen Huang (Nvidia)
Revenue / ARR Growth	\$4 Billion ARR (2025)	\$19.4 Billion Revenue (2024)	\$211 Billion Revenue (2024)	\$60.9 Billion Revenue (2024)
Global Users / Customers	265 Million Monthly Users	~30 Million Creative Cloud Subscribers	400+ Million Enterprise & Cloud Users	Thousands of global enterprise clients
Paid Subscribers / Customers	31 Million Paid Users	30+ Million Paid Subscribers	345+ Million Microsoft 365 Users	Major AI & data center customers worldwide
Company Valuation / Market Value	~\$42 Billion Valuation	~\$250 Billion Market Cap	~\$3 Trillion Market Cap	~\$2 Trillion Market Cap

**(3) Comparative Leadership Styles:**

**Melanie Perkins (The “Creative Platform Innovator”)**

Perkins is recognized for her ability to simplify complex design tools and make them accessible to a broad audience. Her leadership emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and user-friendly innovation, which helped Canva become a popular global design platform.

**Shantanu Narayen (The “Creative Software Strategist”)**

Narayen focuses on strengthening Adobe’s professional creative ecosystem by developing advanced design tools and expanding subscription-based services such as Creative Cloud.

**Satya Nadella (The “Digital Transformation Leader”)**

Nadella is known for transforming Microsoft into a cloud-focused technology leader. His strategy emphasizes artificial intelligence, cloud infrastructure, and global digital transformation.

**Jensen Huang (The “Technology Innovation Pioneer”)**

Huang’s leadership centers on technological advancement in computing hardware and artificial intelligence. His focus on GPU technology has positioned Nvidia as a key player in the global AI industry.

**(4) Summary Analysis:**

Although Canva is smaller compared to technology giants like Microsoft and Nvidia, Melanie Perkins has successfully built a globally recognized digital design platform through innovation and simplicity. While leaders such as Satya Nadella and Jensen Huang focus on large-scale technological infrastructure and computing power, Perkins emphasizes accessibility and creativity in digital design. This unique positioning allows Canva to compete effectively in the growing digital content creation market while maintaining strong user engagement and global brand recognition.

**9. MELANIE PERKINS, CEO OF CANVA AND CEO PERFORMANCE MATRIX :**

Using the CEO Performance Matrix proposed by P. S. Aithal [100] in the **Newly Developed CEO Matrix and KPI framework**, the leadership performance of Melanie Perkins can be evaluated based on two major dimensions: **Leadership Skills** and **Strategic–Financial Capability**. These dimensions help understand how effectively a CEO guides organizational growth, innovation, and long-term competitiveness.

**(1) Classification within the CEO Matrix**

According to the CEO Matrix model, **Melanie Perkins can be classified as a “Super Strategist” (Quadrant 4)**. Leaders in this category demonstrate strong leadership ability along with effective strategic and financial decision-making.

- **High Leadership Skills:**

Melanie Perkins has demonstrated strong visionary leadership by identifying the complexity of traditional design software and introducing Canva as a simple and accessible online design platform. Her leadership approach encourages creativity, collaboration, and an inclusive organizational culture that supports innovation and teamwork.

- **Strategic and Financial Capability:**

Under her leadership, Canva has expanded globally and achieved a multi-billion-dollar valuation. The introduction of services such as Canva Pro, Canva for Education, and Canva for Enterprise has strengthened the company’s revenue model while expanding its global market reach.

**(2) KPI Evaluation Based on the Aithal Framework**

The CEO Matrix framework explains that successful CEOs demonstrate performance across multiple organizational indicators. Melanie Perkins’ leadership can be evaluated through the following key performance indicators:

- **Strategic Thinking and Decision Making:**

Perkins successfully identified a gap in the design industry where professional tools were complex and difficult for non-designers. By developing a user-friendly platform, she positioned Canva as an accessible design solution for individuals, businesses, and educational institutions.

- **Innovation and Product Development:**

Under her leadership, Canva continuously introduces new templates, collaborative tools, and AI-powered design features that improve user experience and strengthen the platform’s competitive position.

- **Technological Integration:**

Canva operates as a cloud-based digital design platform that allows users to collaborate in real time. The integration of artificial intelligence and automation tools supports efficient design creation and improves platform usability.

- **Brand Development and Market Influence:**

Canva has become one of the most widely recognized digital design platforms globally. Strong brand reputation and high user engagement demonstrate the effectiveness of Perkins’ leadership and strategic communication.

- **Organizational Culture and Talent Management:**

Melanie Perkins promotes a positive and creative work culture that encourages employees to innovate and collaborate. This environment helps attract talented designers, developers, and engineers who contribute to the continuous development of the platform.

**(3) ABCD Analysis Summary**

Applying the ABCD analysis framework to Melanie Perkins’ leadership performance provides the following insights:

- **Advantages:** Visionary leadership and innovation-driven strategy have helped Canva become a leading global digital design platform.
- **Benefits:** Continuous product development and global expansion have increased user adoption, brand recognition, and platform growth.
- **Constraints:** Rapid technological change and strong competition from established software companies require continuous innovation and strategic adaptation.
- **Disadvantages:** Managing a rapidly expanding global platform and maintaining consistent innovation across large teams can present operational challenges.

Melanie Perkins’ leadership reflects the characteristics of a Super Strategist in the CEO Matrix framework. Her ability to combine visionary thinking, technological innovation, and strategic business development has enabled Canva to grow into a globally recognized digital design platform. Through effective leadership and continuous innovation, she has positioned the company for long-term growth and competitiveness in the digital technology industry.

**Table 14:** Comparative Performance Table (FY 2025–26)

Parameter	Melanie Perkins (Canva)	Shantanu Narayen (Adobe)	Satya Nadella (Microsoft)	Jensen Huang (Nvidia)
-----------	-------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------

Matrix Type	Super Strategist (Q4)	Financial Strategist (Q3)	Visionary Leader (Q2)	Dynamic Innovator (Q4)
Revenue / ARR	~\$4.5 Billion (Projected ARR)	~\$21 Billion Revenue	~\$230 Billion Revenue	~\$75 Billion Revenue
Global Users / Customers	~270 Million Monthly Users	~32 Million Creative Cloud Subscribers	~420+ Million Cloud & Enterprise Users	Thousands of Global Enterprise Clients
Company Valuation / Market Cap	~\$45 Billion Valuation	~\$270 Billion Market Cap	~\$3.2 Trillion Market Cap	~\$2.2 Trillion Market Cap
R&D / Innovation Investment	Strong investment in AI design tools and platform innovation	~\$3.5+ Billion R&D	~\$30+ Billion R&D	~\$10+ Billion R&D

**Key Differentiators in Leadership Strategy:**

**(1) Melanie Perkins: The “Super Strategist” of Accessible Design Innovation:**

Melanie Perkins focuses on making graphic design simple and accessible for everyone. Her leadership strategy emphasizes user-friendly digital tools, continuous product innovation, and expanding Canva’s platform for individuals, businesses, and educational institutions worldwide.

**(2) Shantanu Narayen: The “Financial Strategist” of Creative Software Leadership:**

Shantanu Narayen’s strategy centers on strengthening Adobe’s leadership in professional creative software. His approach focuses on subscription-based services like Creative Cloud, continuous software innovation, and expanding digital media solutions for professional designers and enterprises.

**(3) Satya Nadella: The “Visionary Leader” of Cloud Transformation:**

Satya Nadella emphasizes digital transformation through cloud computing and artificial intelligence. His leadership strategy focuses on expanding Microsoft’s cloud ecosystem, promoting collaboration tools, and integrating AI technologies across enterprise platforms.

**(4) Jensen Huang: The “Dynamic Innovator” of AI and High-Performance Computing:**

Jensen Huang’s leadership strategy focuses on technological innovation in graphics processing units (GPUs) and artificial intelligence computing. By investing heavily in research and development, he positions Nvidia as a global leader in AI hardware and advanced computing technologies.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS :**

Drawing from the analytical findings on the leadership of Melanie Perkins at Canva Pty Ltd, and the evolving global digital design industry, the following strategic recommendations are proposed to support sustainable and innovative leadership. These suggestions align with the CEO Matrix framework developed by P. S. Aithal [100], which emphasizes strong leadership capability and strategic innovation.

**(1) Strengthening Ethical and Inclusive Digital Design:**

- **Promote Design Accessibility:** Canva should continue developing tools that make design simple and accessible for students, entrepreneurs, and small businesses worldwide. This supports the company’s mission of democratizing design.
- **Support Social Impact Programs:** Expanding initiatives like Canva for Education and nonprofit partnerships can empower underserved communities and strengthen Canva’s social responsibility.

**(2) Advancing Responsible Technology and AI Governance:**

- **Transparent AI Integration:** As Canva adopts artificial intelligence in design tools, the company should ensure transparency and fairness in automated design recommendations and content generation.
- **User Data Protection:** Strengthening privacy policies and cybersecurity systems will help maintain trust among millions of global users.

**(3) Expanding Product Innovation and Platform Capabilities:**

- **Advanced Design Features:** Introducing more professional design tools while maintaining platform simplicity can attract professional designers as well as beginners.

- **Integration with Digital Platforms:** Strengthening integration with productivity and marketing platforms will improve collaboration and workflow efficiency.
- (4) **Strengthening Talent Development and Organizational Culture:**
  - **Creative Workforce Development:** Encouraging innovation programs and continuous learning opportunities will help employees contribute to new product ideas.
  - **Global Team Collaboration:** As Canva operates internationally, improving communication and collaboration across global teams will enhance productivity and innovation.
- (5) **Sustainable Growth and Strategic Expansion:**
  - **Expansion in Emerging Markets:** Providing localized language support and regional design content can increase adoption in developing markets.
  - **Investment in Future Technologies:** Strategic investments in AI, cloud technology, and digital collaboration tools will help Canva maintain long-term competitiveness.

Table 15: Summary of Recommendations for Sustainable Leadership

Strategy Pillar	KPI Focus (CEO Matrix)	Expected Outcome
Ethical & Inclusive Design	Moral Advocate / Role Model	Increased social impact and user trust
Responsible Technology	Technocrat / Strategic Decision Maker	Secure and transparent digital platform
Continuous Innovation	Dynamic Entrepreneur / Visionary	Strong competitive advantage in design technology
Talent Development	Leader / Organizational Builder	Improved creativity and employee engagement
Global Expansion	Financial Acumen / Strategic Leader	Sustainable growth and larger global user base

## 11. CONCLUSION :

This paper examined the leadership performance of Melanie Perkins, CEO of Canva Pty Ltd, using the CEO Matrix and KPI framework. The analysis highlights how her strong leadership vision, innovation capability, and strategic decision-making have contributed to Canva’s rapid global growth. By simplifying graphic design through an easy-to-use digital platform, Perkins successfully transformed Canva into one of the most widely used design tools in the world. Her focus on product innovation, global expansion, and collaborative work culture demonstrates the qualities of a “Super Strategist” leader who balances creativity with effective business management.

Overall, the study shows that Melanie Perkins’ leadership has played a crucial role in strengthening Canva’s brand recognition, expanding its user base, and maintaining continuous technological development. Despite challenges such as strong competition and rapid technological change, her strategic approach and commitment to innovation help the company remain competitive in the digital design industry. The findings suggest that visionary leadership, continuous innovation, and strong organizational culture are essential factors for sustaining long-term growth and success in modern technology-driven businesses.

## REFERENCES :

- [1] Hambrick, D. C., & Mason, P. A. (1984). Upper echelons: The organization as a reflection of its top managers. *Academy of Management Review*, 9(2), 193-206. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [2] Miao, C., Coombs, J. E., Qian, S., & Oh, I. S. (2025). CEO overconfidence and firm performance: A meta-analytic review and future research agenda. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 31(4), 1814-1836. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [3] Wang, G., Oh, I. S., Courtright, S. H., & Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group & organization management*, 36(2), 223-270. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [4] Freeman, S. TEXILA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH. [Google Scholar↗](#)

- [5] Ben Ali, T. (2023). How does institutional quality affect business start-up in high and middle-income countries? An international comparative study. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 14(3), 2830-2877. [Google Scholar](#)
- [6] Ganji, V. L. (2022). CEO CHARACTERISTICS, INDUSTRY 4.0 CAPABILITIES, AND FIRM PERFORMANCE. [Google Scholar](#)
- [7] Trahms, C. A. (2014). Their Reputations Precede Them: The CEO Successor's Reputation and Shareholders' Assessment of Adverse Selection (Doctoral dissertation). [Google Scholar](#)
- [8] Lumpkin, G. T., & Dess, G. G. (1996). Clarifying the entrepreneurial orientation construct and linking it to performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 21(1), 135-172. [Google Scholar](#)
- [9] Vial, G. (2021). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *Managing digital transformation*, 13-66. [Google Scholar](#)
- [10] SAJJAD, A. (2023). SMEs CAPABILITIES & PERFORMANCE: THE MODERATING ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TURBULENCE. [Google Scholar](#)
- [11] Gun, L., Imamoglu, S. Z., Turkcan, H., & Ince, H. (2024). Effect of digital transformation on firm performance in the uncertain environment: transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy as antecedents of digital transformation. *Sustainability*, 16(3), 1200. [Google Scholar](#)
- [12] Zhu, W., Newman, A., Miao, Q., & Hooke, A. (2013). Revisiting the mediating role of trust in transformational leadership effects: Do different types of trust make a difference?. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(1), 94-105. [Google Scholar](#)
- [13] Ensley, M. D., Hmieleski, K. M., & Pearce, C. L. (2006). The importance of vertical and shared leadership within new venture top management teams: Implications for the performance of startups. *The leadership quarterly*, 17(3), 217-231. [Google Scholar](#)
- [14] Venturelli, A., & Mio, C. (Eds.). (2025). *The Routledge Handbook of Accounting for the Sustainable Development Goals*. Routledge. [Google Scholar](#)
- [15] Suwandej, X. C. N. (2024). A STUDY ON THE MEDIATING ROLE OF STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CEO CHARACTERISTICS AND HIGH-TECH FIRM PERFORMANCE IN GUANGDONG, CHINA. [Google Scholar](#)
- [16] Filatotchev, I., Lanzolla, G., & Syrigos, E. (2025). Impact of CEO's digital technology orientation and board characteristics on firm value: a signaling perspective. *Journal of Management*, 51(2), 875-912. [Google Scholar](#)
- [17] Liu, X., Pinsonneault, A., Qu, W. G., & Dong, J. Q. (2024). Board interlocks with information technology firms and innovation outcomes: A resource dependence perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 41(3), 812-838. [Google Scholar](#)
- [18] Vial, G. (2021). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *Managing digital transformation*, 13-66. [Google Scholar](#)
- [19] Seo, M. G., & Hill, N. S. (2005). Understanding the human side of merger and acquisition: An integrative framework. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41(4), 422-443. [Google Scholar](#)
- [20] Gun, L., Imamoglu, S. Z., Turkcan, H., & Ince, H. (2024). Effect of digital transformation on firm performance in the uncertain environment: transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy as antecedents of digital transformation. *Sustainability*, 16(3), 1200. [Google Scholar](#)
- [21] Istiqliler, B., Ahsan, M., Mole, K., Adomako, S., Gyensare, M. A., & Tang, J. (2025). Entrepreneurial alertness in dynamic environments: Mediating pathways to entrepreneurial orientation and performance. *British Journal of Management*. [Google Scholar](#)
- [22] Jin, L., Madison, K., Kraiczy, N. D., Kellermanns, F. W., Crook, T. R., & Xi, J. (2017). Entrepreneurial team composition characteristics and new venture performance: A meta-analysis. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 41(5), 743-771. [Google Scholar](#)

- [23] Gupta, V., MacMillan, I. C., & Surie, G. (2004). Entrepreneurial leadership: developing and measuring a cross-cultural construct. *Journal of business venturing*, 19(2), 241-260. [Google Scholar](#)
- [24] Ensley, M. D., Hmieleski, K. M., & Pearce, C. L. (2006). The importance of vertical and shared leadership within new venture top management teams: Implications for the performance of startups. *The leadership quarterly*, 17(3), 217-231. [Google Scholar](#)
- [25] Shepherd, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2018). *Entrepreneurial cognition: Exploring the mindset of entrepreneurs*. Springer Nature. [Google Scholar](#)
- [26] Zahra, S. A., Sapienza, H. J., & Davidsson, P. (2006). Entrepreneurship and dynamic capabilities: A review, model and research agenda. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(4), 917-955. [Google Scholar](#)
- [27] Huber, D. M., & Alexy, O. (2024). The impact of artificial intelligence on strategic leadership. In *Handbook of Research on Strategic Leadership in the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (pp. 108-136). Edward Elgar Publishing. [Google Scholar](#)
- [28] Ireland, R. D., & Webb, J. W. (2007). Strategic entrepreneurship: Creating competitive advantage through streams of innovation. *Business horizons*, 50(1), 49-59. [Google Scholar](#)
- [29] Zhu, W., Newman, A., Miao, Q., & Hooke, A. (2013). Revisiting the mediating role of trust in transformational leadership effects: Do different types of trust make a difference?. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(1), 94-105. [Google Scholar](#)
- [30] Karnoukhova, E., & Stepanova, A. (2019). Does Smart & Powerful CEO Contribute to the Performance of Technology Companies?. *Корпоративные финансы*, 13(4), 39-58. [Google Scholar](#)
- [31] Aguinis, H., & Glavas, A. (2012). What we know and don't know about corporate social responsibility: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 38(4), 932-968. [Google Scholar](#)
- [32] Wieland, J. (2017). Shared Value—Theoretical implications, practical challenges. In *Creating Shared Value—Concepts, Experience, Criticism* (pp. 9-26). Cham: Springer International Publishing. [Google Scholar](#)
- [33] Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The leadership quarterly*, 16(3), 315-338. [Google Scholar](#)
- [34] Wang, C. L., & Ahmed, P. K. (2007). Dynamic capabilities: A review and research agenda. *International journal of management reviews*, 9(1), 31-51. [Google Scholar](#)
- [35] Anand, P., & Anand, P. (2025). Safety at the margins: intersectional and infrastructural challenges in enforcing the POSH Act at Indian construction sites. *Local Environment*, 1-26. [Google Scholar](#)
- [36] Данилин, И. В., & Мамедьяров, З. А. (2020). The Role of Global Platforms in Advancing Digital Transformation: Competence and Innovation Aspects. *MGIMO Review of International Relations*, 13(3), 267-282. [Google Scholar](#)
- [37] He, B., & Gan, L. (2025). Exploring the synergistic effect of CEO power and technological expertise in driving corporate digital transformation. *International Review of Financial Analysis*, 98, 103918. [Google Scholar](#)
- [38] Lahyani, F. E., Mardini, G. H., & Kohin, L. (2024). How does the regulatory focus of CEOs spur firms' innovation? Moderating roles of CEO tenure, gender diversity, and industry munificence. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*. [Google Scholar](#)
- [39] Tan, M. (2025). CEO power and open innovation: evidence from China. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 28(2), 403-425. [Google Scholar](#)

- [40] Wang, X., Yu, X., & Meng, X. (2023). Entrepreneurial bricolage and new product development performance in new ventures: The contingent effects of founding team involvement. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 13(4), 813-839. [Google Scholar](#)
- [41] Dwivedi, P., Basuthakur, Y., Polineni, S., Paruchuri, S., & Joshi, A. (2025). A stakeholder perspective on diversity within organizations. *Journal of Management*, 51(1), 383-426. [Google Scholar](#)
- [42] Nambisan, S., Wright, M., & Feldman, M. (2019). The digital transformation of innovation and entrepreneurship: Progress, challenges, and key themes. *Research policy*, 48(8), 103773. [Google Scholar](#)
- [43] Prasad, V. N., & Koti, V. B. (2024). Melanie Perkins: poised to redesign Canva from tech unicorn to tech giant?. *The CASE Journal*, 20(6), 1423-1459. [Google Scholar](#)
- [44] McCarthy, P. X., Gong, X., Braesemann, F., Stephany, F., Rizoïu, M. A., & Kern, M. L. (2023). The impact of founder personalities on startup success. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 17200. [Google Scholar](#)
- [45] Xiao, R. (2024). Female Entrepreneur on Board: Assessing the Effect of Gender on Corporate Financial Constraints. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2401.02134*. [Google Scholar](#)
- [46] Audretsch, D. B., Belitski, M., Caiazza, R., Drapeau, M. D., Menter, M., & Wales, W. J. (2024). Resilience and digitally-advanced entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 36(1-2), 1-9. [Google Scholar](#)
- [47] Jung, C., Foëge, J. N., & Nüesch, S. (2020). Cash for contingencies: How the organizational task environment shapes the cash-performance relationship. *Long Range Planning*, 53(3), 101885. [Google Scholar](#)
- [48] Sibalija, J., Barrett, D., Subasri, M., Bitacola, L., & Kim, R. B. (2021). Understanding value in a healthcare setting: An application of the business model canvas. *Methodological Innovations*, 14(3), 20597991211050477. [Google Scholar](#)
- [49] Irwin, L., Rimanoczy, I., Fritz, M., & Weichert, J. (Eds.). (2023). *Transforming business education for a sustainable future: Stories from pioneers*. Taylor & Francis. [Google Scholar](#)
- [50] Silvia, P. J., Nusbaum, E. C., & Beaty, R. E. (2017). Old or new? Evaluating the old/new scoring method for divergent thinking tasks. *The Journal of Creative Behaviour*, 51(3), 216-224. [Google Scholar](#)
- [51] Braesemann, F., McCarthy, P., Gong, X., Stephany, F., Rizoïu, M. A., & Kern, M. (2023). The Science of Startups: The Impact of Founder Personalities on Company Success. [Google Scholar](#)
- [52] Liu, X., & Zhang, L. (2024). Entrepreneurial Bricolage, Business Model Innovation, and Sustainable Entrepreneurial Performance of Digital Entrepreneurial Ventures: The Moderating Effect of Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Empowerment. *Sustainability*, 16(18), 8168. [Google Scholar](#)
- [53] Sussan, F., & Acs, Z. J. (2017). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Small business economics*, 49(1), 55-73. [Google Scholar](#)
- [54] Reiter-Palmon, R., Forthmann, B., & Barbot, B. (2019). Scoring divergent thinking tests: A review and systematic framework. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 13(2), 144. [Google Scholar](#)
- [55] Kaaro, A. (2025). Kaaro Innovation Canvas: Evaluating and developing corporate innovation capabilities. [Google Scholar](#)
- [56] Said, J., Halim, H. A., Yusuf, S. N. S., & Smith, M. (2014). A comparative study of successful male and female entrepreneurs: The case of the Selangor zakat board (SZB). *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(1), 125-135. [Google Scholar](#)
- [57] Ill, I. RESILIENCE AND DIGITALLY-ADVANCED ENTREPRENEURSHIP. [Google Scholar](#)

- [58] Festinger, D. S., Dugosh, K. L., Kirby, K. C., & Seymour, B. L. (2014). Contingency management for cocaine treatment: cash vs. vouchers. *Journal of substance abuse treatment*, 47(2), 168-174. [Google Scholar](#)
- [59] Ojasalo, J., & Ojasalo, K. (2018). Service logic business model canvas. *Journal of research in marketing and entrepreneurship*, 20(1), 70-98. [Google Scholar](#)
- [60] Freiberg, B., & Matz, S. C. (2023). Founder personality and entrepreneurial outcomes: A large-scale field study of technology startups. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(19), e2215829120. [Google Scholar](#)
- [61] Sebhatu, S. P., Enquist, B., & Edvardsson, B. (2021). Business transformation for a sustainable future. In *Business Transformation for a Sustainable Future* (pp. 1-12). Routledge. [Google Scholar](#)
- [62] McCarthy, P., Sammon, D., & Alhassan, I. (2022). Digital transformation leadership characteristics: A literature analysis. *Journal of Decision Systems*, 32(1), 79-109. [Google Scholar](#)
- [63] Müller, S. D., Konzag, H., Nielsen, J. A., & Sandholt, H. B. (2024). Digital transformation leadership competencies: A contingency approach. *International Journal of Information Management*, 75, 102734. [Google Scholar](#)
- [64] Weber, E., Krehl, E. H., & Büttgen, M. (2022). The digital transformation leadership framework: Conceptual and empirical insights into leadership roles in technology-driven business environments. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 16(1), 6-22. [Google Scholar](#)
- [65] Porfírio, J. A., Carrilho, T., Felício, J. A., & Jardim, J. (2021). Leadership characteristics and digital transformation. *Journal of Business Research*, 124, 610-619. [Google Scholar](#)
- [66] Philip, J. (2021). Viewing digital transformation through the lens of transformational leadership. *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 31(2), 114-129. [Google Scholar](#)
- [67] Ly, B. (2024). The interplay of digital transformational leadership, organizational agility, and digital transformation. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 15(1), 4408-4427. [Google Scholar](#)
- [68] Klein, M. (2020). Leadership characteristics in the era of digital transformation. *Business & Management Studies: An International Journal*, 8(1), 883-902. [Google Scholar](#)
- [69] AlNuaimi, B. K., Singh, S. K., Ren, S., Budhwar, P., & Vorobyev, D. (2022). Mastering digital transformation: The nexus between leadership, agility, and digital strategy. *Journal of business research*, 145, 636-648. [Google Scholar](#)
- [70] Sainger, G. (2018). Leadership in digital age: A study on the role of leader in this era of digital transformation. *International Journal on Leadership*, 6(1), 1. [Google Scholar](#)
- [71] McCarthy, P., Sammon, D., & Alhassan, I. (2024). The characteristics of digital transformation leadership: Theorizing the practitioner voice. *Business Horizons*, 67(4), 411-423. [Google Scholar](#)
- [72] Nambisan, S., Wright, M., & Feldman, M. (2019). The digital transformation of innovation and entrepreneurship: Progress, challenges and key themes. *Research policy*, 48(8), 103773. [Google Scholar](#)
- [73] Kannan-Narasimhan, R. P., Wang, R., & Zhu, P. (2021). Founder Imprinting: Innovation Performance Differences between Founders Versus Agent CEOs. Available at SSRN 3920312. [Google Scholar](#)
- [74] Chen, C., Pan, J., Liu, S., & Feng, T. (2023). Impact of digital capability on firm resilience: the moderating role of cooperation behaviour. *Business Process Management Journal*, 29(7), 2167-2190. [Google Scholar](#)

- [75] Kim, H. (2025). *Beyond Entertainment: Unveiling Digital Platform Strategic Implications for International Business Growth of Individual Entrepreneurs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina). [Google Scholar](#)
- [76] Persson, F., & Schreiber, J. (2025). The Effects Of Saas Implementations In Manufacturing Smes: A multiple-case study conducted in collaboration with SkyMaker. [Google Scholar](#)
- [77] Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications* (Vol. 6). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Google Scholar](#)
- [78] Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), 532-550. [Google Scholar](#)
- [79] Dwivedi, Y. K., Kshetri, N., Hughes, L., Slade, E. L., Jeyaraj, A., Kar, A. K., ... & Wright, R. (2023). "So what if ChatGPT wrote it?" Multidisciplinary perspectives on opportunities, challenges and implications of generative conversational AI for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management*, 71, 102642. [Google Scholar](#)
- [80] Van Dis, E. A., Bollen, J., Zuidema, W., Van Rooij, R., & Bockting, C. L. (2023). ChatGPT: five priorities for research. *Nature*, 614(7947), 224-226. [Google Scholar](#)
- [81] Aithal, P. S. (2023). How to create business value through technological innovations using ICCT underlying technologies. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML)*, 7(2), 232-292. [Google Scholar](#)
- [82] Helms, M. M., & Nixon, J. (2010). Journal of Strategy and Management. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 3(3), 215-251. [Google Scholar](#)
- [83] Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook. (No Title). [Google Scholar](#)
- [84] El-Awaisi, A., Wilby, K. J., Wilbur, K., El Hajj, M. S., Awaisu, A., & Paravattil, B. (2017). A Middle Eastern journey of integrating Interprofessional Education into the healthcare curriculum: a SWOC analysis. *BMC medical education*, 17(1), 15. [Google Scholar](#)
- [85] Indrasari, M. (2023). Shifting from SWOT to SWOC: A combination of strategic planning theory and financial strategy approaches for organizational sustainability performance. *Atestasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi*, 6(1), 36-52. [Google Scholar](#)
- [86] Noreen, K. N. K., Umar, M. U. M., & Sabir, S. A. S. S. A. (2021). SWOC analysis of e-learning educational services at Rawalpindi Medical University in the midst of COVID-19. *Journal of Rawalpindi Medical College*, 25(1). [Google Scholar](#)
- [87] Pires, C. (2023). A SWOT analysis of pharmacy students' perspectives on e-learning based on a narrative review. *Pharmacy*, 11(3), 89. [Google Scholar](#)
- [88] Ireland, R. D., & Hitt, M. A. (2005). Achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 19(4), 63-77.
- [89] Mumford, T. V., Campion, M. A., & Morgeson, F. P. (2007). The leadership skills strataplex: Leadership skill requirements across organizational levels. *The leadership quarterly*, 18(2), 154-166.
- [90] Hitt, M. A., Haynes, K. T., & Serpa, R. (2010). Strategic leadership for the 21st century. *Business Horizons*, 53(5), 437-444.
- [91] Finkelstein, S., Hambrick, D. C., & Cannella, A. A. (2009). *Strategic leadership: Theory and research on executives, top management teams, and boards*. Oxford University Press.
- [92] Aithal, P. S. (2017). ABCD analysis as research methodology in company case studies. *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences (IJMTS)*, 2(2), 40-54. [Google Scholar](#)

- [93] Shenoy, V., & Aithal, P. S. (2017). Quantitative ABCD Analysis of IEDRA Model of Placement Determination. *International Journal of Case Studies in Business, IT and Education (IJCSBE)*, 1(2), 103-113. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [94] She, Z., Liu, Y., & Damatoa, A. (2007). Combination of features from skin pattern and ABCD analysis for lesion classification. *Skin Research and Technology*, 13(1), 25-33. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [95] Kambali, U., Shailashri, V. T., & Panakaje, N. (2023). A Quantitative ABCD Analysis of Agricultural Stakeholders. *International Journal of Case Studies in Business, IT and Education (IJCSBE)*, 7(4), 1-32. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [96] Yusop, Z. (2018). PESTEL analysis. *Paper presented at COMRAP*, 34-39. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [97] Yüksel, I. (2012). Developing a multi-criteria decision-making model for PESTEL analysis. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(24), 52. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [98] Buye, R. (2021). Critical examination of the PESTEL Analysis Model. *Project: Action Research for Development*, 1-12. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [99] Song, J., Sun, Y., & Jin, L. (2017). PESTEL analysis of the development of the waste-to-energy incineration industry in China. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 80, 276-289. [Google Scholar↗](#)
- [100] Aithal, P. S. (2023). Anticipated attributes of Chief Executive Officers based on newly developed CEO matrix. *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 1-32. [Google Scholar↗](#)

\*\*\*\*\*