

## A STUDY TO THE ACTUAL STATE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME) IN SWITZERLAND

Claude Meier

Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration, Switzerland  
claude.meier@fhhwz.ch

Urs Jaeckli

Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration, Switzerland

### **Abstract:**

In this study, we evaluate the actual status of digital leadership in small and medium enterprises (SME) in Switzerland. Digital leadership is defined as a perspective on leadership held by leaders that is required to successfully encounter the challenges in the digital age. We were drawing on the theoretical concepts of shared, collaborative and transformational leadership to start to establish the categories of which digital leadership consists of. Based on these concepts, which all can support an integrated economy and more creativity, we advanced the establishment of the categories by conducting a two-stage Delphi study with 33 experts in leadership and digitalization. We then reduced and consolidated the set of the resulting categories and items by applying a factor analysis based on a pre-test with 125 participants. Definitive categories are, among others, Digital Education, Self-Organisation, Agility, Knowledge Exchange, Governance of Digital Activities.

For the main online survey, conducted in February and March 2018 with the software Unipark, we worked together with different leading professional associations like Swissmem (Swiss electrical and mechanical engineering industries), the Swiss Associations of Construction Builders and the Zurich Association of Employers of the Industry as distribution-partners. This allowed us to gain access to around 2'700 SMEs.

The preliminary results not only show the status of digital leadership in Swiss SMEs. They also show interesting and even some surprising correlations between the categories and among the different industries.

*Keywords: Digital leadership, digital education and governance, self-organisation, agility, online survey, Swiss SMEs*