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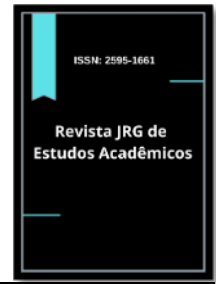
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### Challenges and strategies in managing remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce

Desafios e estratégias na gestão de equipes remotas e multiculturais no comércio eletrônico

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#### Abstract

This paper aims to explore the dynamics of virtual teams in e-commerce and their relationship with innovation, highlighting the factors that influence effective collaboration and the creation of innovative solutions in digital work environments. Through a literature review, studies on technology use, team diversity management, and the impacts of virtual communication on team performance and creativity were analyzed. Additionally, the role of leadership, knowledge integration, and collaborative practices as facilitators of innovation was investigated. This study contributes to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities of virtual teams in e-commerce, highlighting the impact of digital transformation and the pandemic on innovation and remote collaboration.

**Keywords:** Virtual teams; e-commerce; innovation and knowledge; leadership and collaboration; diversity; digital communication; performance.

#### Resumo

*Este artigo tem como objetivo explorar a dinâmica das equipes virtuais no comércio eletrônico e sua relação com a inovação, destacando os fatores que influenciam a colaboração efetiva e a criação de soluções inovadoras em ambientes digitais de trabalho. Por meio de uma revisão da literatura, foram analisados estudos sobre o uso de tecnologia, gestão da diversidade das equipes e os impactos da comunicação virtual no desempenho e na criatividade das equipes. Adicionalmente, investigou-se o papel da liderança, da integração do conhecimento e das práticas colaborativas como facilitadores da inovação. Este estudo contribui para a compreensão dos desafios e oportunidades das equipes virtuais no comércio eletrônico, ressaltando o impacto da transformação digital e da pandemia sobre a inovação e a colaboração remota.*

**Palavras-chave:** Equipes virtuais; comércio eletrônico; inovação e conhecimento; liderança e colaboração; diversidade; comunicação digital; desempenho.

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## 1. Introduction

The challenges and strategies in managing remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce have become central themes in today's business landscape, a sector that demands agility, innovation, and constant adaptation to global market changes. The transition to virtual work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the need for robust strategies to coordinate and optimize the performance of geographically distributed teams characterized by significant cultural diversity. Digital transformation in e-commerce requires agile, collaborative, and well-managed teams capable of addressing not only technical challenges but also cultural, communication, and strategic alignment barriers.

Studies such as those by Abhari, Pesavento, and Williams (2023) emphasize that the pandemic boosted the adoption of digital platforms and social media within organizations, fostering a new dynamic of collaboration among dispersed teams. The efficient use of communication technologies, combined with effective leadership strategies, can transform a group of remote employees into a highly productive, innovative, and agile team. However, managing multicultural teams goes beyond simply adopting technological tools; it requires a deep understanding of cultural differences and communication dynamics among team members.

Leadership plays a crucial role in this context, especially in e-commerce, where rapid innovation and continuous adaptation are critical success factors. Adamovic (2018) stresses that a management approach focused on employees and sensitive to cultural differences can be decisive for developing high-performance teams in virtual environments. Additionally, clear communication, the establishment of well-defined norms and expectations, and trust-building are fundamental aspects for the effective functioning of global teams (Eisenberg, Post & DiTomaso, 2019). In a virtual environment, where human interactions are mediated by technology, building trust and mutual understanding becomes even more challenging but is essential for effective collaborative work.

The e-commerce sector, by its dynamic and global nature, imposes additional challenges on team management. The constant adaptation to consumer demands, changes in purchasing behavior, and the pressure for continuous innovation make managing virtual teams even more complex. Batarseh, Daspit, and Usher (2018) highlight that collaboration is a critical factor for the success of global teams, especially in highly competitive and innovation-driven contexts. Functional diversity, the ability to absorb new information, and an aptitude for innovation are essential aspects of virtual team performance, and their successful integration can lead to creative and effective solutions for e-commerce challenges.

Multicultural teams, in turn, face specific challenges related to differences in values, communication styles, and work practices. For them to thrive, leaders must adopt management strategies that respect and integrate these differences while promoting a sense of unity and shared goals. According to Batarseh, Usher, and Daspit (2017a), effective cultural diversity management can significantly enhance innovation and adaptability essential factors for success in e-commerce. However, as pointed out by Derven (2016), the success of these teams depends on creating a collaborative environment, which can be achieved through adaptive leadership practices and the proper use of communication technologies.

To effectively manage remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce, it is crucial to adopt an integrated approach that balances technological and human aspects. This involves the strategic use of communication and collaboration tools, developing the necessary competencies for working in virtual environments, and

fostering an organizational culture that values diversity and promotes innovation. In this context, integrating different disciplines and creating innovative collaborative environments become key components for managing global teams (Ayoub, Abdallah & Suifan, 2017).

The success of managing remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce depends on organizations' ability to adopt a strategic approach that integrates technology, people management, and innovation. Effective communication, intercultural competency development, and the creation of a collaborative environment are essential factors for these teams to overcome the challenges of the global market. In this scenario, digital transformation and continuous innovation are not just competitive advantages but fundamental requirements for business sustainability and growth in the sector (Batarseh, Usher & Daspit, 2017).

Thus, this study aims to explore the main challenges faced by remote and multicultural teams in the e-commerce context, as well as the management strategies that can be adopted to ensure efficient and innovative performance. To this end, a literature review will be conducted to identify best practices in management, communication, and leadership for global virtual teams. Additionally, the study will examine how cultural diversity can be productively integrated into online work environments, highlighting the importance of organizational flexibility and innovation in a highly competitive and constantly evolving sector.

Finally, this paper aims to provide practical contributions for professionals and leaders working in remote and multicultural environments, offering insights and recommendations for building more cohesive, collaborative, and innovative teams. By adopting effective management strategies, these teams will be better prepared to overcome challenges and seize opportunities in the dynamic e-commerce sector. Efficient virtual team management not only strengthens organizations' competitiveness but also becomes a crucial factor for their growth and success in the globalized market.

## 2. Methods

The increasing digitalization and globalization of businesses have led companies across various sectors, such as e-commerce, to adopt remote and multicultural teams to explore new markets, enhance innovation, and optimize processes. However, effectively managing these teams presents significant challenges, including overcoming cultural barriers, managing long-distance communication, and developing an organizational culture that fosters collaboration. This study aims to explore these challenges and the strategies adopted by e-commerce companies to efficiently manage their teams.

The research will be based on a qualitative exploratory approach, as it seeks to deeply understand the challenges faced and the strategies adopted by managers in the context of remote and multicultural teams, using a combination of literature review and case studies.

### 2.1 Type of Research

The research will be qualitative and exploratory, with an emphasis on multiple case studies. The main objective is to investigate, through interviews with e-commerce managers, how they address the challenges of managing multicultural and remote teams and the strategies they adopt to ensure these teams' effectiveness. To achieve this, primary data collection will be conducted, complemented by a literature review.

## 2.2 Literature Review

The literature review will be the first step of the methodology, focusing on scientific articles, case studies, books, and company reports that discuss the management of remote and multicultural teams, as well as the technologies and tools used to improve collaboration and communication. The literature will be consulted to identify the main challenges and best practices in managing multicultural teams in the e-commerce context, especially in the post-pandemic era, when the remote model has become one of the most significant.

Some key references for this stage include:

- **Abhari et al. (2023)**, who discuss the use of enterprise social media to promote innovation and remote collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing an important perspective on team adaptation and support during crises.
- **Adamovic (2018)**, who analyzes the management of global virtual teams with a focus on human resource management, offering insights into methods for overcoming collaboration and communication challenges in multicultural teams.
- **Glória Júnior and Chaves (2024)**, who highlight the specific challenges of managing virtual teams in innovation projects and can provide applicable insights for the e-commerce context.
- **Batarseh, Daspit, and Usher (2017)**, who discuss collaboration capabilities in virtual teams, emphasizing functional diversity and innovation crucial elements for understanding how multicultural teams can generate innovative solutions in a digital environment.

## 2.3 Field Research (Case Study)

The field research will be conducted through case studies in e-commerce companies that operate with remote and multicultural teams. Three medium to large-sized companies, operating in both national and international markets, will be selected. These companies must have experience managing culturally diverse teams and utilize digital platforms to facilitate communication and collaboration.

### 2.3.1 Selection of Companies

The selection of companies will be done based on convenience, prioritizing those with teams composed of members from different countries and significant experience working remotely. The chosen companies should have demonstrated an effective adaptation to remote work and showcase best practices regarding diversity management and innovation within their teams.

### 2.3.2 Data Collection

Data collection will be carried out through semi-structured interviews with team managers and members from different departments (such as Human Resources, Technology, and Marketing) to understand how management, communication, and innovation practices are structured within the remote and multicultural work context.

The interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed qualitatively. Additionally, a questionnaire will be used to gather further information on collaboration tools, interaction frequency, and the use of communication technologies.

The data analysis will be based on content analysis techniques, allowing for the identification of patterns, recurring challenges, and strategies used by companies.

### 2.3.3 Data Analysis:

After data collection, content analysis of the interviews will be conducted to identify:

**Challenges faced:** How companies deal with intercultural communication, the lack of face-to-face interaction, and time zone differences.

- **Strategies adopted:** Which tools and practices have been most effective in improving collaboration among team members from different countries and cultures.
- **Impact on teams:** How these strategies influence team performance, as well as their capacity for innovation and adaptation.

### 2.3.4 Expected Results

It is expected that companies will reveal how the integration of communication technologies and project management tools, such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Trello, has been fundamental in maintaining productivity and cohesion among teams from different cultures. Additionally, the interviews are expected to show that creating an inclusive work environment and promoting an organizational culture based on values such as trust, respect, and flexibility are crucial for the success of remote teams in e-commerce.

## 3. References

The research will be based on a comprehensive set of academic and practical sources. Some of the key references already listed, such as those by **Batarseh et al. (2017)** and **Glória Júnior and Chaves (2024)**, will provide a solid foundation for understanding the challenges and strategies in managing remote and multicultural teams. The contributions of these studies, along with other reviewed articles, such as those by **Derven (2016)** and **Ayoub et al. (2017)**, will offer deep insights for analyzing and interpreting the data collected from e-commerce companies.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The management of remote and multicultural teams in the e-commerce context presents several challenges that require effective strategies to ensure efficient collaboration, innovation, and organizational performance. This chapter explores the key findings of the study regarding the challenges and strategies adopted by e-commerce companies to manage teams with members located in different countries and cultures, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era. Based on a detailed analysis of the referenced studies, it was observed that the use of digital communication tools, adaptive leadership practices, and the promotion of an inclusive organizational climate are some of the key strategies to overcome these difficulties.

### Challenges in Managing Remote and Multicultural Teams

Remote and multicultural teams face significant challenges that impact both communication and productivity. One of the main obstacles identified was the lack of temporal synchronization, which results in difficulties in coordination and effective decision-making. The geographical dispersion of team members can make communication less efficient and increase the complexity of managing activities and tasks, as time zone differences require flexibility from all involved (Batarseh, Usher, & Daspit, 2017b). According to Adamovic (2018), globally distributed virtual teams often face cultural barriers that can hinder mutual understanding and collaboration.



Another relevant challenge identified is the management of expectations and the integration of members from different cultures. Since multicultural teams involve people with diverse backgrounds, values, and communication styles, conflict management and trust-building among members become essential aspects of successful collaborative work. The research by **Glória Júnior and Chaves (2024)** suggests that managing multicultural teams requires a more sensitive and personalized approach to respecting and integrating cultural differences so that they do not become barriers but rather sources of innovation.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified many of these challenges, as evidenced by Abhari, Pesavento, and Williams (2023), who highlight the need for rapid adaptation to digital tools to maintain team communication and engagement. Physical distancing required new forms of leadership and team management, with organizations being forced to adopt remote work practices at an accelerated pace. The sudden shift to the digital environment underscored the importance of having leaders prepared to handle team emotions and well-being while efficiently managing remote work.

### **Effective Management Strategies for Remote and Multicultural Teams**

To address these challenges, e-commerce companies have adopted various strategies, particularly the use of advanced communication technologies such as video conferencing platforms and project management tools that facilitate collaboration and coordination among dispersed team members (Ayoub, Abdallah, & Suifan, 2017). Promoting a clear and effective communication environment has been identified as one of the most relevant strategies for overcoming the lack of physical proximity. Constant and transparent communication among team members not only enables task coordination but also strengthens trust, an essential element for the success of multicultural teams (Eisenberg, Post, & DiTomaso, 2019).

Additionally, the development of leaders capable of implementing the "e-leadership" strategy has been crucial to the success of remote teams. The concept of e-leadership involves adapting traditional leadership skills to the virtual environment, focusing on digital communication, conflict management, and fostering a work environment that promotes innovation and creativity (Doghri, Horchani, & Mouelhi, 2021). According to Derven (2016), leadership in the virtual context requires skills such as empathy, performance management, and the ability to create a collaborative climate, even when team members are geographically distant.

The promotion of an inclusive organizational climate and continuous training have also been effective approaches to ensuring the success of multicultural teams. Batarseh et al. (2017a) emphasize that cultural diversity can be a source of innovation, but for this to happen, it is necessary to create a culture of acceptance and respect for differences. Training teams to address cultural diversity issues and promote effective intercultural communication has proven to be an important strategy for conflict resolution and integrating different perspectives. In this context, it is essential for e-commerce organizations to develop inclusion policies that meet the specific needs of each culture represented within the team.

Another strategy adopted by e-commerce companies is the promotion of workplace flexibility. Flexibility, both in work schedules and in productivity expectations, is a way to respect cultural and time zone differences. This type of flexibility helps team members better balance professional and personal demands, promoting well-being and job satisfaction. Chamakiotis et al. (2020) suggest that temporal flexibility also

enhances productivity and innovation in virtual teams, as it allows team members to contribute at their most productive times and under the most favorable conditions.

### **Impacts of Managing Remote and Multicultural Teams on Organizational Performance**

The strategies adopted for managing remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce have shown positive results in terms of organizational performance. Companies' ability to adapt to the virtual environment and cultural diversity has led to significant increases in innovation and productivity. According to Dossick, Osburn, and Neff (2019), flexibility, the use of appropriate technologies, and adaptive leadership have been key factors in maintaining effective communication and driving innovation in global teams.

However, successfully implementing these strategies requires a holistic and integrative organizational vision. Companies must ensure that the technological tools adopted are suitable for collaborative work and that virtual leadership is trained to handle the complexities of managing multicultural teams. As stated by Grözinger et al. (2020), the selection of communication tools should be made strategically, considering the specific needs of each team and the cultural characteristics of its members.

Managing remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce requires the adoption of innovative and flexible strategies that meet both team members' needs and organizational objectives. Research has shown that the use of communication technologies, adaptive leadership practices, and the promotion of an inclusive organizational climate are essential factors for the success of these teams. However, challenges related to cultural diversity, task coordination, and effective communication must be continuously addressed by companies, which must adapt and evolve according to the demands of an increasingly globalized and dynamic work environment.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The management of remote and multicultural teams in the e-commerce context presents unique challenges that require a strategic and innovative approach. Globalization and the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation, prompting many companies to adopt remote work. However, this model has highlighted difficulties inherent in coordinating dispersed teams, marked by cultural differences and distinct time zones. The literature suggests that effective management depends on implementing strategies that promote open communication, adaptive leadership, and the use of innovative technologies to facilitate collaboration and stimulate innovation (Abhari, Pesavento & Williams, 2023; Batarseh, Dasmit & Usher, 2018).

Communication is one of the fundamental pillars of virtual team management. Studies such as those by Eisenberg, Post, and DiTomaso (2019) emphasize its role in overcoming geographical barriers, ensuring cohesion and alignment among team members. The use of collaboration tools and advanced technologies enables real-time interactions, boosting efficiency and productivity. However, the absence of in-person contact can weaken interpersonal relationships, reducing trust and the sense of belonging. In this context, building and maintaining trust becomes essential, especially in multicultural teams. To achieve this, leaders must adopt strategies that strengthen team bonds, fostering a cohesive and collaborative work environment (Adamovic, 2018).

Another significant challenge in managing remote and multicultural teams is cultural diversity. While it is a source of innovation and creativity, diversity can also lead to communication conflicts and value differences, making teamwork more complex. Studies such as those by Batarseh, Usher, and Daspit (2017b) suggest that absorption capacity and strategic diversity management are key factors for the success of virtual teams. In this sense, intercultural training emerges as an essential strategy to promote effective integration, minimize misunderstandings, and strengthen collaboration.

Beyond diversity, leadership plays a crucial role in managing virtual and multicultural teams. The concept of **e-leadership** has gained prominence by emphasizing the need for adaptive leadership capable of addressing the challenges of remote work. Effective leaders in this context are those who manage team performance, set clear goals, provide continuous feedback, and maintain team motivation despite physical distance (Glória Júnior & Chaves, 2024). Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership has proven particularly effective in virtual environments, as it inspires and develops employees, encouraging autonomy and innovation (Buisine & Guegan, 2019).

Innovation is a key factor for the success of remote teams in e-commerce. Collaboration plays a central role in this process, and well-managed virtual teams can generate innovative solutions more quickly than traditional teams. The use of digital technologies, such as brainstorming platforms and project management software, facilitates idea exchange and the execution of innovative projects in real time (Bosch-Sijtsema & Haapamäki, 2014). Moreover, the flexibility of virtual teams allows for a rapid adaptation to market changes a crucial advantage in e-commerce, where consumer demands constantly evolve, and competition is intense.

The integration of technology and the selection of appropriate tools are fundamental strategies for optimizing collaboration and productivity. Resources such as video conferencing, project management platforms, and instant messaging apps are indispensable for maintaining smooth communication and ensuring that all team members are aligned with the company's objectives (Derven, 2016). More than just a means of communication, technology creates an environment conducive to innovation, allowing teams to explore new approaches to solving challenges and improving processes.

However, the absence of an effective management structure can compromise the performance of remote teams. The lack of a strong organizational culture, combined with physical distance, can lead to disconnection and disengagement. To mitigate these risks, leadership must establish clear communication norms, ensure that everyone has access to the same information, and foster an environment of constructive feedback exchange. Transparency and the definition of clear expectations are essential to keeping employees motivated and engaged, strengthening team cohesion.

In the context of e-commerce, remote and multicultural teams play an essential role in continuous innovation, particularly in digital marketing, product development, and customer service. To ensure their success, it is crucial to adopt a strategic approach that considers cultural differences, leverages the potential of digital technologies, and promotes a collaborative and innovative environment (Batarseh, Usher & Daspit, 2017a). Task management flexibility, clear goal setting, and encouragement of creativity are essential practices for maximizing the performance of these teams.



The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the importance of remote teams while also highlighting the challenges of this work model. The study by Abhari, Pesavento, and Williams (2023) emphasizes how the use of enterprise social media and other collaborative tools became indispensable for ensuring business continuity and driving innovation during this period. The rapid adaptation to new technologies, combined with the development of an organizational culture that values remote work, is an essential strategy for the success of multicultural teams in e-commerce.

In summary, the effective management of remote and multicultural teams in e-commerce requires an integrated approach, combining strategic communication, adaptive leadership, and innovative technologies. When well managed, cultural diversity drives innovation and high performance. This study reinforces that overcoming the challenges of remote work depends on strategies that strengthen collaboration, trust, and organizational flexibility. Companies that adopt these practices can transform diversity and remote work into competitive advantages, enhancing their innovation and growth in the global market.

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