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Systematic Literature Review of Leadership Theories and Styles in Indonesian Organizational Contexts

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Abstract

In response to rapid organizational change and increasing environmental complexity, leadership has become a critical factor in determining organizational effectiveness. This study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine the dynamics of leadership theories within the context of Indonesian organizations, a setting characterized by distinctive cultural, social, and institutional values. The review was carried out following a structured SLR procedure consisting of planning, identification, screening, eligibility, and synthesis stages. Articles were selected based on explicit inclusion criteria, including peer-reviewed journal publications, empirical studies focusing on leadership in Indonesian organizational contexts, publications in English or Indonesian, and studies published within a defined time frame. A total of selected studies were systematically analyzed to identify dominant leadership styles, key influencing factors, and their impacts on organizational outcomes such as employee performance, motivation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. The findings indicate that transformational, transactional, and culturally embedded leadership styles are most prevalent, with cultural values, organizational structure, and leader-follower relationships playing significant roles. This study contributes by providing an integrative mapping of leadership theories in Indonesia, highlighting contextual challenges and opportunities, and offering clear directions for future research on culturally adaptive and evidence-based leadership development in Indonesian organizations.

Keywords

Employee Performance, Leadership Style, Leadership Theory, Organizations, Systematic Literature Review.

1. Introduction

Effective leadership is a key foundation for organizational success in this dynamic global era. Visionary and adaptive leaders are able to inspire teams, drive innovation, and achieve strategic goals, ultimately determining an organization's competitiveness and sustainability (Bass, 1990). In an increasingly complex and competitive business context, the ability to lead effectively becomes increasingly crucial. Leadership theory has undergone significant evolution over the decades, from a focus on the personal traits of leaders (trait theories) to consideration of situational and behavioral factors (contingency and behavioral theories) (Yukl, 2012). This development reflects efforts to understand the complexity of leadership and identify the most effective approaches in various contexts. However, the multitude of existing theories, such as transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, and leader-member exchange theories, can be confusing for practitioners and researchers seeking to comprehensively understand the dynamics of leadership.

In the modern era, characterized by rapid technological change, globalization, and economic uncertainty, leaders face increasingly complex challenges. They are required to adapt quickly, innovate continuously, and effectively manage diverse teams (Northouse, 2025). Therefore, a thorough understanding of leadership theories and how these theories can be applied in practice is crucial. Despite the extensive body of leadership research, existing studies remain fragmented, often focusing on single leadership theories, specific sectors, or Western organizational contexts. Moreover, there is limited integrative evidence that systematically compares and synthesizes diverse leadership theories to explain their dynamics and effectiveness across varying organizational settings. This fragmentation creates a research gap in terms of comprehensive theoretical integration and empirical generalization, particularly for informing both theory development and practical leadership application.

Systematic Literature Reviews (SLRs) are needed to synthesize various leadership theories and provide a more comprehensive picture of leadership dynamics. Judge et al. (2004) focus on specific theories, a lack of generalizability of findings, or inconsistent results. SLRs can address these limitations by combining empirical evidence from multiple studies and identifying factors that moderate the relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes. It is anticipated that this research will significantly advance leadership theory and practical leadership. Theoretically, this study will provide a comprehensive synthesis of leadership theories that can serve as a basis for developing more effective and relevant leadership models. Practically, the findings of this study can assist organizational leaders and management consultants in selecting and implementing leadership styles that best suit their organizational contexts.

This paper is organized as follows: the research techniques employed in the SLR will be explained in the part that follows this introduction. The outcomes will then be shown and examined. Lastly, a discussion and conclusion will analyze the findings' implications and offer suggestions for further study. The aim of this study is to systematically review and synthesize the existing literature on leadership theories by integrating empirical findings across studies, identifying dominant leadership approaches, key influencing factors, and their impacts on organizational outcomes, as well as highlighting research trends, limitations, and directions for future leadership research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Leadership Style

Leadership theory has undergone substantial evolution, reflecting the increasing complexity of modern organizational challenges and the diverse contexts in which leaders operate. Contemporary leadership research emphasizes the multidimensional nature of leadership, moving beyond traditional trait-based approaches toward more dynamic and contextual frameworks. Recent scholarly work highlights inclusive leadership as a critical paradigm for modern organizations characterized by demographic diversity, multicultural workforces, and heightened social justice awareness (Nishi & Leroy, 2022). Inclusive leadership encompasses three core dimensions: openness, accessibility, and availability, which collectively create environments where individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully regardless of background or identity (Ferdman, 2017; Laksmita & Perdhana, 2024).

The evolution of leadership research from 2020 to 2025 demonstrates significant shifts in theoretical emphasis. Early studies during this period focused primarily on psychological outcomes such as employee well-being and affective commitment, particularly in response to post-pandemic organizational challenges. Subsequently, research attention shifted toward individual and team mechanisms including self-efficacy, innovative work behavior, and belongingness (Bahri et al., 2025). More recently, leadership scholarship has expanded to encompass transformational leadership's impact on employee performance through mediating variables such as job satisfaction, with empirical evidence demonstrating that transformational leadership dimensions, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, significantly enhance organizational outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Young et al., 2021). Contemporary leadership theory emphasizes values-based approaches, including authentic, ethical, and servant leadership, with Liden et al. (2025) highlighting current trends such as examining the dark side of seemingly positive leadership approaches, the critical importance of followership, and integrating leader power and authority with established leadership frameworks

2.2. Organizational Environment

The organizational context serves as a fundamental moderating variable that profoundly influences leadership effectiveness and determines the relationship between leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes. Contemporary research emphasizes that organizational culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, and behavioral norms that guide organizational members' actions and significantly impact workplace dynamics, employee interactions, and management practices. Recent systematic reviews identify innovation, teamwork, result orientation, involvement, and power distance as the most frequently explored dimensions within organizational culture research, with cultural orientations categorized into workplace, business, system, and group orientations (Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024).

The relationship between organizational culture and employee performance has garnered considerable scholarly attention, with research demonstrating that key cultural elements including recruitment culture, team orientation, career development, and communication practices significantly influence employee productivity and performance (Anekwe & Igwe, 2025). Empirical findings reveal that recruitment culture exhibits the strongest positive correlation with productivity, with employee involvement in decision-making and alignment with organizational mission playing pivotal roles in enhancing job performance and retention. Organizations that strategically adjust their cultures to enhance organizational

citizenship behaviors achieve sustainable business growth, affecting both employee and organizational performance (Huang et al., 2020; Tagliabue et al., 2020).

In the digital transformation era, organizational context extends to encompass digital capabilities and technological readiness as critical contextual factors. Research indicates that organizational culture types particularly adhocracy culture, followed by clan, market, and hierarchy cultures positively influence digital transforming capability, which subsequently impacts product innovation in terms of newness, meaningfulness, and performance (Cao et al., 2025). Digital transformation success in organizations depends not merely on technological access but significantly on the interaction between leadership styles and organizational culture (Musaigwa & Kalitanyi, 2024). Leaders with digital literacy and strategic vision who integrate digital capabilities into organizational culture create environments conducive to continuous learning, innovation, and competitive advantage (Lin, 2024). Furthermore, cross-cultural dimensions such as collectivism versus individualism shape how leaders implement high-performance practices, with collectivist cultures emphasizing team cohesion and consensus-building while individualist cultures focus on personal accountability and innovation.

3. Methods

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to collect and analyze data. The data sources used were electronic journal literature with an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) that had been published online and had an E-ISSN code. The selected articles were those indexed by Sintia 1, 2, or 3. The search process was conducted through Google Scholar with a focus on leadership theory, and from this search, 20 articles were obtained that met the criteria as research samples.

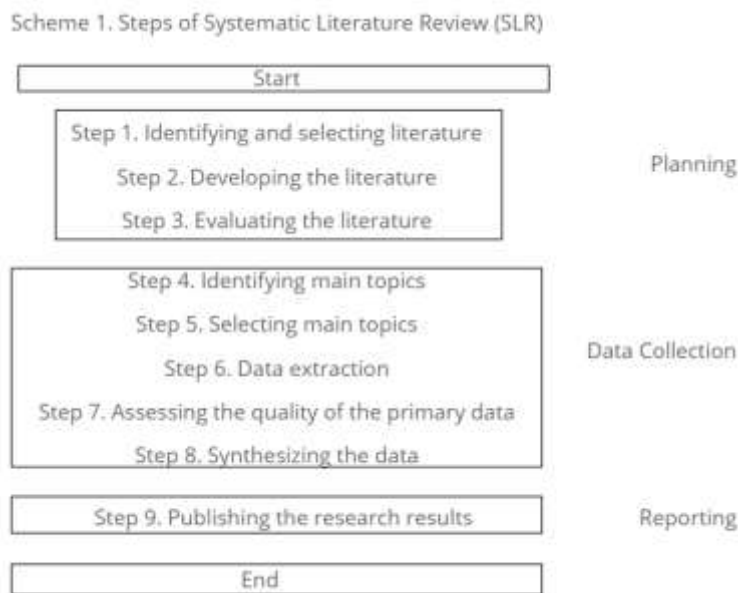


Figure 1. Step of Systematic Literature Review

Based on Figure 1, three interconnected stages were employed to conduct the Systematic Literature Review (SLR): planning, implementation, and reporting. The planning stage identified the need for a systematic review and established procedures to minimize researcher bias. The implementation stage involved formulating research questions, developing a comprehensive search strategy, applying explicit

inclusion and exclusion criteria, assessing study quality, and extracting and synthesizing relevant data. The reporting stage focused on summarizing the findings, discussing their implications, and drawing evidence-based conclusions.

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to explore leadership as a contextual, integrative, and value-driven phenomenon across various educational and organizational settings in Indonesia. The research questions collectively address diverse leadership aspects, including school principals' ability to integrate managerial, transformational, transactional, instructional, and positive leadership styles to shape school climate, enhance teacher motivation, and improve student achievement. In higher education, leadership dynamics are examined through symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy theories to understand the construction of professional identity and collaborative cultures.

Beyond education, the review covers transformational leadership in Indonesian startups, emphasizing its dimensions—inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—in fostering employee creativity and innovation, mediated by organizational culture and work environment. In the business and SME sectors, digital leadership is highlighted for driving innovative performance and competitive advantage through digital capabilities. Leadership is also explored from relational and ethical perspectives (servant leadership and Team Member Exchange), culturally embedded models in Bali (Tri Hita Karana and Sad Warnaning Rajaniti), participatory leadership in Islamic schools, as well as spiritual and Asian leadership emphasizing harmony, spirituality, and adaptation to millennial values.

Drawing on 20 scientific articles (2015–2025) indexed in Scopus and SINTA (levels 1–3), the reviewed studies employ varied methods, including literature reviews, quantitative analyses (SEM-PLS, bibliometrics), and qualitative approaches (interviews, social analysis). The SLR process involved database selection, search string formulation using Boolean operators, and strict inclusion/exclusion criteria to ensure relevance, methodological quality, and full-text accessibility.

4. Results

This study is a systematic literature review aimed at comprehensively analyzing empirical studies on leadership published between 2015 and 2025. The primary focus is to identify and synthesize findings related to leadership styles, their influence on organizational variables, and the specific contexts in which they are implemented. Using data from 20 scientific articles indexed in the Scopus and SINTA databases, this study seeks to map current research trends, identify knowledge gaps, and provide directions for future research in the field of leadership.

The analysis was conducted by grouping articles based on research topic, methodology used, and journal ranking (SINTA). Research topics include leadership styles (transformational, participatory, instructional, spiritual, and digital), the influence of leadership on performance and motivation, leadership in an Islamic context, and organizational and management theory.

The identified research methodologies include quantitative approaches (SEM-PLS, GSCA SEM, path analysis), qualitative approaches (case studies, content analysis), and literature reviews and bibliometrics. The results of this analysis are expected to provide in-depth insights into the effectiveness of various leadership styles in different contexts, as well as identify contingency factors that moderate the relationship between leadership and organizational outcomes. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify potential publication bias and methodological limitations in the existing literature, thereby providing recommendations for more rigorous future research.

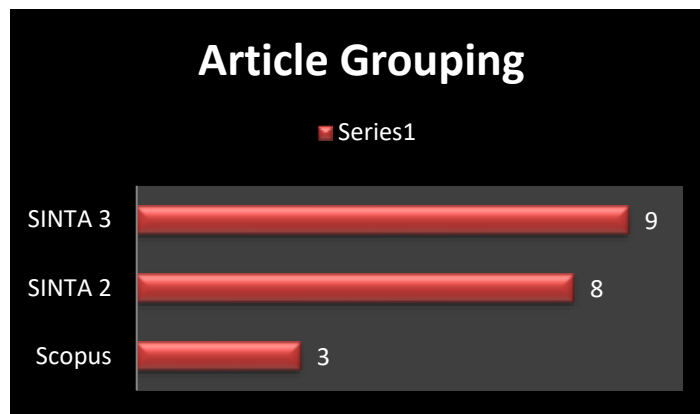


Figure 2. Article Grouping

Based on Figure 2, this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) examines 20 articles analyzing leadership theory: a literature review to understand leadership dynamics. A comprehensive literature review of various scholarly articles reveals a broad spectrum of leadership and management aspects relevant to various organizational contexts.

A study by Gaol (2017) identified appropriate leadership styles for principals, including managerial, transformational, transactional, instructional, and positive. An effective principal's leadership style involves a combination of managerial, transformational, transactional, instructional, and positive approaches, which must be tailored to the school's goals. Indonesia has a lot of issues with schooling. The primary issue stems from principals' poor management skills. This has to do with leadership style. The purpose of this study is to investigate leadership styles in the field of education and to talk about how principals should implement these styles in classrooms. Principals can use a variety of effective leadership philosophies, including management leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, instructional leadership, and positive leadership. In order to accomplish school objectives, principals must be able to integrate and contextualize leadership styles in addition to using them when managing schools. According to Wahyudin (2016), who analyzed higher education leadership through the lens of symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy theory, highlighting the importance of roles and social interactions. This study discusses higher education leadership from the perspective of interactionism theory. Dramaturgy understands that in interactions between humans, there are agreed-upon behavioral agreements that can lead to the ultimate goal of the intended social interaction. Research by Zaluchu (2018) measured leaders' responses to leadership tests based on Frank Damazio's theory, focusing on Christian leadership graduate students. Leaders are not born but made. God uses a number of tests to shape leaders. The purpose of these tests, besides equipping them, is to refine their calling, train their skills, and make them dependent on God.

Sahana (2018) argues that the transformational theory of Islamic educational leadership emphasizes the importance of visionary educational leaders who are capable of making transformational changes in building the quality of Islamic educational institutions. The most crucial role is that of a leader, who is in charge of defining the organization and guiding its members toward their objectives. Furthermore, an organization will stagnate and be unable to compete in the current period if its leaders are incapable of pushing it. In order to be considered a visionary leader who can see far into the future, the ideal educational leader must be able to persuade the members they lead to realize a shared dream in the form of their organizational vision. They must also be able to make organizational changes based on careful analyses within the framework of building and developing the quality of

educational institutions in order to be considered a transformational leader. Muna (2020) examines the existence of women in leadership from a Qur'anic perspective using Muhammad Syahrur's theory of the limits of God's law (Ḥudūd). Discussions about women's presence in public spaces remain controversial. This is due to the numerous discourses circulating in society. These discourses influence how individuals view women in public spaces, particularly those occupying leadership positions.

A study by Fradito et al. (2025) examined the application of Systems and Contingency Organization Theory in Islamic educational management. Systems theory emphasizes synergy among interdependent organizational elements, such as human resources, technology, and work processes, to achieve organizational effectiveness, while contingency theory highlights the need for adaptive leadership and strategic adjustments in response to dynamic environmental conditions. The findings indicate that integrating both theories enhances organizational effectiveness by fostering flexible, responsive, and adaptive structures. Moreover, their application strengthens the integration of managerial and spiritual values, resulting in a holistic educational management model that supports organizational performance and long-term sustainability.

Research by Santoso (2019) explores Asian leadership theories by contrasting them with Western leadership models and emphasizing the influence of local culture. The study questions the universality of Western leadership theories and highlights how Asian leadership philosophies are shaped by cultural values that prioritize harmony, stability, and collective processes within formal and informal social institutions. Leadership effectiveness in the Asian context is defined by the ability to maintain social balance rather than to compete for resources, as emphasized in Western leadership approaches, which tend to be more mechanical, formal, and transactional. The findings suggest that both Asian and Western leadership theories share a common emphasis on contextual fit, aligning with the contingency approach. However, the study also notes that globalization has reinforced Western dominance in leadership discourse, leading to the marginalization of indigenous Asian leadership concepts in contemporary society.

A study by Putriastuti and Stasi (2019) examines leadership philosophies suitable for managing millennials, who now constitute the majority of the global workforce. Addressing the limited research that specifically considers millennials' work values, the study conducts a literature review of leading leadership journals to develop a more comprehensive leadership framework from the millennial perspective. The findings identify five thematic leadership clusters: neo-charismatic leadership, leadership and information processing, social exchange/relational leadership, ethical or moral leadership, and e-leadership, each with distinct strengths and limitations. The study concludes that no single leadership paradigm is sufficient for leading millennials, recommending instead a flexible and integrative leadership approach that combines elements from multiple leadership philosophies to accommodate generational diversity.

Farahdiba et al. (2022) examined employee creativity in Indonesian startups by focusing on intrinsic motivation and transformational leadership. Using a quantitative approach with Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis through SmartPLS, the study involved 101 startup employees with less than one year of tenure. The findings indicate that all dimensions of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration have a positive and significant effect on employee creativity. However, the physical work environment did not moderate the relationship between transformational leadership dimensions and creativity. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on leadership-driven creativity in

Indonesian startups and offers practical insights for managers to enhance employee creativity through effective transformational leadership.

Research by Yudha (2023) examined the influence of opinion leadership, parasocial relationships, and influencer credibility on consumer purchase intentions. Using a survey of 206 followers of food vlogger influencers and GSCA-SEM analysis with mediation testing, the study found that opinion leadership and parasocial relationships positively affect purchase intentions. Attractiveness and trustworthiness also indirectly increase purchase intentions through parasocial relationships, while expertise shows no significant direct or indirect effect. Grounded in source effect theory, this study contributes to influencer marketing literature and suggests that marketers should prioritize influencers with strong opinion leadership and relational bonds with their audiences to enhance promotional effectiveness.

A Study by Aisyah et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analytic study examining the relationship between Servant Leadership (SL) and Team Member Exchange (TMX) in improving performance. Using a meta-analysis of empirical studies identified through Google and ResearchGate with leadership-related keywords, the study synthesized findings that focus on SL and TMX as interrelated concepts. The results highlight that Servant Leadership strengthens the quality of Team Member Exchange, which in turn contributes positively to individual and organizational performance. This study provides a clearer understanding of the mechanisms and conditions underlying the SL–TMX relationship and offers practical insights for organizations in designing leadership strategies, as well as recommendations for future research..

Kusumawati et al. (2024) investigated the influence of good corporate governance (GCG), Tri Hita Karana (THK) organizational culture, and Sad Warnaning Rajaniti leadership on the performance of Village Credit Institutions (LPD) in Bali. Using SEM-PLS analysis on data from 315 LPD heads selected through stratified random sampling, the study found that LPD performance is significantly enhanced by improvements in GCG, encompassing both Sekala (tangible) and Niskala (intangible) dimensions. The results also show that THK cultural values Parahyangan, Pawongan, and Palemahan along with Sad Warnaning Rajaniti leadership, positively affect performance and act as effective moderating variables. These findings contribute to accounting and management literature by integrating governance, culturally rooted leadership, and organizational culture, while offering practical insights for strengthening LPD governance and leadership practices in Bali.

Royani et al. (2024) examined the effectiveness of participatory leadership in improving teacher performance at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Hidayah Serang. Using a qualitative approach based on interviews and social analysis, the study found that participatory leadership practiced by the principal significantly enhanced teacher performance. This improvement was reflected in increased teacher involvement, stronger participation in institutional programs, and more systematic planning. The study also provides a theoretical framework for implementing participatory leadership, highlighting key elements such as participatory dynamics, inclusive decision-making, conflict management, active communication, and responsiveness to teacher availability, making it a useful reference for educational leadership practice.

Windiana et al. (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis of participatory leadership research in education from 1926 to 2023 using data from the Scopus database. Analyzing 850 publications with visualization tools in R Studio and VOSviewer, the study examined research growth, geographical distribution, and thematic trends. The findings show that North America and Europe dominate scholarly contributions, while countries such as Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Indonesia, and Canada exhibit varied publication trajectories. The results also indicate that high publication productivity does not necessarily

correspond to high citation impact, highlighting the complex relationship between quantity and relevance. Overall, the study reveals a strong upward trend in participatory leadership research particularly between 2021 and 2023 demonstrating its sustained relevance, adaptability, and responsiveness to contemporary educational issues.

Putra et al. (2024) examined the influence of digital leadership on the competitive advantage of SMEs through innovative performance. Grounded in upper echelon theory, the study surveyed 113 SME owners and managers across various industries in Indonesia and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling with AMOS. The findings confirm that digital leadership plays a critical role in enhancing innovative performance, which in turn drives SMEs' competitive advantage. Despite using a cross-sectional design and self-report questionnaires, the study provides important insights into how leadership in the digital era can help SMEs adapt to technological change and sustain competitiveness.

Banjarnahor et al. (2025) conducted a systematic literature review using the PRISMA approach to examine the influence of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee work motivation. Analyzing 61 Scopus-indexed articles published between 2014 and 2024, the study found that transformational leadership effectively enhances both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by articulating a clear vision, empowering employees, and fostering emotional engagement. In addition, a strong organizational culture reinforces accountability, collaboration, and recognition, thereby strengthening motivational outcomes. The review highlights the synergistic interaction between leadership and culture in driving motivation, emphasizing the critical role of intrinsic motivation for innovation and long-term sustainability while recognizing the continued importance of extrinsic motivation for short-term performance. These findings underscore the influence of cultural context on leadership effectiveness and provide both theoretical integration and practical guidance for managers in aligning leadership strategies with organizational values.

A Study by Wahab and Dikuraisyin (2024) explored the concept of auditor independence through the leadership perspective of Umar bin Khattab, the second caliph in Islamic history. Using a qualitative biographical chronicle method, the study highlights that Umar's leadership success in economic reform and public welfare was rooted in his knowledge, *ijtihad*, and disciplined managerial system, particularly in managing and supervising state finances. His policies across political, social, and educational economic domains reflected strong principles of Islamic governance, emphasizing accountability, justice, and integrity. The study concludes that Umar bin Khattab's leadership provides a normative and ethical foundation for understanding auditor independence within an Islamic governance framework, despite differences from earlier historical contexts.

Margaretta and Isnaeni (2020). analyzing how the Theory of Planned Behavior-based instructional leadership affects the student accomplishment index. The Head of the Study Program implements instructional leadership for one semester using a quantitative approach utilizing a pre-experimental design and a one-group pre-post test type. GPA is assessed by observations and GPA transcript values. A total sampling technique, 63 students in the first semester, is used in the sampling design. A significant value of $p = 0.000$ on student GPA was derived from the study's paired t-test results. This study concludes that using Instructional Leadership in conjunction with the TPB strategy can raise student GPA.

Research by Hariri et al. (2025) reviews the theory and practice of spiritual leadership in schools based on ten studies published between 2020 and 2024. The study defines spiritual leadership as a leadership model that emphasizes intrinsic motivation through vision, hope or belief, and altruistic love. The findings show that spiritual leadership has a positive impact on teachers' psychological and professional

well-being, principals' performance, student achievement, and organizational citizenship behavior. However, the review also notes that empirical research on spiritual leadership in educational settings remains limited, indicating the need for further studies to strengthen empirical support. Similarly, Simbolon (2017) examines the influence of visionary leadership, work motivation, and lecturer competence on work culture, work commitment, and lecturer performance. Using data from 251 lecturers, the study finds that visionary leadership, motivation, and competence significantly enhance work culture and commitment, which in turn mediate their positive effects on lecturer performance. These findings highlight the important role of visionary leadership in fostering commitment and improving performance in higher education institutions.

5. Discussion

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) are largely consistent with previous leadership studies, while also highlighting several important distinctions across contexts and theoretical perspectives. Earlier studies, particularly in the educational sector, emphasize that leadership effectiveness does not rely on a single dominant style. For instance, prior research on school leadership demonstrates that the integration of managerial, transformational, transactional, instructional, and spiritual leadership styles leads to better organizational outcomes. This aligns with previous arguments that leadership must be situational and responsive to institutional needs rather than rigidly applied.

The systematic review of 20 leadership studies reveals a critical tension between universal leadership frameworks and context-dependent effectiveness, suggesting that contemporary leadership scholarship is moving toward integrated, contingency-based models. Rather than validating a single optimal leadership approach, the empirical evidence demonstrates that leadership effectiveness emerges from the alignment between leadership philosophy, organizational context, and follower characteristics.

The dominance of transformational leadership across multiple studies warrants deeper interrogation. While Sahana (2018), Farahdiba et al. (2022) and Banjarnahor et al. (2025) collectively affirm transformational leadership's positive effects on creativity, motivation, and institutional quality, this convergence may reflect methodological homogeneity rather than genuine superiority. The reliance on quantitative methods, particularly SEM-PLS and path analysis, privileges measurable outcomes while potentially obscuring nuanced contextual factors that determine leadership success. This raises questions about whether transformational leadership is inherently effective or whether it simply aligns with dominant Western organizational paradigms that emphasize individualism and performance metrics.

The cultural contingency of leadership becomes particularly salient when examining Asian and Islamic leadership philosophies. Santoso (2019) exposes how Western leadership theories dominate global discourse despite cultural incompatibility, while studies by Sahana (2018), Wahab and Dikuraisyin (2024), and Kusumawati et al. (2024) demonstrate that indigenous leadership models grounded in Islamic principles or Balinese cultural values produce distinct organizational dynamics. The integration of spiritual dimensions, ethical governance, and communal harmony in these contexts suggests that leadership effectiveness cannot be divorced from cultural epistemology. This challenges the implicit universalism in much leadership research and implies that cross-cultural leadership studies should examine not just behavioral adaptations but fundamentally different conceptions of what constitutes effective leadership.

The emerging research on digital leadership and millennial management points to generational and technological disruptions that existing leadership theories inadequately address. Putra et al. (2024) and Putriastuti and Stasi (2019) reveal that

traditional leadership paradigms require fundamental reconfiguration rather than superficial adaptation. The recommendation for integrative, flexible leadership approaches acknowledges that contemporary organizational environments demand leaders who can fluidly navigate multiple leadership philosophies rather than master a single style.

A notable gap persists in understanding the mechanisms through which leadership influences outcomes. While studies establish correlational relationships, few examine mediating processes or boundary conditions with sufficient granularity. The emphasis on quantitative validation over qualitative exploration of leadership processes limits theoretical advancement and practical application.

6. Conclusion

Based on a review of the literature, leadership is identified as a critical factor across diverse organizational contexts, extending beyond the business sector. Leadership effectiveness largely depends on a leader's ability to adapt leadership styles to situational demands. In educational settings, effective principals integrate managerial, transformational, transactional, instructional, and positive leadership styles to foster an optimal learning environment. Transformational leadership in Islamic education highlights the role of visionary leaders in inspiring organizational members toward shared goals, while instructional leadership grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior has been shown to enhance student academic achievement. Participatory leadership further contributes to improved teacher performance and program effectiveness by promoting involvement in decision-making, whereas spiritual leadership supports teachers' psychological well-being and the development of a positive organizational culture.

Beyond education, digital leadership plays an increasingly important role in driving innovation and competitive advantage in SMEs, while systems and contingency theories offer valuable frameworks for understanding organizational adaptability in dynamic environments. This review also underscores the importance of cultural context in leadership practices. Asian leadership theories emphasize harmony and stability, contrasting with Western approaches that prioritize competition and transactional processes. Additionally, leading millennials often requires a flexible combination of leadership styles to accommodate their distinct values and expectations. The findings suggest that effective leadership is dynamic and contextual, requiring adaptability, vision, and the ability to empower others to achieve shared objectives.

Despite these insights, this review is limited by its reliance on secondary sources and the diversity of methodological approaches across studies. Future research is encouraged to employ more empirical and comparative designs, particularly across cultural and generational contexts, to strengthen the generalizability and practical relevance of leadership theory.

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Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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