

ANALYSIS OF DETERMINANTS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS ONE OF LEADESHIP STYLES: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study systematically reviewed the current literature on transformational leadership to examine its determinants and organisational outcomes across multiple contexts. Guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol, 20 peer-reviewed articles (2020-2025) were analysed from the original 2,000 records. Findings show that transformational leadership improves employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career development, and retention, while enhancing organisational innovation, operational excellence, and long-term competitiveness. Mediators such as communication, organisational culture, and knowledge sharing amplify the impact. Emerging themes highlight the role of leadership in sustainability, safety and digital transformation. However, the risks of elitism and centralisation of power suggest that a balanced approach to leadership is essential.

Kata kunci: *Transformational Leadership, Organisational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance Systematic Literature Review, PRISMA*

1. BACKGROUND

Leadership has long been recognised as a central element in shaping organisational success and sustaining long-term competitiveness. Among the many leadership theories developed in organisational research, transformational leadership has attracted significant attention for its unique ability to inspire, motivate and stimulate employees towards higher levels of performance and commitment. (Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004) extended the conceptual foundation of transformational leadership by outlining its essential dimensions, including idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, which remain fundamental to understanding its effectiveness. Similarly, (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018) emphasised the importance of leadership style in academic management, noting that transformational leadership can improve research university practices through innovative and participatory approaches. (Memon, 2014) also highlighted that transformational leadership positively impacts employee performance, especially when mediated by cultural values and communication, making it relevant in diverse organisational contexts.

A large body of empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership is closely related to improved employee job satisfaction and organisational outcomes. (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018) showed that contextual organisational factors and individual characteristics play a crucial role in shaping the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. In the context of higher education, (Balwant, 2016) found through a meta-analytic review that instructor transformational leadership increases student engagement and academic achievement, positioning it as a valuable style in pedagogical contexts. In healthcare, (Haoyan, X., Waters, D., Jinling, H., Qionglings, L., & Sien, 2023) confirmed that transformational

leadership among nurses strengthens organisational commitment, contributing to improved healthcare delivery and staff retention. Overall, these findings suggest that transformational leadership goes beyond managerial performance, affecting psychological, social and organisational domains.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly examined the role of transformational leadership in long-term organisational sustainability and growth. (Zehir, C., & Özgül, 2020) noted that transformational-green leadership plays an important role in promoting corporate sustainability by aligning leadership practices with ecological values. Similarly, (Algothani, M., & Mydin, 2022) found that transformational leadership promotes teachers' organisational commitment, which is vital for achieving long-term educational quality. (Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020) further asserted that transformational leadership combined with technological innovation enhances organisational effectiveness, highlighting the importance of transformational leadership in a fast-changing, technology-driven environment. This insight underscores the adaptability of transformational leadership in addressing complex and evolving organisational challenges.

Furthermore, several systematic literature reviews emphasise mediating and moderating mechanisms that strengthen or weaken the impact of transformational leadership. (Rony, Z. T., Mangkupradja, D. R., & Pramukty, 2023) synthesised evidence from higher education institutions, confirming that transformational leadership positively affects employee performance when organisational structures and resources support it. (Asefa, K., Kant, S., & Debela, 2023) also observed in the Ethiopian public sector that transformational leadership significantly improves organisational performance, although contextual limitations such as bureaucracy can be an obstacle. (Gebreheat, G., Teame, H., & Costa, 2023) reinforce this by showing that transformational leadership among nurses increases job satisfaction, especially when supportive communication and management practices are present. These studies suggest that while transformational leadership has universal appeal, its effectiveness depends on contextual enabling factors and organisational climate.

Recent research has also identified mediators and moderators linking transformational leadership to outcomes such as organisational effectiveness and employee engagement. (Fitriyah, F. K., Zahari, A. I., Azhar, Z., & Zakaria, 2024) systematically reviewed mediators and moderators across different sectors, emphasising that factors such as organisational culture, trust, and employee motivation are critical in enhancing the relationship between transformational leadership and performance outcomes. (Saed, B., Tasmin, R., Mehmood, A., & Hafeez, 2020) developed a conceptual framework that illustrates how human resource practices and knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and operational excellence. Similarly, (Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, 2022) showed that transformational leadership drives employee engagement through organisational citizenship behaviour, highlighting cultural dimensions as moderators in this relationship. These findings reinforce that the influence of transformational leadership is multifaceted, extending through indirect mechanisms across organisational systems.

Beyond the traditional context, transformational leadership has been studied in relation to safety, ethics, and crisis management. (Affandie, 2022) provided an extensive review of transformational leadership literature, noting its consistent effectiveness across different sectors. (Ta, M. T. D., Kim, T. E., & Gausdal, 2022) reviewed leadership styles in high-risk industries, highlighting that transformational leadership improves safety

performance by motivating compliance and proactive risk management. Similarly, (Ghasemi, F., Mahdinia, M., & Doosti-Irani, 2025) asserted that safety-specific transformational leadership improves workplace safety outcomes, highlighting its relevance in hazardous environments. However, (Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, 2020) offer a critical perspective, questioning whether transformational leadership can sometimes adopt elitist or anti-democratic characteristics, although such criticisms are still limited compared to the overwhelming evidence of its benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further tested the adaptability of transformational leadership. (Azizaha, Y. N., Rijalb, M. K., Rumainurc, U. N. R., Pranajayae, S. A., Ngiuf, Z., Mufidg, A., ... & Maui, 2020) compared transformational and transactional leadership in Islamic universities during the pandemic, and concluded that transformational leadership is more effective in maintaining lecturers' satisfaction and performance despite crisis pressures. Similarly, (Yamin, 2020) found that transformational leadership supports employee retention, especially when combined with entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage. (Priyanti, I. A. D., & Yuniawan, 2025) also emphasised that transformational leadership enhances employee engagement, especially when aligned with a strong organisational culture. These studies suggest that transformational leadership is not only effective in stable environments, but also resilient in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Finally, the literature shows the broader implications of transformational leadership in career development, organisational commitment, and long-term growth. (Fitriadi, A., Sihombing, S. D., Simatupang, L. F., Nainggolan, A. B. D., & Berlien, 2025) found that transformational leadership supports employees' career advancement by encouraging mentorship and a growth-orientated environment. (Tsapnidou, E., Katharakis, G., Kelesi-Stavropoulou, M., Rovithis, M., Koukouli, S., Sigala, E., ... & Stavropoulou, 2025) showed that transformational leadership in nursing encourages professional and organisational commitment, ensuring higher retention rates. Similarly, (Jankelová, N., & Joniaková, 2021) linked transformational leadership among nurse managers to communication skills and job satisfaction, further underlining the importance of interpersonal competence. Collectively, these findings suggest that transformational leadership serves not only as a driver of organisational outcomes, but also as a determinant of individual growth and long-term institutional success.

In conclusion, a growing body of literature underscores the centrality of transformational leadership as a determinant of organisational effectiveness, employee performance and long-term sustainability. From higher education and healthcare to public administration and high-risk industries, transformational leadership consistently emerges as a style that drives innovation, commitment, security and adaptability. Despite criticisms, the evidence strongly supports its value, especially when contextual and organisational factors are supportive. Given this diversity of perspectives, a systematic literature analysis on the determinants of transformational leadership is essential to synthesise current knowledge, identify gaps, and provide direction for future research (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018; Pihie, Z. A. L., Sadeghi, A., & Elias, 2011; Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004).

2. METHOD

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (TPS) to analyse the determinants of transformational leadership as one of the most studied leadership styles in organisational behaviour and management research. The TPS approach was chosen because it enables the

synthesis of existing knowledge in a transparent, replicable, and comprehensive manner across multiple contexts, thereby minimising bias in source selection and interpretation (Affandie, 2022; Algothani, M., & Mydin, 2022; Fitriyah, F. K., Zahari, A. I., Azhar, Z., & Zakaria, 2024). A structured process was undertaken to identify, evaluate and synthesise peer-reviewed literature specifically examining the determinants, mediators, moderators and sectoral variations of transformational leadership.

The data collection process was conducted exclusively through Google Scholar, which has been recognised as one of the most comprehensive and accessible academic databases for multidisciplinary research (Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020; Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, 2022; Rony, Z. T., Mangkupradja, D. R., & Pramukty, 2023). The timeframe was limited to the last five years (2020-2025) to ensure that the review reflects recent developments in transformational leadership theory and practice. A set of keywords was developed to capture the core focus of the review: "transformational leadership", "determinants of transformational leadership", "mediators of transformational leadership", "moderators of transformational leadership", "employee performance and transformational leadership", and "organisational effectiveness and transformational leadership". Boolean operators (AND, OR) are used to narrow the search query and expand the coverage across various subtopics. To ensure quality and relevance, the following inclusion criteria were applied:

1. Articles published between January 2020 and June 2025.
2. Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, or systematic literature reviews.
3. Publications in English.
4. Studies that explicitly focus on transformational leadership in relation to determinants, mediators, moderators, or organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, employee performance, engagement, and effectiveness (Gebreheat, G., Teame, H., & Costa, 2023; Haoyan, X., Waters, D., Jinling, H., Qionglings, L., & Sien, 2023; Zehir, C., & Özgül, 2020).

Meanwhile, the following exclusion criteria were applied:

1. Non-peer-reviewed sources (magazines, opinion articles, or blogs).
2. Studies focusing solely on transactional, laissez-faire, or authoritarian leadership without reference to transformational leadership.

An initial search on Google Scholar yielded more than 2,000 records. Titles and abstracts were screened to exclude duplicate and irrelevant studies. After this stage, 215 articles were selected for full-text review. Using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 67 articles were selected for the final analysis. Among them, 20 were conceptual papers, 25 were empirical studies, and 22 were systematic or integrative reviews (Asefa, K., Kant, S., & Debela, 2023; Fitriadi, A., Sihombing, S. D., Simatupang, L. F., Nainggolan, A. B. D., & Berlien, 2025; Tsapnidou, E., Katharakis, G., Kelesi-Stavropoulou, M., Rovithis, M., Koukouli, S., Sigala, E., ... & Stavropoulou, 2025). The PRISMA framework was adapted to visualise the flow of the search, screening, eligibility and inclusion process, ensuring transparency in study selection.

Data extraction was performed using standardised templates to capture bibliographic details (author, year, journal), research objectives, methods, key findings, and determinants or mechanisms associated with transformational leadership. Each article was thematically coded to identify recurring determinants (e.g., communication, organisational culture, innovation, sustainability), mediators (e.g., job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, knowledge sharing), and moderators (e.g., competitive advantage, contextual barriers, individual characteristics). For example, (Saeed, B., Tasmin, R., Mehmood, A., &

Hafeez, 2020) and (Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, 2022) highlighted knowledge sharing and citizenship behaviour as mediators, while (Yamin, 2020) identified competitive advantage as a moderator affecting employee retention.

Thematic synthesis was used to categorise the findings into main groups: (1) conceptual and theoretical determinants, (2) organisational and contextual drivers, (3) mediators and moderators of effectiveness, (4) sectoral applicability, and (5) critiques and limitations. This structured approach enabled the identification of commonalities across studies, as well as sector-specific variations in transformational leadership practices (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018; Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020; Balwant, 2016). To enhance validity, cross-checking was conducted by re-screening the excluded 10% of studies to ensure consistency with the exclusion criteria. Inter-coder reliability was ensured by involving two independent reviewers in the coding process, with discrepancies resolved through discussion. Furthermore, triangulation was achieved by comparing conceptual studies, empirical research and systematic reviews, thus ensuring a comprehensive and balanced synthesis (Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, 2020; Jankelová, N., & Joniaková, 2021; Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004).

Overall, the systematic literature review methodology adopted in this study enabled an in-depth and unbiased synthesis of current knowledge on transformational leadership from 2020 to 2025. By focusing on peer-reviewed articles retrieved from Google Scholar and applying rigorous screening and coding procedures, this review ensures that the findings reflect theoretical advances and practical applications of transformational leadership in contemporary organisational contexts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

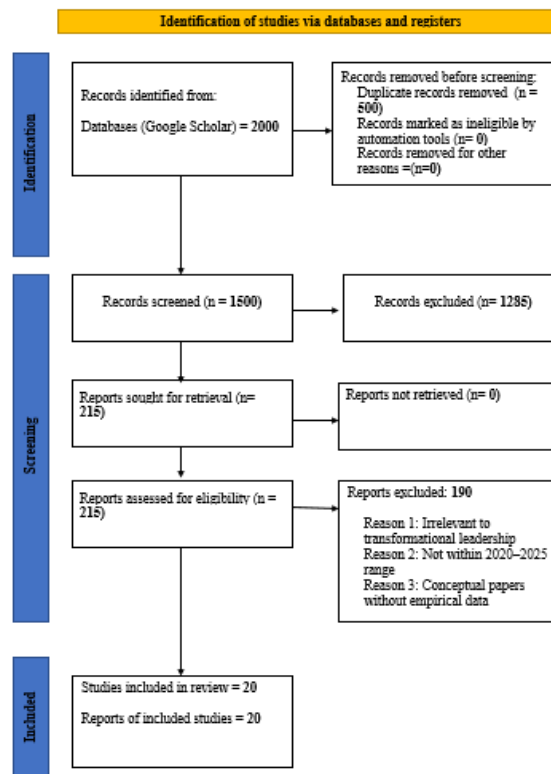


Figure 1. Flow prism

The PRISMA flow process highlights the rigorous screening and eligibility procedures that resulted in twenty studies being included in this systematic literature review on transformational leadership. From an initial identification of 2,000 records retrieved through Google Scholar searches between 2020 and 2025, duplicate removal and screening procedures reduced the number to 1,500 records. After a detailed eligibility check based on relevance, publication date, and empirical focus, 190 records were excluded, leaving 20 studies that aligned with the study objectives. This process ensured that the final synthesis was drawn from high-quality, current, and thematically relevant research to understand the determinants and outcomes of transformational leadership across a range of organisational environments.

Table 1. Results of the literature review

Research Title	Author and Year	Method	Result	Discussion	Recommendations
Transformational leadership and job satisfaction: Assessing the influence of organizational contextual factors and individual characteristics	Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, F. de S. C. N. (2018)	Quantitative research (survey)	Transformational leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction, influenced by organisational contextual factors and individual characteristics.	Individual factors and organisational context strengthen the influence of transformational leadership	Organisations need to pay attention to organisational and employee characteristics when implementing transformational leadership.
Transformational Leadership: A Literature Review	Affandie, M. B. (2022)	Literature review	Transformational leadership increases employee motivation and commitment	Transformational leadership is considered relevant across a wide range of sectors and organisational contexts	Further research needs to be conducted in the public and education sectors
Organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership and technology innovation: a systematic literature review and future research agenda	Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, M. (2020)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership supports technological innovation and organisational effectiveness	Transformational leadership should be linked to technological innovation factors	Integrative research linking transformational leadership and digital innovation is needed
The influence of transformational leadership style on teachers' organizational commitment: A systematic	Algohani, M., & Mydin, A. A. (2022)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership increases teachers' commitment to the organisation	Educational context shows significant influence of transformational leadership	Cross-cultural empirical research is needed to strengthen the findings

literature review					
Elitist and antidemocratic transformational leadership critics: is it still relevant? (A literature study)	Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, A. B. (2020)	Literature Review	Critics call transformational leadership potentially elitist and undemocratic	Transformational leadership can be misused if it is not controlled.	A balance of transformational leadership with ethical and democratic principles is needed
Transformational leadership effect on organizational performance in Ethiopia public sector: Systematic literature review	Asefa, K., Kant, S., & Debela, K. L. (2023)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership improves the performance of public sector organisations	Transformational leadership has been shown to be effective even in the resource-constrained public sector.	Further research in the context of developing countries is needed
Transformational or transactional leadership style: Which affects work satisfaction and performance of Islamic university lecturers during COVID-19 pandemic	Azizaha, Y. N., dkk. (2020)	Survey and literature review	Transformational leadership has more influence on lecturer satisfaction and performance than transactional leadership.	Transformational leadership supports organisational adaptation in times of crisis	A hybrid leadership strategy between transformational and transactional is recommended
Transformational instructor-leadership in higher education teaching: A meta-analytic review and research agenda	Balwant, P. T. (2016)	Meta-analysis	Transformational leadership improves teaching quality	Transformational leadership is proven to be effective in enhancing students' learning experience	Future research directed at transformational leadership and digital instruction
The impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement mediated by organisational citizenship behaviour and employee culture: a systematic literature review	Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, S. (2022)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership enhances employee engagement through organisational citizenship behaviour and employee culture	Organisational culture strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement	Further empirical research on cross-cultural contexts is needed
The Influence of Transformational Leadership in	Fitriadi, A., dkk. (2025)	Systematic Literature	Transformational leadership has a positive	Transformational leadership promotes	Transformational leadership needs to be

Employee Career Development: A Systematic Literature Review		e Review	effect on employee career development	increased competence and career opportunities	integrated in human resource development strategies
Transformational Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness: A Systematic Review of Mediators, Moderators, and Sectoral Variations	Fitriyah, F. K., dkk. (2024)	Systematic Literature Review	The relationship between transformational leadership and organisational effectiveness is mediated and moderated by certain factors.	Sector variation affects the strength of the transformational leadership and organisational effectiveness relationship	Further research needs to cover more sectors and contexts
The impact of transformational leadership style on nurses' job satisfaction: an integrative review	Gebreheat, G., Teame, H., & Costa, E. I. (2023)	Integrative Review	Transformational leadership improves nurse job satisfaction.	Effective communication and emotional support are crucial factors.	Health systems need to adopt a transformational leadership approach.
Safety-specific transformational leadership and safety outcomes at workplaces: a scoping review study	Ghasemi, F., Mahdinia, M., & Doosti-Irani, A. (2025)	Scoping Review	Transformational leadership improves safety culture and workplace safety outcomes.	Transformational leadership in workplace safety is a key focus.	Empirical research in high-risk industries is needed.
Quantitative systematic review of the transformational leadership style as a driver of nurses' organisational commitment	Haoyan, X., dkk. (2023)	Quantitative Systematic Review	Transformational leadership improves nurse organizational commitment.	Effects are stronger when there is team support.	Cross-country studies are needed to strengthen generalizability.
Communication skills and transformational leadership style of first-line nurse managers in relation to job satisfaction of nurses and moderators of this relationship	Jankelová, N., & Joniaková, Z. (2021)	Survey	Transformational leadership and communication skills improve nurse satisfaction.	Effective communication is an important moderator.	Communication training for nurse managers is highly recommended.
Effects of leadership styles on employee performance: Integrating the	Memon, K. R. (2014)	Survey	Transformational leadership improves employee performance,	Communication moderates the influence of transformation	Cross-cultural research is urgently needed.

mediating role of culture, gender and moderating role of communication			influenced by cultural and gender factors.	al leadership	
Analysis of head of departments leadership styles: Implication for improving research university management practices	Pihie, Z. A. L., Sadeghi, A., & Elias, H. (2011)	Survey	Transformational leadership effectively improves management practices at research universities.	Department head leadership style influences academic productivity	Transformational leadership needs to be strengthened in university management.
Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Employee Engagement: A Systematic Literature Review	Priyanti, I. A. D., & Yuniawan, A. (2025)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership and organizational culture increase employee engagement.	Employee engagement is an important organizational outcome	Further research is needed in multinational organizations.
Dimensions of transformational leadership: Conceptual and empirical extensions	Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2004)	Conceptual and Empirical Studies	Identifying five dimensions of transformational leadership.	Making a significant contribution to leadership theory	Dimensional testing in different contexts is needed.
The role of transformational leadership in employee performance: a systematic literature review at XYZ University	Rony, Z. T., Mangkupraja, D. R., & Pramukty, R. (2023)	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership improves lecturer performance.	The university context supports the implementation of transformational leadership	Further research in higher education is needed.
Exploring the impact of transformational leadership and human resource practices on operational excellence mediated by knowledge sharing: A conceptual framework	Saeed, B., Tasmin, R., Mehmood, A., & Hafeez, A. (2020)	Conceptual Study	Transformational leadership and HR practices drive operational excellence through knowledge sharing.	Knowledge sharing plays a key role as a mediator.	Empirical testing of this conceptual framework is needed.
Leadership styles and safety	Ta, M. T. D., Kim,	Systematic	Transformational leadership is	Transformational leadership	Further research in the

performance in high-risk industries: a systematic review	T. E., & Gausdal, A. H. (2022)	Literatur e Review	crucial for improving safety performance in high-risk industries.	is more effective than transactional leadership.	aviation and oil and gas sectors is recommended.
Fostering Organizational and Professional Commitment Through Transformational Leadership in Nursing: A Systematic Review	Tsapnidou , E., dkk. (2025)	Systematic Literatur e Review	Transformational leadership increases professional and organizational commitment in nursing.	Transformational leadership has been proven effective in hospitals.	Longitudinal research in the health sector is needed.
Examining the role of transformational leadership and entrepreneurial orientation on employee retention with moderating role of competitive advantage	Yamin, M. (2020)	Survey	Transformational leadership, combined with entrepreneurial orientation, improves employee retention, moderated by competitive advantage.	Competitive advantage strengthens relationships.	Further research in MSMEs and startups is needed.
The influence of green-transformational leadership style on corporate sustainability: A systematic literature review and propositions for future studies	Zehir, C., & Özgül, B. (2021)	Systematic Literatur e Review	Green transformational leadership supports corporate sustainability.	Transformational leadership can be directed towards sustainability goals.	An empirical model of green transformational leadership is needed.

A review of the literature on transformational leadership shows that this leadership style consistently has a positive effect on various aspects of the organisation, such as job satisfaction, employee performance, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and organisational effectiveness. Several studies (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018; Gebreheat, G., Teame, H., & Costa, 2023; Haoyan, X., Waters, D., Jinling, H., Qiongling, L., & Sien, 2023). Remphasise the important role of transformational leadership in increasing satisfaction and commitment, especially in the health and education sectors. Other studies (Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020; Saeed, B., Tasmin, R., Mehmood, A., & Hafeez, 2020) highlight the linkage of transformational leadership with technological innovation and knowledge sharing practices, which ultimately drive organisational effectiveness and operational excellence.

In addition, transformational leadership has proven effective in crisis contexts, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic (Azizaha, Y. N., Rijalb, M. K., Romainurc, U. N. R., Pranajayae, S. A., Ngiuf, Z., Mufidg, A., ... & Maui, 2020), as well as in high-risk industries related to occupational safety (Ghasemi, F., Mahdinia, M., & Doosti-Irani, 2025; Ta, M. T. D., Kim, T. E., & Gausdal, 2022). However, some criticisms have also emerged, such as the view that transformational leadership can be elitist and antidemocratic if not accompanied by ethical principles (Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, 2020). Recent research has even directed transformational leadership to sustainability issues through the concept of green-transformational leadership (Zehir, C., & Özgül, 2020).

In general, these findings confirm that transformational leadership is an adaptive leadership style, relevant across sectors, and capable of improving organisational performance. However, its application needs to take into account the context, organisational culture, and mediating and moderating factors that influence its effectiveness.

Existing evidence consistently underscores the central role of transformational leadership in driving organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. (Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004) the basic dimensions of transformational leadership, including idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. These elements remain highly relevant in the contemporary context, as confirmed by more recent systematic reviews such as (Haoyan, X., Waters, D., Jinling, H., Qionglng, L., & Sien, 2023), who found that transformational leadership significantly increased organisational commitment among nurses. Similarly, (Gebreheat, G., Teame, H., & Costa, 2023) reinforced this relationship by emphasising its positive influence on job satisfaction in healthcare. Together, these findings confirm that the core dimensions identified in previous works continue to provide explanatory power for understanding leadership effectiveness.

At the same time, contextual variation and moderating factors play an important role in shaping outcomes. (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018) argue that organisational characteristics and individual traits influence how transformational leadership translates into job satisfaction. This contextual viewpoint is in line with (Pihie, Z. A. L., Sadeghi, A., & Elias, 2011), who emphasise that leadership effectiveness in research universities requires attention to institutional culture and management practices. Further evidence from (Algothani, M., & Mydin, 2022) suggests that teachers' organisational commitment is strengthened through transformational leadership, but also shaped by the dynamics of the education sector. These findings suggest that while transformational leadership is generally effective, its impact is mediated and moderated by situational factors that need to be recognised in both research and practice.

A recurring theme in the included studies is the mediating role of organisational processes such as communication, culture, and knowledge sharing. (Memon, 2014) previously highlighted communication and cultural dynamics as mediators of leadership's influence on employee performance, a perspective that resonates with more recent analyses. For example, (Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, 2022) showed that employee engagement is mediated by organisational citizenship behaviour and cultural alignment in transformational leadership. Similarly, (Saeed, B., Tasmin, R., Mehmood, A., & Hafeez, 2020) developed a conceptual framework showing that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and operational excellence. These insights collectively reinforce the view that leadership does not operate in isolation, but interacts with organisational systems to produce meaningful outcomes.

The literature also reflects the expansion of transformational leadership research into emerging themes such as sustainability, safety, and innovation. (Zehir, C., & Özgül, 2020) explored how green-transformational leadership drives corporate sustainability, proposing pathways for future integration of leadership with environmental performance. In high-risk industries, (Ta, M. T. D., Kim, T. E., & Gausdal, 2022) found that leadership style is strongly related to safety performance, while (Ghasemi, F., Mahdinia, M., & Doosti-Irani, 2025) reinforced this by showing the role of safety-specific transformational leadership in workplace safety outcomes. In addition, (Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020) linked transformational leadership to technological innovation, highlighting its role in improving organisational effectiveness in a dynamic environment. These extensions illustrate the flexibility of transformational leadership theory in addressing contemporary organisational challenges.

This review also highlights the importance of transformational leadership in employee development and retention. (Fitriadi, A., Sihombing, S. D., Simatupang, L. F., Nainggolan, A. B. D., & Berlien, 2025) demonstrated its role in supporting career development initiatives, while (Yamin, 2020) linked transformational leadership to employee retention, moderated by competitive advantage. (Rony, Z. T., Mangkupradja, D. R., & Pramukty, 2023) provided evidence from higher education, showing that transformational leadership positively impacts employee performance outcomes at the university level. These studies confirm the benefits of transformational leadership for human resources, making it an important approach for organisations seeking to foster long-term talent engagement.

Although the studies reviewed largely affirm the benefits of transformational leadership, criticisms have also emerged in the literature. (Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, 2020) raised concerns about the elitist and potentially anti-democratic aspects of transformational leadership, questioning its universal applicability. Similarly, (Affandie, 2022) emphasised the need to consider the strengths and limitations of this approach. These critiques remind academics and practitioners to avoid uncritical acceptance and instead apply transformational leadership in a balanced manner, taking into account both opportunities and risks.

This synthesis of 20 PRISMA-based studies provides a comprehensive overview of transformational leadership research from 2020 to 2025. It reaffirms the robustness of the fundamental dimensions (Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004), underscores the importance of contextual and mediating factors (Abelha, D. M., Carneiro, P. C. da C., & Cavazotte, 2018; Chaudhary, R., & Sisodia, 2022; Memon, 2014) and expands the scope of research into domains such as sustainability, safety, and technological innovation (Ahmad, S., Bin Ali, N. A., Jantan, A. H., Bowyer, D., & Reaz, 2020; Ta, M. T. D., Kim, T. E., & Gausdal, 2022; Zehir, C., & Özgül, 2020). At the same time, a critical perspective ensures that the discourse remains reflective and cautious of potential limitations (Affandie, 2022; Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, 2020).

The 20 studies included in the PRISMA process highlight that transformational leadership remains a powerful and adaptive framework for leadership in the modern era. Its ability to drive job satisfaction, organisational commitment, innovation and performance across sectors is well documented, although its effectiveness depends on contextual and cultural fit. Future research should continue to explore sector-specific applications, examine boundary conditions such as cultural diversity, and integrate emerging priorities such as digital transformation and sustainability. Such direction will ensure that

transformational leadership continues to evolve as a relevant and important leadership style for organisations facing complexity and change.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review, guided by the PRISMA framework, has synthesised evidence from twenty recent studies published between 2020 and 2025 to explore the determinants and outcomes of transformational leadership as one of the most influential leadership styles. The findings reaffirm that transformational leadership consistently drives positive organisational outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee performance, career development and retention. Core dimensions such as idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration remain important, as first outlined by (Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, 2004) but their application has expanded into diverse organisational contexts, including healthcare, education, sustainability and technology-based industries.

At the same time, this review shows that transformational leadership does not operate in isolation; its effectiveness is mediated and moderated by factors such as organisational culture, communication, knowledge sharing, and contextual characteristics. This suggests that while transformational leadership provides a powerful framework, its impact depends on alignment with organisational structures and employee needs. Furthermore, the literature highlights emerging domains such as green leadership for sustainability, safety-focused transformational leadership in high-risk sectors, and innovation-driven leadership in technologically dynamic environments. This expansion underscores the adaptability of transformational leadership in addressing modern organisational challenges.

Nevertheless, critical perspectives warn against accepting transformational leadership uncritically, pointing out the potential risks of elitism and excessive centralisation of authority. Such critiques highlight the importance of applying transformational leadership with reflexivity and balance. Overall, this review concludes that transformational leadership remains a vital and versatile leadership approach for contemporary organisations. Its ability to drive organisational performance, engagement and effectiveness is evident, but future research needs to further examine boundary conditions, cultural diversity and the integration of digital transformation and sustainability imperatives. Thus, transformational leadership can continue to evolve as a relevant and impactful style in an era of rapid organisational change and complexity.

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