

Reimagining Leadership in the Digital Era: A Systematic Literature Review of Digital and Transformational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this studies is to systematically evaluate and synthesize the present literature concerning transformational leadership and virtual management in current corporations. This look at pursuits to become aware of dominant themes, methodological developments, theoretical trends, and unresolved studies gaps in the current literature to provide a complete understanding of how those leadership paradigms make contributions to organizational sustainability and effectiveness. The method employed is a qualitative-descriptive Systematic Literature assessment (SLR) technique presenting thematic analysis and qualitative synthesis strategies. The population sample of this look at accommodates a dedicated literature dataset including peer-reviewed journal articles, convention complaints, instructional evaluations, and conceptual research posted as much as 2026, which especially cognizance on management transformation, digital abilities, and enterprise 4.zero environments. The outcomes exhibit that digital and transformational leadership are an increasing number of interconnected strategic requirements that at once aid enterprise model innovation, organizational agility, and revolutionary paintings conduct. but, the synthesis also well-knownshows tremendous conceptual fragmentation, a lack of standardized operational metrics, and an urgent need for longitudinal research regarding follower reviews in virtual work systems. The look at concludes that current corporations require an included framework combining transformational values with virtual competencies to preserve moral governance and long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Digital Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Systematic Literature Review, Organizational Innovation, Digital Transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of virtual era and industry 4.0 has essentially transformed organizational structures, verbal exchange patterns, and decision-making, requiring a shift from conventional control to adaptive techniques like virtual and transformational leadership. virtual management serves as an important functionality for navigating technological disruption and VUCA (unstable, unsure, complicated, and ambiguous) environments by means of fostering innovation, strategic adaptability, and collaboration

in more and more digital and far off work settings. simultaneously, transformational leadership continues to play a central function in driving organizational improvement and empowering employee creativity. As current organizations integrate these tactics to enhance agility, resilience, and commercial enterprise version innovation, a developing need emerges for management models that efficiently blend advanced technological skills with human-focused, transformational values.

Despite of the expanding literature, numerous essential research gaps stay unresolved throughout sectors and disciplines. contemporary studies suffer from fragmented theoretical frameworks and conceptual ambiguity, frequently the usage of the phrases "virtual leaders" and "virtual management" interchangeably with out standardized operational definitions or measurable signs. moreover, existing studies is heavily restrained with the aid of local, cross-sectional, and sector-precise focuses, highlighting a distinct loss of longitudinal, go-cultural, and ethical governance studies. rising complexities—which includes the emotional dynamics of virtual collaboration, the integration of artificial intelligence and hybrid paintings structures, and the implementation of moral frameworks—remain largely underexplored. consequently, this systematic literature review targets to synthesize previous findings on management capabilities and organizational overall performance to pick out dominant subject matters, methodological trends, and theoretical gaps, ultimately providing a comprehensive framework for sustainability within the digital technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Leadership

Virtual leadership has evolved right into a critical paradigm for navigating technological disruption, industry 4.0, and digital environments, transferring the function of leaders from conventional administrative controllers to adaptive change marketers. latest research outline it as an approach that embeds generation into organizational method, culture, and selection-making to enhance agility, competitiveness, and patron-oriented experimentation (Wibowo et al., 2025; Arsyad et al., 2025). in place of focusing entirely on technical capabilities, effective digital leadership needs a destiny-oriented strategic vision balanced with human-focused management practices to control volatility and uncertainty (Asri et al., 2020; Bach & Sulíková, 2021). Empirical proof indicates that it drives enterprise model innovation, collaborative getting to know cultures, and worker modern work behaviors throughout company and educational sectors (Mihardjo et al., 2019; Erhan et al., 2022).

While researchers have diagnosed middle digital management competencies—inclusive of emotional recognition, strategic execution, speedy adaptability, and technological orientation (Sisu, 2023; Ridha et al., 2024)—the literature stays surprisingly fragmented. modern research is siloed across more than one disciplines, main to theoretical inconsistencies and conceptual ambiguity wherein the terms "digital leaders" and "virtual leadership" are used interchangeably (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Adie et al., 2022). moreover, the sector nonetheless lacks standardized operational definitions and measurable framework metrics to systematically compare leadership effectiveness in real-global exercise (Ridha et al., 2024).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational management stays a foundational framework for using organizational alternate through thought, vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention. by means of fostering psychological empowerment, this method builds employee self assurance, dedication, and innovative paintings behaviors, making it quite effective for bureaucratic reform and performance development (Ibrahim et al., 2016; Harahap et al., 2025). beyond corporate performance, transformative leadership promotes energetic democratic participation, inclusivity, and collaborative trouble-solving to address complex modern-day societal challenges (Effendi et al., 2024).

in the current technology, the scope of transformational leadership an increasing number of intersects with digitalization, traumatic that leaders foster agree with, emotional information, and adaptive communication inside virtual and hybrid spaces (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Erhan et al., 2022). despite widespread documentation, enormous gaps persist concerning its utility in virtual environments. conventional frameworks continue to be heavily targeted on psychological consequences, leaving leadership version to rising technologies beneath-examined. moreover, the literature suffers from a shortage of longitudinal and move-cultural studies, and its direct synergy with digital abilities remains insufficiently explored (Harahap et al., 2025).

The Integration of Digital and Transformational Leadership

The escalating complexities of cutting-edge agencies—marked via hybrid paintings, virtual collaboration, and disruptive marketplace forces—demand a unified framework that merges transformational empowerment with digital competency. each management paradigms share the core goals of cultivating creativity, helping modern work behavior, and accelerating enterprise version version in enterprise four.0 settings (Mihardjo et al., 2019; Erhan et al., 2022). In far flung and decentralized work environments, leaders need to concurrently set up digital gear to bridge physical distance and utilize transformational smooth competencies to hold agree with, open communicate, and organizational brotherly love (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Asfahani, 2025).

Furthermore, the fast upward thrust of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and metaverse structures introduces unprecedented operational demanding situations. companies often war with a loss of sensible managerial suggestions, virtual infrastructure, and strategic governance required to ethically integrate AI into executive selection-making and commercial enterprise strategies (Di Paolo et al., 2025; Al-Zirjaw et al., 2026). because existing literature stays conceptually fragmented and lacks empirical cohesion, a systematic synthesis is vital to set up how these combined leadership dynamics foster long-time period organizational transformation and sustainability inside the digital generation.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This examine employs a systematic Literature evaluate (SLR) technique paired with a qualitative-descriptive assessment layout to synthesize and analyze earlier studies on transformational and virtual leadership. this system became selected as it enables a established, obvious, and rigorous evaluation of organizational transformation, leadership talents, and virtual environments. The layout emphasizes thematic synthesis and conceptual integration to uncover hidden patterns, dominant educational conversations, and unresolved research gaps in the current literature.

Methodologically, this qualitative-descriptive evaluate layout mirrors hooked up practices inside the field. earlier researchers have efficaciously applied SLRs and bibliometric gear to map out shifting studies trends, set up operational definitions, and perceive important management dimensions in technologically disrupted spaces (Espina-Romero et al., 2023; Ridha et al., 2024; Saleh et al., 2025). by adopting this technique, the observe ensures that the synthesis of digital transformation and management paradigms stays theoretically grounded and empirically rigorous.

Data Collection and Article Selection

The analytical material was derived exclusively from a specialized, researcher-compiled dataset. This comprehensive boundary guarantees first rate synthesis by pulling from peer-reviewed magazine articles, convention court cases, systematic opinions, and conceptual research. The targeted selection manner captured literature cross-secting digital transformation, transformational management, enterprise 4.zero, innovative work conduct, and faraway or digital environments across diverse operational sectors.

The selected papers constitute a big range of organizational backdrops, inclusive of education, public management, and telecommunications. Key foundational research within this dataset encompass Mihardjo et al. (2019), Cortellazzo et al. (2019), Bach and Sulíková (2021), Sisu (2023), Adie et al. (2022), Ridha et al. (2024), Saleh et al. (2025), Harahap et al. (2025), Connolly et al. (2023), and Espina-Romero et al. (2023). those unique works were chosen due to their direct attention on modern-day leadership version, digital abilities, and technological integration.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To keep analytical consistency and strategic focus, express boundary parameters had been strictly enforced at some stage in the look at selection technique. The inclusion standards dictated that every one well-known texts ought to be instructional publications, which includes journals and convention court cases, contained within the supplied dataset. moreover, eligible papers had to explicitly address virtual or transformational management, along core organizational issues like digitalization, industry four.zero, innovation, or technological adaptation.

Conversely, inflexible exclusion standards have been carried out to weed out beside the point or susceptible literature. Any papers absolutely unrelated to leadership or organizational trade had been straight away disregarded from the examine. additionally, the review overlooked non-instructional or incomplete courses, papers out of doors the researcher's pre-compiled dataset, and any studies that lacked enough

conceptual intensity or methodological clarity to contribute meaningfully to the synthesis.

Data Analysis Technique

Data evaluation is predicated closely on thematic analysis and qualitative synthesis carried out via a rigorous multi-degree pipeline. This analytical technique involves systematic ranges of literature identity, article type, thematic categorization, comparative analysis of findings, research hole synthesis, and deep conceptual interpretation. This structure guarantees that every piece of literature is broken down into its core components before being integrated into the larger review.

The use of this method, the literature become categorized into center dimensions, consisting of virtual skills, enterprise 4.zero edition, AI integration, and hybrid leadership demanding situations. This established framework aligns flawlessly with validated analytical techniques in digital leadership literature used to map out operational dimensions and destiny studies trajectories (Adie et al., 2022; Espina-Romero et al., 2023; Ridha et al., 2024). The final evaluation emphasizes figuring out the underlying relationships among transformational and digital management patterns.

Research Framework

The structural framework of this look at conceptualizes transformational and digital management as deeply interconnected paradigms riding agility, innovation, and sustainable overall performance. It maps out how present day management behavior immediately shapes employee empowerment, digital subculture, and virtual collaboration. in place of viewing generation and human control as separate elements, this framework looks at how they actively influence every other in contemporary places of work.

By using synthesizing transformational attributes, digital abilities, and rising technological demanding situations (which includes AI and hybrid systems), this incorporated framework explains how present day businesses achieve operational continuity. It positions each management patterns as dual engines vital for navigating complicated, volatile commercial enterprise environments. in the end, the framework presents a comprehensive map for expertise how combining gentle management abilities with technical imaginative and prescient ends in long-term organizational resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Growing Importance of Digital Leadership in Contemporary Organizations

The reviewed literature demonstrates that digital management has shifted from a complementary managerial functionality right into a strategic organizational necessity. driven by using technological disruption, complex organizational structures, and enterprise four.0 implementation, contemporary environments require a departure from inflexible administrative manipulate. groups throughout all sectors face rapid technological shifts that demand leaders who can integrate adaptive skills and innovation-orientated questioning at once into center operational processes.

A number one characteristic of virtual management is accelerating enterprise version innovation and strategic adaptation. Empirical proof suggests that digital management at once complements client experience orientation at the same time as cultivating excessive levels of organizational agility (Mihardjo et al., 2019). via focusing on employee capability enhancement and the intentional improvement of a digital way of life, leaders can efficiently steer complete digital transformation approaches that permit companies to maintain market competitiveness within the modern digital financial system (Saleh et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the need of digital management is intensified by means of the reality that modern-day agencies function inside unstable, unsure, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) conditions. Navigating this profound environmental uncertainty calls for leaders to showcase a high openness to paradigm shifts, a future-oriented mind-set, and the capacity to proactively count on non-stop disruption (Asri et al., 2020; Bach & Sulíková, 2021). therefore, digitized environments reshape conventional chief-follower dynamics, forcing a transition closer to accept as true with-constructing, emotional know-how, and adaptive collaboration in digital or far off paintings setups (Hesse, 2018; Cortellazzo et al., 2019).

Beyond the corporate sphere, this management paradigm plays a critical function in institutional resilience and collaborative learning. In instructional and public sectors, powerful virtual management fosters reflexive studying dialogues, network-primarily based virtual studying systems, and evidence-primarily based professional development (Connolly et al., 2023). ultimately, the synthesized literature proves that navigating the complexities of present day remote collaboration and continuous innovation needs a leadership version that balances technological execution with human-targeted control practices.

2.Digital Leadership Competencies and Leadership Characteristics

Powerful virtual management calls for a multidimensional combination of tendencies that amplify a long way past mere technical proficiency. The literature constantly demonstrates that a successful digital chief should balance strategic technological know-how with sharp innovation skills and bendy organizational transformation capabilities. these combined capabilities form an vital framework that empowers leaders to boost up executive selection-making, hold baseline organizational overall performance, and maintain worker engagement amid disruptive adjustments (Sisu, 2023).

Large mapping within the literature has identified center operational traits required for virtual execution. particularly, researchers have categorized essential developments which include robust technological orientation, strategic execution, top notch conversation effectiveness, and high collaborative capability (Ridha et al., 2024). those wonderful traits allow virtual leaders to behave as lively trade retailers who promote strategic agility and non-stop organizational studying, permitting their firms to preserve lengthy-time period competitiveness and sustainability (Adie et al., 2022).

Crucially, gentle capabilities like emotional understanding and relationship control stay paramount regardless of the heavy integration of computerized technologies. In decentralized and virtual organizational settings, virtual leaders are tasked with

establishing psychological believe and open channels of verbal exchange throughout geographically dispersed teams (Cortellazzo et al., 2019). handling the specific emotional impacts that affect virtual decision-making strategies represents a critical, but regularly underexplored, detail of maintaining stable leadership effectiveness (Sisu, 2023).

Regardless of the broad identity of those various developments, the literature reveals a good sized loss of operational standardization. existing research fails to provide a cohesive framework for evaluating and measuring digital management effectiveness in practical corporate settings, and a clean conceptual boundary setting apart "virtual leaders" from "virtual leadership" stays missing (Adie et al., 2022; Ridha et al., 2024). therefore, virtual leadership maintains to face as an evolving, multidisciplinary concept that needs an included stability of transformational questioning and superior strategic flexibility.

3. Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation

Transformational management maintains to function a foundational mechanism for using organizational innovation, employee empowerment, and structural reform. In an era ruled via marketplace uncertainty and fast digitalization, transformational leaders comfortable organizational sustainability by using the usage of inspirational motivation and highbrow stimulation to build a innovative corporate tradition. This technique encourages personnel to appearance past fashionable expectancies and actively generate progressive paintings behaviors (Ibrahim et al., 2016; Harahap et al., 2025).

A middle strength of transformational management lies in its potential to foster psychological empowerment and increase ordinary worker overall performance. via leveraging individualized consideration and idealized influence, leaders construct employee confidence and relaxed a deep institutional commitment (Ibrahim et al., 2016). In bureaucratic or deeply traditional establishments, those practices emerge as vital for breaking down rigid behavioral resistance, facilitating a hit inner reform, and accelerating the move-purposeful generation of creative answers (Harahap et al., 2025).

In present day corporate environments, transformational frameworks should an increasing number of intersect with virtual abilities to remain effective. whilst management practices merge human-targeted values with technological model, they devise a supportive surroundings where digital tools are used to maximize worker creativity (Erhan et al., 2022). This intersection helps continuous business version evolution, strengthens institutional resilience, and encourages energetic democratic participation and collaborative problem-fixing throughout diverse organizational groups (Mihardjo et al., 2019; Effendi et al., 2024).

However, traditional transformational management research faces excellent barriers while implemented to trendy virtual systems. plenty of the present day literature relies on move-sectional designs that restrict long-time period causal interpretation, and few research discover how transformational ideas operate within hybrid work systems and technologically mediated spaces (Harahap et al., 2025). due to the fact the appropriate interaction between transformational soft talents and virtual technical capabilities stays underneath-tested, present day corporations ought to consciously evolve those frameworks to control digital collaboration successfully.

4. Digital Transformation and Organizational Adaptability

Virtual transformation represents a complete paradigm shift that basically alters organizational structures, operational tactics, and verbal exchange structures. achieving excessive organizational adaptability calls for some distance extra than adopting new software; it mandates whole alignment between strategic technological implementation and digital lifestyle improvement (Saleh et al., 2025). to remain viable, modern-day corporations must proactively redesign their enterprise fashions, patron engagement systems, and broader innovation portfolios (Mihardjo et al., 2019).

The literature underscores that an organization's capability to adapt hinges on its management's readiness to handle technological disruption and structural uncertainty. working efficaciously underneath risky VUCA situations needs destiny-orientated strategic making plans and an energetic rejection of legacy managerial mindsets (Asri et al., 2020; Bach & Sulíková, 2021). furthermore, the fast upward push of remote and hybrid paintings structures calls for leaders to build highly adaptive, technologically mediated verbal exchange frameworks capable of retaining consider and crew cohesion across physical distances (Asfahani, 2025).

This ongoing transformation introduces new layers of complexity via the speedy integration of advanced, next-era technologies. rising gear like synthetic intelligence, metaverse systems, and blockchain infrastructure call for rigorous strategic governance, sizable personnel competency development, and sturdy baseline virtual infrastructure to maximize statistics-pushed choice-making (Espina-Romero et al., 2023; Al-Zirjaw et al., 2026). with out clear managerial hints, companies regularly struggle to ethically combine those disruptive technologies into their daily operations (Di Paolo et al., 2025).

Ultimately, the number one obstacles to digital transformation achievement are rooted in organizational way of life, employee resistance, and coffee technological readiness rather than technical obstacles. because contemporary research remains theoretically fragmented across one-of-a-kind disciplines and lacks longitudinal verification, the precise mechanisms riding long-time period digital adaptability remain uncertain (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Saleh et al., 2025). Addressing these challenges calls for cutting-edge management models that can seamlessly combine transformational values, digital agility, and collaborative mastering cultures to make sure long-term company sustainability.

5. Leadership in Virtual, Remote, and Technology-Driven Work Environments

The fast growth of far off paintings systems and digital organizational settings has dramatically altered present day control, moving the metrics of leadership effectiveness from traditional bodily oversight to virtual relational control. cutting-edge leaders are structurally required to coordinate geographically dispersed groups through extraordinarily mediated communicate networks. on this decentralized landscape, baseline organizational cohesion hinges on a leader's ability to construct mental agree with and clear lines of collaboration without the advantage of face-to-face interaction (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Asfahani, 2025).

To bridge these physical distances, virtual management talents should be strategically deployed to shield team interaction, worker engagement, and average operational productiveness. Leaders an increasing number of interpret organizational

realities and coordinate workflows thru digital communication channels, forcing conventional practices to emerge as fairly flexible, integrative, and context-established (Hesse, 2018). a success virtual management fosters strong expertise-sharing networks, reflexive communique dialogues, and evidence-primarily based expert improvement to build resilience in linked environments (Connolly et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the escalation of era-driven operations introduces intense interpersonal and emotional complexities within digital workspaces. current educational scholarship possesses a confined expertise of ways emotional contagion, consider formation, and collaborative information-pushed decision-making arise throughout computer monitors (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Sisu, 2023). To keep institutional alignment and facts-knowledgeable adaptability, present day leaders ought to actively domesticate an organizational way of life rooted in curiosity, exploration, and continuous virtual getting to know (Hill et al.).

Consequently, navigating digital structures demands an included leadership version that seamlessly merges transformational soft values with technical virtual expertise. Transformational ideas remain surprisingly applicable in faraway areas, performing as a crucial anchor for motivating remote workforce, establishing psychological protection, and riding administrative reform (Harahap et al., 2025). however, due to the fact current literature closely favors government views, destiny studies ought to have a look at follower experiences and lengthy-term hybrid staff dynamics to construct sustainable digital management fashions (Hesse, 2018).

6. Emerging Technologies and the Future of Leadership

The rapid rise of advanced virtual technologies—including artificial intelligence, blockchain architecture, metaverse platforms, and automated frameworks—is fundamentally transferring the destiny execution of organizational leadership. these disruptive tools provide large opportunities to supercharge information processing, strategic making plans, and structural efficiency across diverse sectors. however, to unlock those blessings, leaders should actively champion strong technological infrastructures, continuous staff functionality education, and adaptive governance mechanisms (Al-Zirjaw et al., 2026).

The introduction of subsequent-generation tech continuously provides executives with exceptional operational obstacles concerning innovation portfolios, digital upskilling, and technical sustainability. This friction highlights a pressing need for multi-disciplinary corporate strategies capable of dealing with complicated, tech-in depth ecosystems (Espina-Romero et al., 2023). as an example, digital spaces like the metaverse open new horizons for international client interaction and collaborative trade, but agencies frequently stumble due to an absolute lack of clean managerial manuals or established governance structures (Di Paolo et al., 2025).

Moreover, the profound depth of modern-day technological integration introduces crucial moral questions that check long-term corporate legitimacy. As organizations go through deep virtual reconstruction, they face heightened publicity to vulnerabilities regarding data governance, algorithmic bias, transparency, and stakeholder trust. Addressing those pitfalls calls for leaders to enforce proactive moral frameworks,

making sure that computerized selection-making methods stay deeply responsible and aligned with center institutional values (Hill et al.).

Ultimately, navigating these volatile industry four.0 environments requires an adaptive mindset able to balancing technological increase with human-centered execution (Asri et al., 2020; Bach & Sulíková, 2021). contemporary instructional literature remains distinctly conceptual, presenting minimum longitudinal records regarding employee version or leadership efficacy in relatively computerized work environments (Espina-Romero et al., 2023). future leadership fashions should consequently evolve into multi-dimensional frameworks that synthesize virtual knowledge and technical agility with foundational transformational ethics to guard organizational continuity.

7. Research Gaps in Transformational and Digital Leadership Studies

Notwithstanding the speedy extent of academic e-book surrounding modern management, a scientific evaluation exhibits deep conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps that prevent the theoretical adulthood of the field. A primary conceptual vulnerability is the fragmented definitions used at some point of virtual leadership literature, wherein "digital leaders" and "virtual leadership" are often handled as interchangeable phrases. This continual ambiguity restricts theoretical consistency, leaving the company global with out standardized definitions or dependable metrics to degree govt effectiveness (Adie et al., 2022; Ridha et al., 2024).

Methodologically, present day leadership research suffers from an over-reliance on go-sectional designs, qualitative interpretations, and static conceptual debates that provide no longitudinal validation. This empirical deficit makes it hard to evaluate how digital management styles influence corporate transformation and monetary overall performance over prolonged periods (Harahap et al., 2025; Saleh et al., 2025). moreover, current research show a intense geographic and business bias, focusing primarily on Western international locations or unique company sectors at the same time as ignoring worldwide frameworks and bureaucratic institutions (Espina-Romero et al., 2023; Harahap et al., 2025).

In addition, the literature fails to thoroughly give an explanation for human adaptation, emotional shifts, and interpersonal dynamics for the duration of tech-driven adjustments. even as studies closely report software program implementation and structural innovation, they constantly overlook worker resistance, emotional exhaustion, and the erosion of baseline believe within virtual networks (Cortellazzo et al., 2019). This oversight is compounded through a loss of studies on follower reports in hybrid areas, leaving agencies unaware of how far flung employees understand verbal exchange best and chief behavior (Hesse, 2018).

Ultimately, contemporary academic frameworks fail to offer a comprehensive model that unifies transformational values with technical digital skills. while both styles promote organizational agility and innovative administrative center behavior, their empirical interaction remains poorly integrated and inadequately mapped (Mihardjo et al., 2019; Erhan et al., 2022). furthermore, sensible steering regarding moral governance, information duty, and management version to emerging tools like AI or

blockchain stays heavily siloed, requiring a concerted shift in the direction of interdisciplinary studies (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Ridha et al., 2024).

8. Synthesis of Findings

The holistic synthesis of this systematic literature review proves that transformational leadership and digital leadership are no longer separate management styles, but deeply interconnected organizational engines. The continuous evolution of Industry 4.0, remote employment structures, and automated workspaces has permanently dismantled traditional, top-down managerial hierarchies. To protect corporate survival, modern organizations must demand executives who can seamlessly merge technical execution with strategic vision, structural agility, and open communication (Mihardjo et al., 2019; Adie et al., 2022; Saleh et al., 2025).

Concurrently, transformational leadership remains an indispensable operational anchor due to its powerful focus on psychological empowerment, inspirational vision, and employee motivation. In times of extreme operational disruption, these human-centric attributes act as a vital counterweight to technological coldness, building employee confidence and easing organizational reform (Ibrahim et al., 2016; Harahap et al., 2025). Therefore, long-term corporate sustainability requires an active synthesis where transformational values protect interpersonal trust and emotional intelligence, while digital skills drive technological optimization.

Furthermore, an organization's capacity to thrive in highly disrupted markets is deeply dependent on its institutional commitment to continuous, collaborative learning. Cultivating a corporate culture centered around collective experimentation, reflexive professional development, and intense intellectual curiosity is essential for building long-term resilience (Connolly et al., 2023; Hill et al.). As disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain rewrite the rules of market competition, leaders must step forward with a multi-dimensional blend of technical prowess, strategic foresight, and ethical responsibility.

In conclusion, despite the valuable insights captured across current academic studies, the broader literature remains fragmented across isolated disciplines and lacks empirical cohesion. The persistent presence of conceptual ambiguity, regional research biases, and a shortage of longitudinal data demonstrates that the field must move toward more integrated, interdisciplinary frameworks. Modern enterprises cannot afford to treat human leadership and digital innovation as competing priorities; they must adopt holistic management frameworks that leverage technology to elevate human potential and secure sustainable market success.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined the evolving relationship between transformational leadership and digital leadership within contemporary organizational environments. The reviewed literature demonstrates that technological advancement, digital transformation, Industry 4.0 implementation, remote work systems, and organizational disruption have fundamentally reshaped leadership practices, organizational structures, and communication systems across multiple sectors.

The findings indicate that digital leadership has become an increasingly important organizational capability supporting organizational adaptability, technological integration, innovation development, and strategic transformation. Studies by Mihardjo et al. (2019), Saleh et al. (2025), Adie et al. (2022), and Ridha et al. (2024) consistently demonstrated that digital leadership contributes significantly to organizational agility, innovation capability, digital transformation effectiveness, and organizational sustainability within digitally evolving environments.

At the same time, transformational leadership remains highly relevant because of its emphasis on empowerment, organizational change, inspiration, employee motivation, and innovative work behavior. Ibrahim et al. (2016) and Harahap et al. (2025) demonstrated that transformational leadership positively influences psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, organizational reform, and employee innovation capability. These findings suggest that transformational leadership continues to function as a critical organizational mechanism supporting employee engagement and organizational resilience during periods of technological and organizational change.

The synthesis further reveals that contemporary organizations increasingly require the integration of transformational leadership values and digital leadership competencies. Leaders are expected not only to manage technological systems and organizational transformation but also to maintain communication quality, organizational trust, collaborative relationships, emotional understanding, and human-centered organizational cultures. Consequently, leadership effectiveness in contemporary organizations increasingly depends on multidimensional competencies involving technological capability, strategic adaptability, innovation orientation, ethical awareness, and organizational learning capability.

The reviewed literature also identified several important unresolved issues within transformational leadership and digital leadership studies. Conceptual ambiguity, insufficient operationalization of digital leadership competencies, methodological limitations, contextual restrictions, and limited longitudinal evidence remain dominant challenges within existing research. In addition, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain systems, metaverse platforms, and digital collaboration ecosystems introduce new organizational complexities that require further theoretical and empirical investigation.

Overall, this study concludes that transformational leadership and digital leadership should no longer be treated as separate organizational paradigms. Instead, contemporary organizations increasingly require integrated leadership approaches capable of combining transformational values, technological competencies, organizational adaptability, organizational learning, innovation capability, and ethical responsibility simultaneously. Such integrated leadership approaches are essential for supporting organizational sustainability and effectiveness within increasingly digitalized and technology-driven environments.

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