



An analytical study on the effective dimensions of leadership styles for enhancing organizational performance

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ABSTRACT

Leadership style plays an important role in improving organizational performance, especially in the face of increasingly complex global competitive challenges. Effective leadership is considered capable of increasing motivation, job satisfaction, and team cohesion, which ultimately contributes positively to organizational performance. The aim of this research is to examine the impact that different leadership styles, with a focus on transformational leadership, have on the results of an organization. The research method used was a literature review of relevant scholarly sources, including articles, conference proceedings, and books that discuss the contribution of leadership style to organizational performance. Data collection was conducted through online database searches, including Google Scholar and JSTOR. The findings indicate that by promoting employee involvement and fostering a culture of constant enhancement, transformational leadership can greatly enhance organizational effectiveness. At the same time, transactional leadership may be successful in reaching short-term goals but lacks the ability to inspire lasting motivation. On the other hand, passive-avoidant leadership often results in hindered team dynamics and reduced productivity. The advice given in this research suggests that companies should focus on implementing transformational leadership in order to boost employee motivation, involvement, and creativity. Moreover, utilizing a blend of transformational and transactional leadership techniques may be effective in reaching both immediate and long-lasting objectives. Organizations are also advised to develop leadership competencies through training, as well as avoid passive-avoidant leadership styles that can be detrimental to team performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a vital role in shaping organizational performance, acting as a key driver for achieving strategic objectives, sustaining operational efficiency, and fostering innovation. Effective leadership influences various aspects of an organization, including employee motivation, job satisfaction, and team cohesion, which are critical for enhancing overall performance. Organizational culture and the cultural context of the local environment play significant role in shaping the

effectiveness of various leadership styles (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018; Saleh et al., 2018). Every organization has a unique culture, which includes the values, norms, and practices that evolve within their work environment. This culture will shape on how the leadership style is accepted and applied by the members of the organization (Fariz, 2022a). For instance, in organizations that have a collaborative and egalitarian culture, a transformational leadership style that prioritizes inspiring and empowering team members is perhaps more effective. Whereas, in a more hierarchical and authoritarian culture, a transactional leadership style that focuses more on rewards and punishments may be more preferred. Transformational leadership, focusing on vision, motivation, and flexibility, has proven to greatly boost company performance through encouraging employee involvement and cultivating a culture of ongoing enhancement (Natasya & Harahap, 2023). On the other hand, poor leadership can lead to decreased motivation, frequent staff changes, and lower efficiency, causing damage to the overall success of the organisation.

As global markets become increasingly competitive (Fariz, 2022b), the demand for effective leaders who can navigate complex challenges and drive organizational success has grown. Organizational performance is widely regarded as one of the most critical constructs in management literature (Martin-Rojas et al., 2019). Many research projects have been carried out to investigate the reasons, procedures, and additional elements that improve the results of organizations (Roundy et al., 2018). Scholars such as (Arnett et al., 2018) define organizational performance as the effectiveness of an organization, emphasizing the attainment of objectives and the overall results achieved by the organization (Winarsih & Fariz, 2021).

In recent years, organizations worldwide have witnessed both successes and failures in industries that, on the surface, appear similar. Existing corporations such as Google, Amazon, and Tesla have demonstrated sustained leadership in their respective industries, showcasing how strategic vision and adaptive leadership are critical to navigating modern challenges. Still, other organizations have struggled to maintain their growth trajectories due to ineffective leadership strategies and a failure to adapt to changing market dynamics (Chatterjee et al., 2018; Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Even renowned companies like IBM, General Motors, Xerox, Glaxo, Unilever, Nestlé, and Philips have encountered challenges and occasional setbacks despite their track record of success in the past (Flamholtz, 1995). Achieving sustained organizational performance requires top management to demonstrate effective leadership and cultivate a positive work environment (Chatterjee et al., 2018). Saleh et al. (2018) suggest that leaders have a crucial impact on moulding the trajectory and performance of an organisation. Gandolfi and Stone (2018) add that managers have the ability to increase employee dedication and efficiency by utilising suitable leadership techniques.

Previous research (Tang, 2019) indicates that several research studies have explored how different leadership styles influence various aspects of organizations, such as their effectiveness and performance. As noted by Saleem et al. (2019), studies of this nature are essential for understanding how leadership can support and empower followers, encouraging them to invest greater effort and commitment, ultimately enhancing organizational performance.

This research uniquely examines the impact of transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership styles on organisational performance, particularly in competitive international contexts. It introduces a theoretical framework linking leadership styles to outcomes, offering guidance for future studies. Unlike previous research, which often focused on specific styles or industries, this study adopts a comprehensive approach, exploring how these leadership styles influence employee engagement, organisational culture, and innovation across diverse cultural and industry settings. The local cultural context involving social norms, communication patterns and values dominant in a particular society also holds significance. For illustration, in cultures that prioritize respect for authority and hierarchy (as in many Asian cultures), a more authoritarian leadership style may be more likely to be effective than a more egalitarian leadership style. In contrast, for countries with a more individualistic and egalitarian culture (as in many Western countries), a more participative or transformational leadership style tends to be more at play. This is quite evident in this study, as having an understanding of the influence of organizational culture and

local culture can assist in the selection of the most effective leadership style in a given context, as well as strengthen the relationship between leadership style and organizational performance.

Yet, there is a gap in research that explores the collective impact of various leadership styles on organizational performance in culturally and industry diverse contexts. Despite existing research on each style individually, this study underscores the call to explore the collective relationship between the styles, specifically how they influence innovation, employee engagement, and organizational culture in a variety of industry and cultural settings. The aim of this research is to explore how various leadership styles impact the performance of an organisation, as well as to establish a foundation for future investigations into the connection between leadership and organisational results. Additionally, the study seeks to provide guidance to leaders within organisations on selecting the most effective leadership style to enhance performance and competitiveness.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers in this study looked at previous research to investigate how different leadership styles impact organisational performance. They paid special attention to the connection between transformational leadership and organisational performance. The researchers ensured the quality and credibility of the sources by selecting relevant articles, conference proceedings, books and dissertations from reputable online databases. Data was gathered from a variety of online databases such as Google Scholar, Springer Link, ResearchGate, Wiley, Science Direct, Taylor & Francis, JSTOR, Emerald, Scopus, the Repository of Universiti Utara Malaysia Library, WorldCat, and EBSCOHOST. In the present study, online databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and others were considered based on their comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature. Google Scholar is easily accessible and offers a wide array of scholarly materials, while Scopus is known for indexing high-quality journals, ensuring the inclusion of relevant and current research. This database was chosen to ensure a thorough literature review and obtain diverse and credible sources relevant to the research topic. This focus on academic sources demonstrates the researcher's efforts in using recognized literature in the field. In their investigation, the researchers sought out the most pertinent materials such as articles, conference papers, books, and dissertations to gather a thorough understanding of the subject. The study also puts forward insightful recommendations for prospective research. By analysing the research aims, methods, and results of past empirical and theoretical studies in the field, the review was carried out. The analysis was performed manually with a theory synthesis approach to achieve a conceptual model.

The theoretical and empirical frameworks are integrated by analyzing findings from various studies that address the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance. The results of this analysis were then used to develop a conceptual model on which to base further exploration of the impact of leadership style on organizational outcomes. After conducting an in-depth analysis of existing research, the study introduces a research model that outlines the correlation between various leadership styles and the performance of an organization. This model is intended to guide future research efforts by offering a structure to examine how different leadership approaches impact the outcomes of a company. Subsequent research can use this model as a starting point to delve deeper into the complexities and consequences of leadership styles on organizational success.

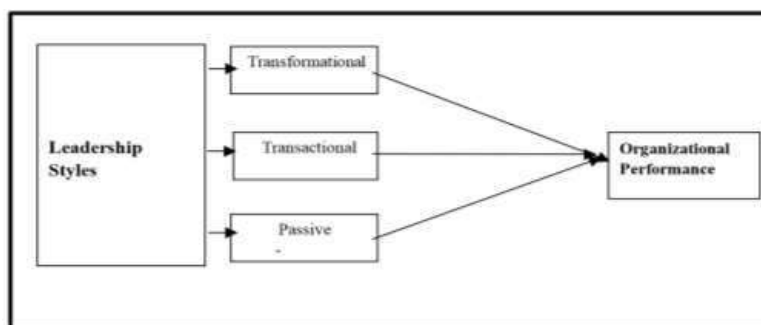


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Leadership and Leadership Styles

Contemporary leadership theories build on traditional frameworks, emphasizing adaptability, collaboration, and ethical guidance as core competencies required of effective leaders today. Recent studies have expanded beyond the transactional and transformational paradigms, exploring diverse approaches that address the increasingly dynamic nature of organizations, including authentic, servant, and adaptive leadership models.

Authentic leadership, for instance, prioritizes self-awareness, relational transparency, and integrity, allowing leaders to cultivate trust and commitment within teams (Gardner et al., 2021). Similarly, servant leadership focuses on empowering and developing followers by prioritizing their needs and fostering a supportive environment, ultimately driving both personal and organizational growth (Buil et al., 2019). Adaptive leadership, on the other hand, is gaining recognition for its emphasis on flexibility (Fariz, 2022c) and responsiveness to rapidly changing organizational challenges, helping leaders navigate complex, unpredictable environments (Heifetz, 2009).

Research highlights that the alignment of leadership style with organizational culture and workforce needs significantly influences organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and resilience (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). In light of the growing importance of agility and innovation in competitive markets, leadership theories now stress the value of empowering employees, fostering inclusivity, and promoting a culture of continuous learning (Ahmed et al., 2023). Consequently, contemporary leadership approaches encourage leaders to adopt a participatory role (Oktaviani, 2022), where guidance and support are balanced with autonomy and employee engagement, cultivating environments conducive to sustainable success (Herlina et al., 2021).

Leadership is a process involving interaction between leaders and followers, wherein the leader guides and motivates the group to achieve shared goals or outcomes (Yukl, 1989). Burns (1978) significantly contributed to leadership studies through his examination of politicians' leadership behaviors, introducing the concept of viewing subordinates as either transformational or transactional. (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985) later adapted Burns' model for broader organizational settings. Eisenbach et al. (1999) noted that Bass and Bernard (1985) transactional and transformational leadership frameworks have gained widespread attention in leadership studies. Bass and Bernard (1985) introduced three leadership styles - transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant - in their model.

Leadership is crucial for shaping the dynamics and performance of organizations, with several different styles and methods that can be utilised depending on the circumstances (Fariz, 2022a). One of the most frequently debated leadership styles is transactional leadership, which centres on the interaction between leaders and their followers, where the leader sets goals for followers to achieve (Fariz, 2019). In contrast, transformational leadership emphasizes a deeper connection between leaders and followers, with the goal of creating a shared vision and encouraging

team growth (VanGronigen, 2022). Democratic leadership, which encourages participatory decision-making, provides opportunities for team members to express their input, while autocratic leadership emphasizes more on tight control with centralized decision-making by the leader (Keleş, 2022).

Servant leadership, in contrast, revolves around empowering followers and catering to their needs in order to develop them into future leaders. In a historical context, leadership theory has evolved considerably, from the "Big Man Theory" to more flexible modern approaches, reflecting the changing values and needs of organizations (Keleş, 2022). These various leadership styles are also linked to the shifts in management practices taking place in both the public and private sectors, which increasingly emphasize adaptation to changing environments (Bhansali et al., 2014; Keleş, 2022). The effectiveness of different leadership styles can vary in different situations, so it's essential to understand that no single style is consistently the best. The most appropriate approach will depend on the specific culture of the organisation and the demands of the situation (VanGronigen, 2022).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is a type of leadership that centres on straightforward transactions between leaders and their employees, using rewards and penalties to shape and manage personnel conduct and productivity. This approach can improve organizational performance, particularly in achieving short-term goals, as it provides a clear structure and motivates employees to meet set expectations (Mumtaz et al., 2024). Research has also shown a significant positive relationship between transactional leadership and worker productivity in industries such as retail and finance (Lama et al., 2024). However, the main emphasis of transactional leadership on external incentives and immediate objectives may restrict the internal drive of employees, thus impeding an organization's capacity to innovate and adjust in a rapidly evolving setting (Udin, 2024). In this case, employee motivation acts as a mediator that strengthens the effectiveness of transactional leadership, as increased motivation can lead to better performance. However, the limitations of transactional leadership in driving innovation and long-term engagement point to the need for a more balanced approach, which incorporates elements of transformational leadership to achieve sustainable organizational success (Azzahra et al., 2024).

Transactional leadership consists of three fundamental elements: (a) conditional benefits, where leaders outline anticipations and connect them to rewards, and (b) active monitoring, where leaders establish precise objectives and closely oversee progress (Duguay et al., 2018). A study by Patiar and Wang (2016) examined transactional leadership's impact on employee engagement in high-demand work environments, finding that transactional leaders can enhance engagement through clear performance expectations and structured reward systems. This structure helps employees to focus on immediate goals, thus improving task performance and aligning employee efforts with organizational objectives.

Similarly, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) investigated the role of transactional leadership in the education sector, emphasizing that transactional leadership contributes to maintaining operational efficiency and procedural compliance. Their findings suggest that transactional leadership can be especially effective in roles that require adherence to well-defined standards, such as administrative tasks, where immediate, measurable performance outcomes are critical.

Further, research by Ahmed et al. (2023) explored how transactional leadership affects employee turnover intentions. The study revealed that transactional leadership, when applied alongside other leadership styles, can reduce turnover by reinforcing employees' sense of stability and predictability in the workplace. The findings imply that transactional leadership can complement other styles to balance motivation with organizational structure, ultimately reducing turnover rates.

Transformational Leadership

Burch & Guarana (2014) identified transformational leaders as agents of change, noting that they share this vision with employees, fostering alignment and engagement. The essential elements of this type of leadership, such as ideal behaviours, ideal attributes, inspiring motivation, personalised attention, and intellectual stimulation, are crucial building blocks of the theory of transformational leadership (Fariz & Winarsih, 2024).

Transformational leadership style, which prioritizes inspiration and motivation, has been shown to be effective in increasing employee engagement and driving innovation (Al-Kasasbeh, 2024). Transformational leaders not only inspire their teams but also create a climate of innovation that is essential for adaptation to market changes (Logan, 2024). On the other hand, transactional leadership style focuses on stability and efficiency, which is suitable for more stable environments, but tends to limit creativity and motivation in dynamic settings (Najihah et al., 2024). This style emphasizes clear tasks and structured rewards, which may increase productivity, but may be less effective in building long-term engagement (Balakrishnan et al., 2024). In addition, communication and interpersonal skills play an important role in the success of the leadership style (Fariz, 2019). Effective communication, through an assertive approach, can increase employee commitment and trust, leading to improved organizational performance (Balakrishnan et al., 2024). Leaders who are able to adapt their communication style to the needs and motivations of the team can create more productive and adaptive relationships (Balakrishnan et al., 2024). It should be acknowledged that solely focusing on leadership style may result in neglecting the impact of organizational culture and external factors on performance. Therefore, a holistic approach that integrates leadership with other organizational elements is essential to achieve sustainable success.

Passive-Avoidant Leadership

Recent studies have delved deeper into passive-avoidant leadership, which is defined by a tendency to avoid taking initiative and making decisions, and explored how it impacts the overall performance of an organisation. Studies consistently highlight the negative impacts of passive-avoidant leadership on team dynamics, employee morale, and organizational performance. For example, Zhang and Li (2016) explored the impact of passive-avoidant leadership on staff involvement and job contentment in healthcare establishments, demonstrating that this type of leadership is associated with diminished engagement and increased potential for staff burnout, primarily because of the absence of guidance and assistance.

Similarly, a study Ahmed et al. (2023) investigated the link between passive-avoidant leadership and employee effectiveness in the banking industry, revealing a connection between this type of leadership and lower output levels and higher turnover intentions. The study suggested that employees under passive-avoidant leaders experience frustration and lack of motivation, as they receive minimal guidance and support, which hinders their ability to achieve set goals effectively.

Additionally, Mahmood et al. (2023) examined passive-avoidant leadership within project-based teams, focusing on innovation outcomes. Their findings indicated that passive-avoidant leadership can stifle creativity and innovation by failing to provide the necessary encouragement or resources for team members to pursue new ideas. In high-stakes, project-based settings, the absence of proactive leadership was shown to hinder problem-solving and adaptive performance.

Laissez-faire or passive-avoidant leadership is the third type of leadership style introduced by Bass and Bernard (1985) which is characterized by a lack of leadership. According to researchers in leadership studies, such as Bass & Avolio (1994) and Gardner and Stough (2002), passive-avoidant leadership is synonymous with a 'do nothing' or 'no leadership' style. Bass and Avolio (1994) FRL theory encompass three different approaches to leadership - transactional, transformational, and non-transactional laissez-faire.

Full Range Leadership Model

Researchers (Salter, 2007; Green et al., 2008) discovered that the Full Range Leadership Model includes transactional, transformational, laissez-faire styles, as well as active and passive forms of management by exception during their analysis. The model integrates a spectrum of leadership behaviors, illustrating that leaders apply various forms of leadership behavior across different contexts, as shown in the figure below.

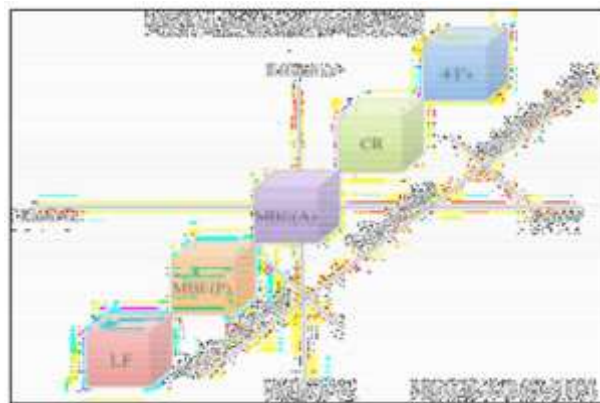


Figure 2 Full Range Leadership Approach
Source: Bass & Avolio, 2004

In the Full-Range Leadership (FRL) model, it is believed that all leaders possess some level of each type of leadership style (Kirkbride, 2006). Kirkbride (2006) highlighted that the FRL model is extensively studied and confirmed as a leadership framework used worldwide. The model suggests that successful leaders mainly show characteristics of transformational leadership, while ineffective leaders usually display transactional and passive-avoidant traits (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Kirkbride (2006) noted that the FRL approach encompasses a wide range of leadership behaviours, covering everything from passive non-leadership to transformational leadership, including all styles of leadership in between.

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is a widely studied topic in the management field (Andrew Neely, 2005). Scholars such as Ford and Schellenberg (1982) and Johannessen et al. (1999) have noted that, despite extensive studies in this area, a universally accepted definition of organizational performance has yet to be established. Based on Hammer and Champy (1993) and Burch and Guarana (2014) organizational performance is seen as a measure of how well an organization is operating, showing both the outcomes of its activities and its accomplishment of specified goals. Studies on organizational performance draw insights from a range of fields such as operations management, human resources, strategic management, marketing, and organizational behaviour (Neely, 2005; Marr et al., 2004). Organizational performance is often evaluated against certain benchmarks, emphasizing both effectiveness and efficiency in action (Andy Neely, 2002). Sawalha (2013) described organizational performance as the capability of a company to accomplish its objectives, which may include making a profit, maintaining financial stability, capturing a substantial portion of the market, delivering top-notch products, pleasing customers, and ensuring long-term viability, all accomplished through successful strategies and decisions. Boyne and Walker (2005) pointed out that there are various factors that impact the performance of an organization, such as internal factors like corporate culture, styles of leadership, and the talent of employees, as well as external factors like the environment, politics, and social changes.

Enhancing the performance of an organisation is an ongoing journey involving innovative thinking and constant development. This evolution occurs in tandem with the organisation's

expansion, necessitating regular contributions from management and employees at all levels (Tunali and Sener, 2019). High-achieving companies make it a priority to not only meet existing performance benchmarks, but also actively seek to improve performance through enhancing critical performance factors. Li and Tan (2013) stressed the significance of implementing efficient strategies in order to improve and boost the performance of organisations, including those that operate for profit as well as those that do not.

Leadership Styles on Organizational Performance

After reviewing the literature, it is clear that different leadership styles can greatly influence how well an organization performs (Rahmat et al., 2019). Transformational leadership is a style in which leaders motivate their followers to surpass what is expected of them, and it is essential in improving the overall performance of an organisation (Buil et al., 2019). There is additional evidence to suggest that transformational leadership is highly effective at encouraging both expected and voluntary actions by employees (Weller et al., 2020).

Research has shown that strong leadership capabilities are more likely to enhance organizational performance and motivate employees to perform at their best, whereas ineffective leadership can hinder performance (Hersona & Sidharta, 2017). Academics have defined leadership as the capability to inspire individuals to achieve objectives that they previously believed to be beyond their reach or were hesitant to attempt (Taylor et al., 2019). Furthermore, certain scholars have recognised transformational leadership as a crucial element impacting the performance of organisations, especially in public sector settings (Han et al., 2019). Elbaz and Haddoud (2017) further contended that the leadership styles and behaviours demonstrated by leaders have a considerable impact on the outcomes, positive or negative, of an organisation.

Previous research has emphasised how transformational leadership can improve the overall performance of an organisation, consistent with findings from Buil et al. (2019). Another study has confirmed the strong connection between transformational leadership and the success of an organization (Ejaz et al., 2024; Arif & Akram, 2018). In the same way, research shows a clear link between transformational leadership and the success of an organisation (Patiar & Wang, 2016). Transformational leaders inspire followers toward a shared vision of organizational success (Ghafourian et al., 2010). Hence, the established impact of transformational leadership on organisational performance surpasses that of other leadership styles.

Transformational and participative leadership styles have been shown to be highly effective in driving innovation and creating a positive organizational culture, which in turn improves performance. Transformational leadership, for example, is known to increase employee motivation and engagement, and create an environment that is aligned with organizational goals, thereby positively impacting performance (Logan, 2024; Azzahra et al., 2024). In contrast, autocratic or laissez-faire leadership styles often stifle employee creativity and motivation, potentially negatively impacting organizational outcomes (Azzahra et al., 2024; Yabrifa et al., 2024). Transactional leadership, while effective for short-term and operational goal achievement, has a more limited impact when compared to transformational leadership styles (Azzahra et al., 2024; Sokolic et al., 2024). In addition, effective communication and a supportive organizational culture play an important role in enhancing the positive impact of leadership styles on organizational performance (Azzahra et al., 2024; Sokolić et al., 2024). However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of leadership styles can also be affected by situational factors and the specific context of the organization, which suggests that a uniform leadership approach is not always optimal for every situation (Logan, 2024).

Practically, the results of this study offer guidance for organizational leaders in selecting and applying appropriate leadership styles to achieve organizational goals. For example, leaders are advised to adopt a transformational approach in situations that require innovation and adaptability, while a transactional approach may be more effective for tasks that require structure and strict

compliance. This understanding helps organizations increase productivity, motivate employees, and create a work environment that supports optimal engagement and performance.

4. CONCLUSION

This research has thoroughly examined the key aspects of different leadership styles and how they can improve the overall performance of a company. After carefully reviewing various studies, it is clear that leadership has a significant influence on the success of an organization. Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership has been consistently identified as one of the most effective in driving performance, fostering innovation, and promoting employee engagement. Empirical results from the previous studies reveal that transformational leadership style significantly improves organizational performance by increasing employee engagement, innovation, and positive work culture. Still, there remains a call for strengthening the empirical evidence through further studies across different sectors and organizational contexts. Conversely, passive-avoidant and transactional leadership styles have shown less positive effects on organizational performance, with the former often linked to negative organizational outcomes. The study emphasises the need to match leadership approaches with company objectives in order to enhance effectiveness and stresses the pivotal part leadership actions play in attaining sustainable achievement. This research spotlights the importance of matching leadership styles with organizational goals to improve performance. Leaders are urged to adopt transformational leadership, which is proven to inspire innovation and increase employee engagement. A well balanced approach, with the inclusion of transactional leadership styles when necessary for specific operational tasks, can more closely optimize results. These findings bring valuable guidance to leaders who want to create sustainable success in their organizations. As a practical recommendation, organizations can develop transformational leadership training to improve leadership competencies in relation to organizational needs. In addition, it is essential to develop evaluation tools to assess the match between leadership styles and the needs of the organization to support its strategic goals.

Future studies have the opportunity to build upon the results of this research by carrying out practical research to delve deeper into the link between various leadership approaches and the effectiveness of organisations in various sectors and settings. It would be advantageous to analyse how particular aspects of transformational leadership, like inspiring motivation and personalised attention, impact the behaviour and performance of employees. Furthermore, longitudinal research may provide insight into the lasting impact of different leadership styles on the overall success and endurance of an organisation. Another avenue for future studies could involve examining how leaders can flexibly adjust their leadership styles to align with evolving organizational circumstances or obstacles. Finally, forthcoming research could delve into the collective influence of leadership styles alongside other organisational elements, such as corporate culture, strategic consistency, and external market circumstances, to achieve a more comprehensive grasp of the factors influencing performance across different levels within an organisation.

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