

A Systematic Literature Review on the Nexus of Ambidextrous, Transformational, and Transactional Leadership and Organizational Innovation

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Abstract

This study systematically reviews the role of leadership in organizational innovation. The selected research articles analyze the relationship between ambidextrous, transformational, and transactional leadership and organizational innovation has been discussed. 56 published research articles through the Scopus database have been reviewed for this SLR, which were highly cited papers published from 2017 to 2021. The PRISMA statement template explains the process of selecting and rejecting the article. A positive relationship has been found either directly or indirectly between ambidextrous leadership, transformational, transactional leadership and organizational innovation. SCOPUS is used to collect journal articles for this study. Therefore, the review focused on research articles that discussed the relationships between ambidextrous, transformational, and transactional leadership and organizational innovation. The analysis reveals a positive association between transformational, ambidextrous, transactional leadership and organizational innovation directly or indirectly. Among the important conclusions are that transformational leadership is vital in encouraging organizational innovation by inspiring shared objectives and influencing staff members to welcome change. In contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leadership is less likely to be innovative, even though it is more successful in tracking goals and keeping track of accomplishments. While ambidextrous leadership provides a balanced strategy for exploratory and exploitative innovation, transactional leadership may be advantageous for incremental innovation. By offering insights into the effects of transactional, transformational, and ambidextrous leadership on innovation, this study adds to the body of research by suggesting that businesses can foster innovation by adopting effective leadership philosophies.

Keywords: Transformational, Transactional leadership, Ambidexterity leadership, Organizational innovation.

Introduction

Risk is rapidly increasing in the existing business environment globally, and because of the rapid changes, it is becoming difficult for organizations to forecast the market accurately (Fontana & Musa, 2017). Organizations want to improve their existing process and avail those opportunities that help them secure their position in the market (Scheepers and Storm. 2019). If organizations want to enhance their performance continuously and stand competitive in this risky environment, they must change their routine and innovate. (Prasad and Junni. 2016). The innovation process can be achieved through creative employees and by implementing their new ideas to achieve innovative performance (west and Farr, 1990). Leadership is one of the important factors in the organization that plays a role in innovation (Kittikunchotiwut, 2019).

Many publications are being reviewed in this study, and the link between leadership styles and organizational innovation is being discussed in these publications. Organizations and decision-makers can benefit from this study by adopting the best leadership style that improves organizational innovation and allows them to take a competitive advantage. The overview of the concept of innovation and leadership is present in the first part of the study. The methodology is discussed in the second part of the paper, which provides a descriptive analysis of the reviewed publications. The third section of this study discusses every publication according to leadership style. Research findings and conclusions are summarized in section 4.

Innovation

Innovation is critical for organizations to get a competitive advantage and sustain their market position (Porter, 1990). New or entirely different idea applications that enhance the value in customers' eyes result in organizational growth. Organizations can get a competitive advantage through innovation, increasing their business performance (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). According to Borins (2002), technical employees bring creative ideas, and these are the people who not only improve the current process and products but also bring new products and processes. For example, due to internal problems regarding external conditions in the public sector, front-line employees and middle managers take the initiative to innovate. Many factors play a role in innovation, but leadership is the primary source of innovation (Zacher & Rosing, 2015).

The innovation process is how the organizational activities are executed and controlled, takes innovation, and increases the value to the customer. The innovation process begins with generating multiple ideas, then choosing and developing the idea, and

finally ends with the idea diffusion (Fontana & Musa, 2017). Adopting innovation becomes much easier for the organization with an innovative and dynamic environment (Khalili, 2016). Its employees can perceive the organizational policies and strategies according to their environment. The organizational environment reflects its employees' emotions, behaviors, and attitudes (Villaluz & Hechanova, 2019).

The capability to bring and adopt a new idea is known as organizational innovation, which is critical to increasing the productivity of the business and its performance (Jia et al., 2018). Organizational innovation can be acquired in many ways, for example, by introducing new products, innovative organizational structures, adopting a different managerial practice, or a cultural change in the organization (Kwon & Cho, 2016). Individual, organizational, and environmental variables can influence organizational innovation, but the main variable for organizational innovation is the organization (Damanpur, 1991).

Innovation paradoxes are discussed by Buekens (2013), and he states that while companies are relied upon to have explicit structure and working models, they expect to be versatile and open with the eventual result of adjusting to promote changes and embrace innovations. This also consolidates risk flexibility and allows for the picking up of astonishing opportunities to ensure long-term success and sustainability. Managers are expected to be competent concerning the external environment and put assets into working on existing abilities and securing new and problematic ones. There must be harmony in all the organizational business units and working in a comparable direction. Therefore, innovation demands a style of leadership where leaders motivate and encourage their peers to think differently and introduce an environment that gives a smooth flow of innovative ideas across the different business units.

Therefore, leadership style drives organizational innovation. Organizational practices and the innovative environment of the organization can be influenced by the leader (Jia et al., 2018). Organizations must have effective leadership if they want to achieve organizational innovation. Leaders must enhance the decision quality by analyzing all the options and considering all the input sources. Leaders should be competent in taking the best from the employees by motivating them (McMillan, 2010). Organizational learning can be another antecedent of organizational learning, and leaders must play a critical role by supporting the learning process and by producing an environment where knowledge can be shared (Hou et al., 2019).

Leadership

Leadership comprises the personal relationships described in the literature or how one behaves with peers, stakeholders, and administrative positions. (Nusait et. al., 2012). It is usually variable and cannot be defined universally. Modern leadership is based on one's ability to inspire and motivate followers to create a highly motivated, supportive, and creative environment for the team to improve performance. Leadership comprises different aspects, such as coaching and role modeling (Samos et al., 2011).

Leadership is generally a team-based effort to acquire the aim. (Waite, 2014). These are the leaders who can motivate and influence the innovators. (Kwon & Cho, 2011) Leaders are responsible for the changes in any organization by their available resources. (Sarros et. al., 2011). Employers are a fundamental part of the organization, and they must have a vision of leadership and other organizational practices that could help the process. (Kalili, 2016). Leaders are those people who help the organization's management innovation. (Chang, 2016). Leaders are responsible for inspiring their followers and encouraging them to bring out innovation and creativity so they can know their aims and goals and perform very well. Leaders encourage their followers in every way to think about new ideas for the organization (Villaluz & Hechanova, 2019).

Leadership in the Context of Organizational Innovation

However, leadership is a complex stigma used to inspire followers. Leadership is critical in finding organizational innovation; leaders initiate innovations and introduce new and creative ideas. Organizational innovation is fully comprised of a supportive environment and a type of leadership that promotes learning and open communication. Thus, it can provide all sorts of resources to individuals who need innovation. Organizational innovation usually enhances the performance of an organization and is generally due to the style of leadership or any other factor such as teamwork, collaboration, or learning. Leadership is important to increase organizational innovation by impacting various variables such as organizational climate, strategy, and learning. So, it is not based on a single individual but comprised of leaders and employees and their engagement with each other (Liao et al., 2017). According to Martins and Terblanche (2003), leadership is vital to maintaining the organizational culture. Moreover, leadership promotes organizational differentiation strategies required for the uniqueness of its product features or the marketing of its product. The authors thus mention the importance of building an environment that provides employee empowerment and makes different resources available for innovation initiatives. (Semuel et al, 2017).

The leader can share his vision with his peers to create an organizational innovation strategy. Leaders establish a helpful environment for their followers and provide them with the guidance to pursue their goals and promote innovation. In this way, a leader ensures that his followers are fully capable and are interested in proving themselves. The leaders are, therefore, the reason for their employees' commitment to work and good performance. The full support and guidance provided by the leader make the employees confident to take any risk or challenge and perform better (Woszczyna, 2015).

Slimane (2015) defined leaders as people who are responsible for motivating and inspiring their followers to perform better. That is why innovation is necessary to lead. Leaders are responsible for the innovations they promote, the creativity of their employees, and the care they give to their followers' emotions and attitudes for better performance and innovation (Carneiro, 2008). Innovative leaders and others are not the same. They are different in many ways. They possess creative capabilities and analyze the organizational processes from their innovative perspective. They are fervent, taking challenges and risks to bring about innovation and create a healthy, creative environment. They are so focused on their mission and goals; they are creative and passionate and can create a highly talented and motivated team. Innovation leaders use both front-end and back-end approaches (Deschamps, 2005).

Innovation leadership is defined by Sen and Eren (2012) as the logical way to solve problems and benefit the people. Innovative leaders have a vision, and they can reshape the future and communicate a shared vision. Innovative leaders must possess multiple qualities for success. Innovative leaders should know social problems to provide radical and logical solutions. An innovative leader should be efficient and talented enough to analyze the surroundings and be able to compete. Innovative leaders must be efficient, empathetic, and honest and value equality. They should be so strong in themselves that they inspire their employees and can easily communicate and share their vision. Vlock (2012) completed a study on innovative leaders' competency profiles. In a highly creative and innovative environment, leaders should promote and encourage their followers to take on any risk or challenge and share creativity and innovation. The author has proposed a four-quadrant competency profile. The first quadrant is known as an s 'strategist,' which declares that the leader can motivate and inspire his followers to teamwork and achieve the goal. Generally, leaders are result-driven, but an innovative leader can inspire followers and provide them guidance and support to achieve better performance and, thus, achieve results.

Research Aims

The role of leadership can be seen in the development and determination of organizational innovation. Different leadership styles have made finding the relationship between each leadership style and organizational innovation challenging. Different leadership styles have also made finding the right style for innovation in an organization is harder. Obviously, leadership plays an imperative role in creating and deciding organizational innovation every day. Different leadership styles make it hard to decide whether to link organizational innovation and leadership style. Many early studies have shown to investigate and find the connection between innovation and leadership overall or specific leadership style. For instance, Ayranci and Ayranci (2015) have inspected the leadership highlights and perspectives between small to medium venture (SME) proprietors leads the innovativeness of their business, express the link between creativity and leadership is not obvious and is for sure questionable concerning the link between different leadership styles and innovation. The writer suggested further investigation into the link between leadership and innovation. Essentially, Vloc (2012) indicates that combining innovation and leadership in one stream of literature as innovative leadership is a huge advancing subject that is modestly new. The writer found a gap in his leadership requirement study for successful innovation.

Moreover, it is said in a public sector innovation by Moussa et al. (2018) that the leadership characteristics, practices, and capabilities needed for the fruitful execution of innovation stay vague; leaders are relied upon to advance a culture of transparency and adaptability that typifies innovation, just as start the activities related to innovation and leads to another follow likewise. Moreover, Zacher and Rosing (2015) have suggested more investigations to find the effect of ambidexterity leadership on organizational innovation rather than at the individual or group level. Khalili (2016) suggests that future exploration organizations ought to be subjective in analyzing the link between the behaviors of leaders and workers' innovation and deciding if ambidextrous, transformational, or transactional leadership has more effect on innovation. Much literature is available on ambidextrous leadership and innovation, but a systematic consolidation is missing to link ambidextrous leadership and innovation. The current review aims:

- To concentrate on the connection between organizational innovation and ambidextrous, transformational, and transactional leadership styles.
- To distinguish the leadership style from transformational, transactional, and ambidextrous leadership for cultivating organizational innovation.

Thus, this paper reviews many articles that examine the link between different leadership styles and innovation to explain the problem to experts so they can embrace the appropriate leadership style and furnish students with additional experiences on this research subject.

Methodology

Search Strategy

The purpose of the paper is to provide a broad investigation and review the effect of ambidextrous, transformational, and transactional leadership on innovation in an organization by finding the relationship between leadership and innovation in previous studies and for the guidance of the user of this study, all the findings are compiled in this paper. Specific leadership styles are being focused on most of the existing literature. An SLR of the previous studies on ambidextrous leadership, transformational and transactional leadership, and innovation has been included in this paper. The study addresses the problem of available literature by identifying, evaluating, and integrating all the relevant studies done in a specific field by addressing the research question (Burry, 2012). The preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) are used to select and reject the relevant material. Researchers can use PRISM's statement to improve the reporting of the systematic literature review paper. The published research article in SCOPUS from 2017 to 2021 has been used for this study.

Literature search.

The relevant articles are found on the SCOPUS database to complete this study. The keywords used for the search are transformational, transactional leadership, ambidextrous leadership, and innovation. As a result, 165 articles and 75 were found in the past five years, 2017-2021. This time window is selected for the systematic literature review because the number of publications in the last five years has increased immensely. The articles were selected under business management and accounting, econometrics, and finance, and we were left with 64. 58 papers were left after selecting the document type "article." English language of the paper was selected, and 56 papers were left.

Quality assessment: The identified papers were selected using a detailed process to be included in this paper. The papers with at least 10 citations were chosen for this study to help the authors understand the concept better.

Eligibility and inclusion criteria. Only published articles were taken for this study. Papers written in English were selected because of two reasons: the highest availability of literature in English and the worldwide acceptability of the English language.

Studies included in the qualitative synthesis. For the analysis, only 27 papers were selected, which were published in Scopus-indexed journals from 2017-2021. The following process is being used after selecting the papers. The corresponding metadata was exported into Microsoft Excel from Scopus.

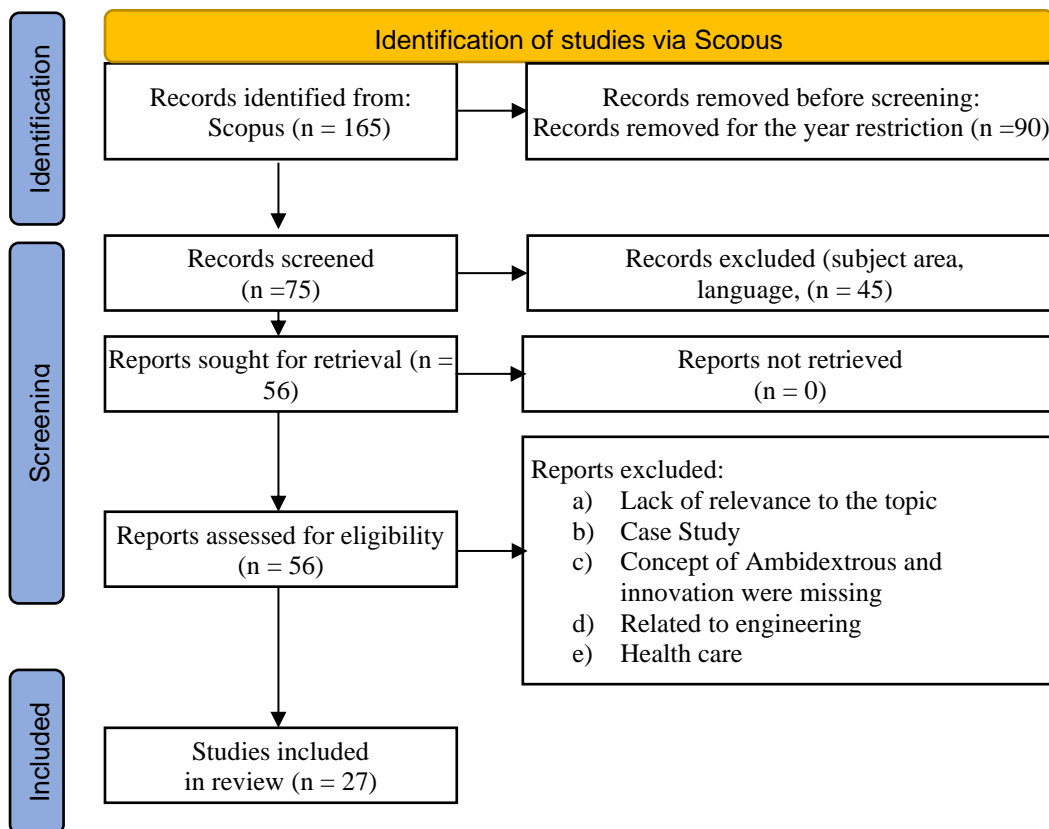


Figure 1. Study Scope

Descriptive analysis

The reviewed publications were classified based on their year of publication, leadership style, journal name, number of citations, and research methodology.

Year base: The trend of the studies in Figure 2 about ambidextrous leadership and innovation from 2017-2021. The results depend on the number of publications annually except if restricted to highly cited studies. The maximum number of papers were published in 2021.

Industry base: Figure 3 shows the industry that carries out ambidextrous leadership and innovation. The industry is divided into two sectors: manufacturing and services. Eight articles are taken from manufacturing, six are taken from services, and 13 are considered other because the industry is not mentioned in these articles.

Journal base: European Management Review published two articles from 2017-2021, while the rest of the journals published one article each. Table 1 shows the top 10 journals, along with their published articles.

Citations based: 10 citations per paper is the minimum selection criteria to select a paper for this study. International Journal of Human Resource Management is the top-cited article, with 54 total citations. The top eleven highly cited papers can be seen in Table 2, with the details of authors and sources.

Distribution of articles by research methodology: 07 articles, with 26 % conceptual out of 27. An empirical study was conducted in 20 articles. Out of these 20 articles, 15, a percentage of 56, employed a quantitative study, while 05, with 18 %, employed a qualitative method approach.

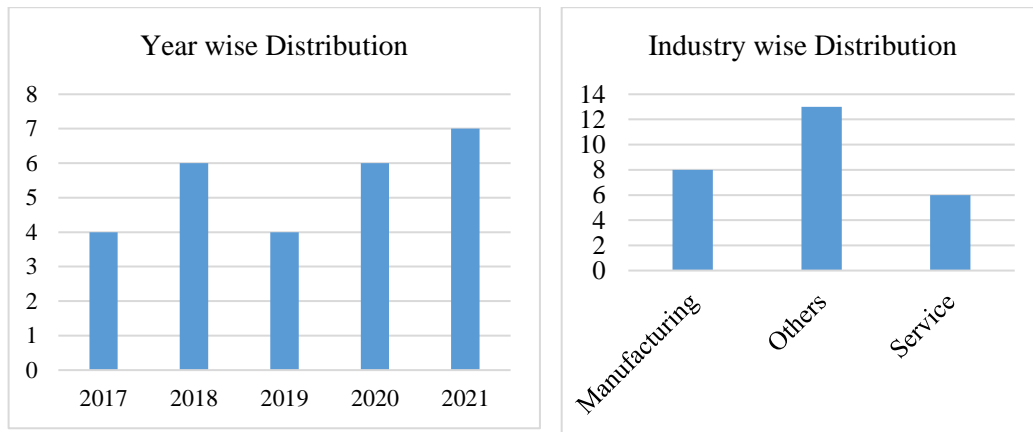


Figure 2. Year-wise and Industry Distribution

Table 1

Top Cited Journals and its Publications

Journal	Publication
European Management Review	2
Amfiteatru Economic	1
BMC Medical Education	1
Chinese Management Studies	1
Cogent Business and Management	1
Engineering Economics	1
European Journal of Management and Business Economics	1
Foundations of Management	1
International Journal of Business Innovation and Research	1
International Journal of Ethics and Systems	1

Table 2

Top Cited Publications

Authors	Source Title	Cited by
Afsar B., Badir Y.F., Saeed B.B., Hafeez S.	International Journal of Human Resource Management	54
Zheng J., Wu G., Xie H.	Sustainability (Switzerland)	48
Maria Stock R., Zacharias N.A., Schnellbaecher A.	Journal of Product Innovation Management	27
Megheirkouni M.	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	25
Darwish T.K., Zeng J., Rezaei Zadeh M., Haak-Saheem W.	European Management Review	21
Bligh M.C., Kohles J.C., Yan Q.	Journal of Change Management	20
Li Y., Castaño G., Li Y.	Chinese Management Studies	18
Alrowwad A., Abualoush S.H., Masa'deh R.	Journal of Management Development	17
Zheng J., Wu G., Xie H., Li H.	International Journal of Managing Projects in Business	16
Sethibe T.G.	International Journal of Innovation Management	14
Pasamar S., Diaz-Fernandez M., de la Rosa-Navarro M.D.	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	13

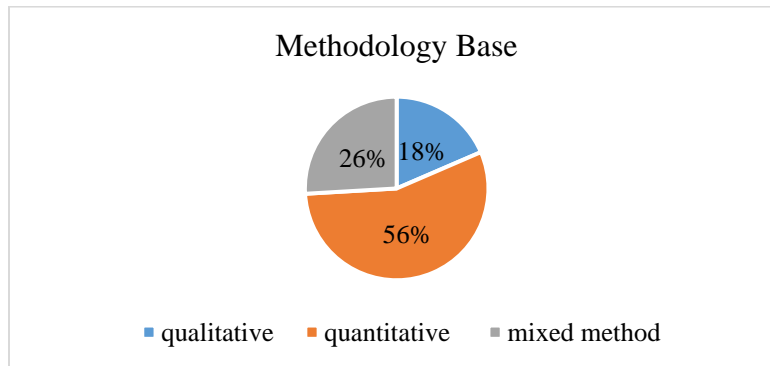


Figure 4. *Distribution of the articles by research methodology*

Data Synthesis and Analysis

Transformational leadership

Transformational leaders can convert their followers into a higher level of enthusiasm from self-oriented. Transformational leaders give confidence to their followers and motivate them, and the transformational leader focuses on collective or team goals instead of individual goals (Liao et al., 2017). In process theory, employees are motivated to give their maximum effort to achieve organizational goals, and their contribution is recognized and highly valued in this theory (Nusair et al., 2012). On the following basis, transformational leaders are quite different from other leaders. First, transformational leaders are known as visionaries because they can create and inspire a shared vision. Second, they support their followers to enhance their skills by capturing opportunities and becoming a higher performer (Carless et al., 2000).

Transformational leaders set the vision, motivate, and encourage their followers so that they can find new ways and overcome the fear linked with challenges (Khalili, 2016). Transformational leaders also encourage their subordinates to accept change in the organization. Finding new ways and adopting change leads to innovation (Michaelis et al., 2010). Transformational leadership is the primary contributor to organizational innovation. It can be said that organizational innovation can be obtained through transformational leadership and the organization's culture (Sarros et al., 2011).

Transactional leadership

Transactional leaders improve their relations with their followers by taking and monitoring progress to avoid errors. For example, a leader explains the remuneration to

achieve or accomplish a particular organizational objective (Liao et al., 2017). To a greater extent, it is viewed as a traditional management approach that arranges the extrinsic requirements of the subordinates, such as their jobs, obligations, and remuneration. Transactional leadership can influence organizational learning in a stable environment for purifying knowledge (Vargas, 2015). Transactional leaders monitor the work of their followers very closely so that the organizational objective can be met and corrective actions can be taken to meet the desired objectives (Jia et al., 2018). However, if we compare transactional leadership with transformational leadership, less innovation performance is seen in transactional leadership.

Ambidextrous leadership

It is said that innovation is complex because it demands new ideas to be tested, and at the same time, it also demands the exploitation of activities that carry out the implementation and application of the selected data. In management science, the mark Ambidexterity has been connected to the equilibrium of explorative and exploitative organizational strategies, for example, the capacity to participate in Exploration and exploitation similarly well, Bledow et al. (2009). Exploration and exploitation were initially characterized by March (1991) as two unique types of organizational learning (OL). Exploration is associated with expanding differences, trial, and error, looking for choices, and risk-taking. Regarding innovation, exploration is connected to radical innovation, entering new item showcases, and new technology. The new ideas and exploitation activities require complex leadership, leading the team towards innovation. The dual approach of ambidextrous leadership makes it more suitable for organizations than a single leadership style (Zaher & Rosing, 2015).

Investment should be made to manage the competition continuously. The efficiency can be increased by targeting exploitative innovation, while explorative innovation is more relevant to experimentation. Innovation ambidexterity requires a particular type of leadership behavior, which is like transformational leadership, which can balance short- and long-term needs (Zheng et al., 2016). However, innovation ambidexterity and transformational leadership are linked positively and lead to the production processes and products (Ebrahimi et al., 2016).

It is challenging for organizations to accomplish innovation ambidexterity, which demands inclusion in both exploratory and radical activities that intend to lead to new markets and clients' needs (Fu et al., 2018). For organizations, achieving ambidexterity can enhance financial performance, but this is very difficult for them and challenging for

the leadership to achieve a balance. Transformational leadership leads to radical innovation, while transactional leadership links to incremental innovation (Scheepers & Strom, 2019).

Discussion and Conclusion

Findings

Valero-Pastor et al. (2021) conducted a study on digital outlets to find the style of leadership that promotes innovation in the organization. They found that transformational leadership is the style that promotes innovation. In their study, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that transformational and transactional leadership are critical indicators of organizational innovation and employee creativity. Transformational leadership was instrumental to organizational innovation, while transactional leadership was negative to these variables.

Agarwal and Gupta (2021) completed a study in the context of United Arab Emirates (UAE)- based organizations and found that transactional leadership style scores less than transformational leadership regarding forecasting innovation. Khan et al. (2021) found that transformational leaders connect more with every employee. Employees' creativity and innovation are the reasons for giving them value and support, while transactional leadership is more toward organizational rules. Therefore, it is assumed that organizational culture is more linked to and supportive of transformational than transactional leadership.

Alrowwad A's study found that ambidextrous leadership is strongly related to organizational performance. The study also showed that intellectual capital and innovation are critical to ambidextrous leadership and organizational performance. Jelača et al. (2020) studied the importance of a company's external environment and CEO's leadership style. The study results show a strong relationship between organizational innovation and the environment. He also found that organizations cannot ignore transformational leadership styles if they want to improve organizational innovation.

As per the study outcomes by Contreras et al. (2020), leadership without help from anyone else is insufficient to promote subordinates' innovative work behavior. Ambidextrous leadership impacts this behavior just through absorptive capacity and work engagement. Jia et al. (2018) found that transformational and transactional leadership are directly linked to organizational innovation. However, transformational leadership increases organizational innovation, while transactional leadership decreases it. Zheng et al. (2017) have shown in their study that ambidextrous leadership has some positive and

robust effects on knowledge sharing and innovation performance. Stock et al. (2017) found that there is a positive interaction effect between innovation-oriented strategy and transformational leadership, but their combinations are not up to the mark.

Megheirkouni's (2017) study shows that transformational leadership is important for organizational learning. Zheng et al. (2019) suggest that a strong coherence between transformational or transactional leadership styles and organizational culture could reduce harmony and mutual agreement among the organization's members. Suliman et al. (2019) have found that psychological empowerment does not affect the arbitration of transformational leadership performance relationships. However, support from within the team for innovation is very important and impacts the conciliation of transformational leadership performance relationships. Pasamar et al. (2019) declared that transformational leaders play a convertible role and thus promote both types of HC, which promotes both types of organizational learning. They also identified that the marketing department is much keener to explore than the marketing departments.

Summary of Results

Leadership is an important and main contributor to organizational innovation, and its impact depends upon the leadership style. Several articles have been published in the five years of leadership that show the relationship between leadership and innovation, which is very valuable. Moreover, the most popular leadership style is transformational due to its relevance to organizational innovation. Transformational leaders can motivate, encourage, and inspire employees to help them achieve common goals. This kind of leadership affects innovation directly or indirectly by impacting the employees' behavior, competencies, and willingness to accept change or by increasing the organizational innovation environment. Transformational leaders have the charisma to build trust and respect in their followers' eyes, influencing their employees' behavior. Transactional leadership is the objective-based leadership style that positively impacts organizational innovation, but its impact is less than that of the transformational leadership style. Ambidextrous leadership is a complex leadership style but has a positive relationship with innovation. It affects innovation through opening and closing leadership behaviors. Moreover, innovation ambidexterity is positively linked to transformational leadership.

Research Contribution

This research contributes to the existing research body on innovation and leadership. This study appreciates the research that has been done before. Transactional,

transformational, and ambidextrous leadership are covered in this study. This study is valuable for the following people:

- Leadership researchers. It provides the impact of transactional, transformational, and ambidextrous leadership on innovation.
- Professional practitioners. This study discusses the different styles of leadership, and it can help professionals choose the best style to foster organizational innovation.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The literature review underscores the pivotal role of leadership in driving organizational innovation, with transformational leadership emerging as the most influential style. Organizations stand to benefit from fostering a culture that encourages transformational leadership behaviors, as they directly impact employee creativity, organizational learning, and innovation performance.

To leverage the findings of this study, organizations should prioritize developing and promoting transformational leadership capabilities among their leadership cadre. By aligning leadership styles with organizational culture and strategic objectives, organizations can create an environment conducive to innovation, thereby gaining a competitive edge in dynamic business landscapes.

Innovation is the responsibility of the leaders in an organization. Leaders can choose a leadership style by considering the organization's internal and external factors and economic and environmental factors. However, leaders should be intelligent enough so he can choose the best leadership style to improve organizational innovation by considering the factors relevant to the organization, such as:

- If the leader wants to enhance innovation and other aspects of the followers, organizational learning, and information exchange, then the transformational leadership style is the best style that influences these aspects.
- If an organization wants radical or quick results, it can choose a leadership style that directly impacts organizational innovation (transformational leadership, ambidextrous leadership).
- If the leader wants to enhance incremental innovation, then transactional leadership is the solution to this.

Despite positive findings on the relationship between organizational innovation and transformational, transactional, and ambidextrous leadership, there are still many limitations and research gaps for future research. In terms of database, this study is limited

to articles that met the search criteria. All researchers have discussed the results of leadership on innovation. Still, researchers have yet to discuss the effect of innovation on leadership, and this approach could be fascinating for future research.

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