

## RESEARCH NOTE

# Transformational Leadership and Business Continuity: A systematic review of empirical studies

Mary Sabbah

<sup>1</sup>Head of Finance and Operations,  
STAR-Ghana Foundation, Accra, Ghana

**Correspondence**

Corresponding author Mary Sabbah,  
Email: marysabbah3@gmail.com

**Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to systematically review journal articles on transformational leadership, specifically examining its relationship with business continuity, resilience, and survival.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** – The study employed a word search procedure across eight databases, including Google Scholar, retrieving a total of 36 articles. After a rigorous selection process, 28 articles were retained for further analysis. The analysis focused on identifying publication patterns across journal outlets and exploring the influence of transformational leadership on various organizational and individual outcomes.

**Findings** – The findings reveal that the 28 articles were published across 24 journal outlets hosted by the eight databases. However, the number of publications per journal could have been higher, with some journals having only one article over two decades. The findings revealed that transformational leadership significantly influences organizational resilience by fostering adaptive cultures, supporting teams during crises, and enhancing team effectiveness. Secondly, transformational leaders facilitate organizational adaptability and survival by empowering teams to embrace change and respond proactively to challenges, ultimately driving organizational longevity and competitiveness. Additionally, transformational leadership stimulates organizational innovation by fostering a culture conducive to creativity and risk-taking, enhancing organizational performance. At the individual level, transformational leadership promotes self-efficacy, role clarity, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee performance by inspiring and empowering followers and fostering trust and commitment. Overall, this review highlights the pivotal role of transformational leadership in driving business continuity and organizational success, underscoring its significance for organizational resilience, adaptability, innovation, and individual well-being.

**Contributions** – This review underscores the critical role of transformational leadership in promoting business continuity and organizational success. It highlights the importance of transformational leadership for organizational resilience, adaptability, innovation, and individual well-being. The study also provides valuable insights into the current state of the literature on transformational leadership, offering guidance for future research and academic focus on theory development and the practical implications for business continuity.

**KEYWORDS**

Transformational leadership, business continuity, organizational performance, employee performance, systematic review

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial concept in management literature, driven by its recognized significance in fostering

organizational growth and development. Transformational leadership refers to leadership traits that seek to “move followers beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration” (Reza 2019,

p.11). As businesses navigate increasingly complex and dynamic environments, the need for visionary leadership capable of inspiring and motivating teams toward shared goals has become imperative (Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal 2023, Lissillour and Sahut 2023). Transformational leadership, characterized by articulating compelling visions, empowering and developing followers, and stimulating innovation and change, is pivotal in driving business success (Amuzu et al. 2018a, Burawat 2019). These leaders' emphasis on fostering a positive corporate culture despite cultural heterogeneity in hybrid organisations (Lissillour 2021, Wang 2024), encouraging creativity and initiative, and promoting individual and collective growth aligns with modern enterprises' demands to adapt and thrive in competitive markets (Tian et al. 2020). Transformational leadership has garnered attention in management discourse due to its proven effectiveness in enhancing business growth, fostering innovation, and nurturing high-performing teams capable of achieving organizational objectives and enhancing business continuity in today's dynamic business landscape (Bonet and Lissillour 2023, Cheben et al. 2022). Business continuity is a "management process that identifies potential factors that threaten an organization and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response" (Speight 2011, p.529). Considering the relevance of transformational leadership, it is important for scholars to continuously build and update knowledge on the impact of transformational leadership on organizational and individual outcomes. What we do not know in the literature is the extent of work done on transformational leadership and its impact on individual and organizational-based factors (Quashigah and Amuzu 2024). What are the grey areas and suggested calls for research works in closing these gaps in theory and practice? What are the country-specific distribution, methodology and database distribution on the antecedents and impact of transformational leadership? This study, therefore, seeks to provide answers to these issues by undertaking a systematic literature review to explore the extent of work done on transformation leadership and business continuity literature landscape. This is expected to help develop the transformational leadership theory and its relationship with organizational-based factors like business continuity, pointing towards areas for future research and academic focus. Finally, this study focuses on selecting empirical studies over conceptual papers. This allows room for evidence-based decisions founded on theory development and its testing.

## 2 | METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 | Publication Outlet

The study adopted a word search procedure for extracting data and, thus, journal articles for further analysis. The word search included "Transformational leadership" AND "business continuity" OR "business survival" OR "business resilience." The search was conducted in eight databases: Sustainability, Taylor and Francis, Wiley online library, Emerald Insight, Sage publications, Science Direct, Springer, and EBSCOhost.

Google Scholar was used as the academic search engine in accessing these databases. The journals used were indexed in the Australian Deans list- this gives a list of peer-reviewed journals. The keywords were searched thoroughly in the topics or titles, abstracts, and body of journal articles. No limitation of time frame was given for the present study because the intent was to capture all the literature available on the topic. This is presented in Table 1.

### 2.2 | Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Before commencing the study, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to encompass papers published in international peer-reviewed journals, accessible in full-text articles, written in English, and with authorship available. Subsequently, only journal articles were considered, including conceptual, empirical, and theoretical papers. This approach excluded other types of literature materials such as book chapters, other systematic reviews, conference proceedings papers, editorial notes, special issues, symposia, lecture notes and presentation slides from the retained articles. In addition, unpublished master's or doctoral theses and working papers were also included to avoid double counting, as these are sometimes later converted as journal articles. Furthermore, the study focused on transformational leadership and its relationship with business continuity regarding resilience, survival, and adaptability. 36 articles were retrieved, but 28 were retained for further analysis after identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion.

## 3 | RESULTS

### 3.1 | Publication Outlets

The journal outlets for the 28 journal articles and databases from which these articles were sourced are represented in Table 2. 28 articles were published in 24 journal outlets hosted by eight databases such as sustainability, Wiley and Sons, Science Direct, Sage Publication, Taylor and Francis, Emerald insight, Springer and EBSCOhost. Most journals had just one article each, with only four publishing two. It is noted that the number of publications for these journals could have been higher, with some having one article for almost two decades. The general outlook of the journals raises concerns for academia, thus reflecting a need for more concentration and the choice of outlets for articles.

### 3.2 | Publication Trends

The analysis encompassed 28 journal articles spanning nearly two decades, from 2006 to 2023, providing a comprehensive overview of research trends in transformational leadership outcomes. Figure 1 visually depicts the distribution of these articles over the years, revealing intriguing patterns. Notably, the overall volume of research on transformational leadership appears low, particularly in the last decade and

**TABLE 1** Themes from Empirical Literature Matrix.

Major Themes	Related Articles
Transformational Leadership and Resilience	Mohtady-Ali et al., 2023; Madi-Odeh et al., 2023; Valero et al., 2015; Shuja & Abbasi, 2016; Dimas et al., 2021
Transformational Leadership and Innovation	Cuevas-Vargas et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023
Transformational Leadership and Adaptability and Survival	Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022; Żywiótek et al., 2022; Kim-Quy et al., 2023; Khoshlahn & Ardabili, 2016
Transformational Leadership and Organisational Performance	Ng et al., 2016; Phung et al., 2023; Xenikou & Simosi, 2006; Permana et al., 2022; Sengupta, 2023
Transformational Leadership and Individual Level Outcomes	Chen et al., 2022; Çop et al., 2021; Djourova, 2020; Geier, 2016; Mittal, 2016; Malik, 2023

Source: Summarized from Literature Matrix shown in Appendix.

**TABLE 2** Database and Journal.

Database	Journal	Freq
Sustainability	International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health	2
	Sustainability	2
Wiley and Sons	Business Strategy and the Environment	1
	Journal of General Management	1
Science Direct	Procedia Computer Science	1
	Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences	1
	Journal of Vocational Behavior	1
Sage Publication	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	2
Taylor and Francis	International Journal of Leadership in Education	1
	Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce	1
	The Journal of Psychology	1
	Journal of Culinary Science & Technology	1
Emerald	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management	1
	International Journal of Manpower	1
	Disaster Prevention and Management	1
	Journal of Managerial Psychology	1
	Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management	1
	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management	1
	Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance	2
	The International Journal of Logistics Management	1
	South Asian Journal of Business Studies	1
Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy	1	
Springer	Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management	1
EBSCOhost	Journal of Independent Studies & Research: Management & Social Sciences & Economics	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>

Source: Author's Construct (2024)

a half, with a noticeable uptick in recent years, as evidenced by the 10 articles published in 2023. This trend is unexpected, given the growing recognition among scholars of transformational leadership's pivotal role in fostering business continuity, organizational success or resilience. Despite the historical underrepresentation, the increasing scholarly interest in recent years suggests a burgeoning appreciation

for the relevance and application of transformational leadership principles within organizations striving for sustained business continuity and growth.

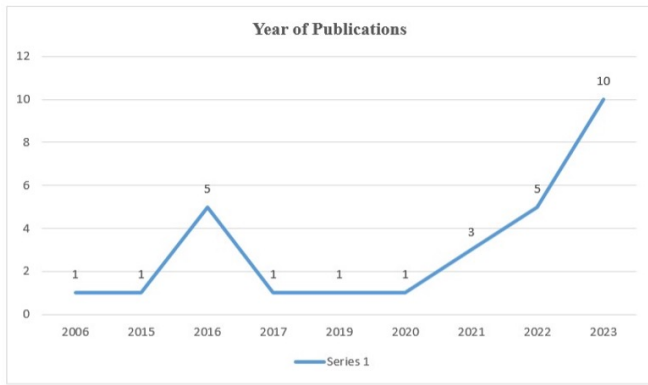


FIGURE 1 Year of Publications

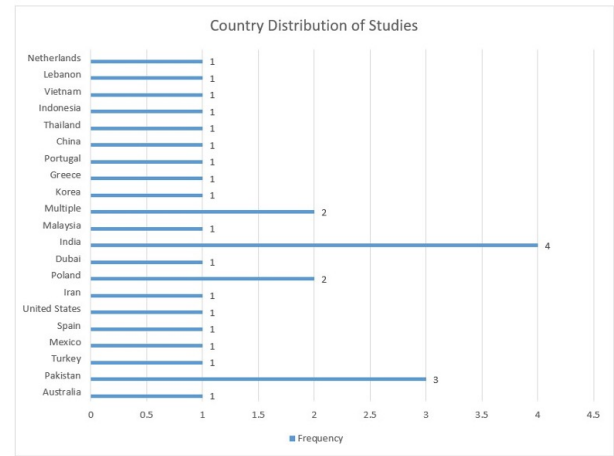


FIGURE 2 Country-specific Distribution of Studies

### 3.3 | Country-Specific and Context Distribution

From Figure 2, the country-specific distribution of the studies was analyzed based on where the study data was sourced from and the authors' affiliation. The analysis revealed that data for the 28 articles were pulled from 20 specific countries, with more articles from India (4), three from Pakistan and two from Poland. The rest of the articles were distributed across different countries, with one each. These countries are Australia, Turkey, Mexico, Spain, the U.S.A., Iran, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Korea, Greece, Portugal, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Lebanon and the Netherlands. The articles' specific contexts (industry or sector) were examined from the analysis to include health, hotel, social services, higher education, government organizations, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), information technology, financial services, and mega projects. It is deduced from the analysis that fewer studies are available on Africa, particularly in the context of Ghana. In addition, the context of non-governmental and civil society organizations is missing in the literature on transformational leadership and business continuity studies.

### 3.4 | Methodological Distribution

The methodology and research design or techniques distribution of the journal articles were analyzed based on the methodology used in the study. The analysis revealed that out of 28 journal articles, 27 were empirical, while one was conceptual or theoretical. Furthermore, most of the studies used a quantitative method of data collection and analysis, representing 23 articles, of which 3 used a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. At the same time, 1 adopted a mixed method (combining both qualitative and quantitative). The quantitative studies engaged cross-sectional (21 articles) and longitudinal (2) research designs, while the qualitative studies engaged interviews (semi-structured and in-depth) as well as phenomenological designs (as shown in table 3). The analysis revealed a gap in longitudinal studies, conceptual papers,

and mixed-method studies. The current literature needs to be more balanced toward cross-sectional studies with its attendant shortcomings of being unsuitable for generalization.

### 3.5 | Theoretical Stance

The analysis identified several theories that underpin research in transformational leadership outcomes. Among these, the transformational leadership theory emerged as the most frequently employed, as evidenced by its prominent use in studies such as those conducted by Philip (2021), Shatila et al. (2023), and Dimas et al. (2021). Additionally, researchers leveraged various theoretical frameworks to elucidate the relationship between transformational leadership and its outcomes, including the dynamic capabilities theory (Żywiótek et al. 2022), conservation of resource theory (Chen et al. 2022), upper echelon theory (Prabhu and Srivastava 2023), job demand-resource theory (Çop et al. 2021), exceptional leadership theory (Ng et al. 2016), collaborative leadership framework (Valero et al. 2015), digital capability theory (Permana et al. 2022), and broaden and build theory (Çop et al. 2021). Transformational Leadership Theory prominently used in studies by Philip (2021), Shatila et al. (2023), and Dimas et al. (2021), posits that effective leaders inspire and motivate followers through a compelling vision, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders are known for creating significant organizational change by fostering a positive organizational culture and encouraging innovation and growth. Dynamic Capabilities Theory, utilized by Żywiótek et al. (2022), suggests that organizations can achieve competitive advantage and long-term success by continuously adapting and reconfiguring their resources and capabilities in response to changing environments. In the context of transformational leadership, this theory emphasizes the leader's role in enabling organizational agility and responsiveness to market dynamics. In the conservation of Resource Theory, Chen et al. (2022) employed this theory, which posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources such

**TABLE 3** Distribution of Articles based on Articles.

Research Approach	Design	Frequency
Quantitative Approach	Cross-sectional	21
	Longitudinal	2
Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews	1
	Phenomenology	1
	In depth-interviews	1
Conceptual		1
Mixed		1
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>

Source: Author's construct (2024)

as time, energy, and social support. In the context of transformational leadership, this theory highlights how leaders can contribute to employees' well-being and performance by providing support, recognition, and opportunities for growth. Further, the upper-echelon theory utilized by Prabhu and Srivastava (2023) suggests that the characteristics and experiences of top management teams influence organizational outcomes. In transformational leadership, this theory emphasizes the importance of leader attributes, such as vision, charisma, and strategic thinking, in shaping organizational direction and performance. Moreover, the Job Demand-Resource Theory (Çop et al. 2021) proposes that job characteristics can be classified as either demands or resources, influencing employee well-being and performance. In transformational leadership, this theory highlights how leaders can mitigate job demands and enhance job resources to promote employee resilience and effectiveness. In addition, Exceptional Leadership Theory (Ng et al. 2016) employed this theory, which suggests that exceptional leaders possess unique qualities and behaviors that differentiate them from average leaders. In the context of transformational leadership, this theory emphasizes the extraordinary impact of transformational leaders on organizational innovation, growth, and performance. Another theory that emerged was the Collaborative Leadership Framework. (Valero et al. 2015) utilized this framework, emphasizing the importance of collaborative relationships and collective leadership practices in driving organizational change and effectiveness. In the context of transformational leadership, this framework underscores the role of leaders in fostering collaboration, communication, and shared vision among team members. Permana et al. (2022) utilized the Digital Capability Theory, which suggests that organizational performance is influenced by the extent to which digital technologies are integrated into business processes and strategies. In transformational leadership, this theory highlights the leader's role in driving digital transformation and leveraging technology to enhance organizational agility and competitiveness. Çop et al. (2021) used the Broaden and Build Theory, suggesting that positive emotions broaden individuals' cognitive and behavioral repertoires, increasing resilience, creativity, and well-being over time. In the context of transformational leadership, this theory emphasizes the role of leaders in creating a positive work environment that fosters employee growth, development,

and innovation. These diverse theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of transformational leadership and its impact on organizational outcomes.

### 3.6 | Empirical review based on Literature Matrix

The systematic review of the literature revealed the concept of transformational leadership as an important concept in management literature. Valero et al. (2015) broadly characterize transformational leadership as embodying traits such as vision, innovation, inspiration, and attentiveness to the needs of followers. The literature confirmed that transformational leadership has four dimensions: inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Djourova et al. 2020, Philip 2021, Malik 2023). Recently, transformational competence is another new dimension or concept that is springing from transformational leadership (Mohtady Ali et al. 2023). The competencies linked to transformational leadership center on governance and leadership, planning and risk assessment, and communication and network engagement. Governance and leadership involve transformative agency and decisive accountability while planning and risk assessment entails navigating risks, attuning to disasters, and displaying agility in planning. Communication and network engagement entails accelerating communication and fostering innovative collaboration. Another recent concept regarding transformational leadership is green transformational leadership (Çop et al. 2021). The idea of green transformational leadership emerges from the global call for protecting the environment and social and economic values while engaging in normal business. Chen et al. (2022) propose that green transformational leadership has a notable impact on two facets of green innovation: green product innovation and green process innovation. Similarly, Çop et al. (2021) underscored the influence of green transformational leadership on both green work engagement and green team resilience. Further, Geier (2016) noted that transformational leaders' behaviors may change depending on the context, emphasizing that they exhibit transformational leadership characteristics under normal contexts but fail to exhibit them during extreme circumstances. The literature reviewed noted the relationship between transformational leadership

and other organizational and individual-level variables, resilience, innovation, adaptability, survival, performance, and other employee-level variables (self-efficacy, role clarity, OCB etc).

### 3.6.1 | Transformational Leadership and Resilience

The relationship between transformational leadership and resilience is seen in organizational resilience and individual employee and team resilience. It is noted that resilience is a measure of business continuity. Mohtady Ali et al. (2023) identified three crucial competencies inherent in transformational leadership essential for enhancing disaster resilience across all phases of the disaster cycle, including prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Similarly, Madi Odeh et al. (2023) uncovered transformational leadership's significant and positive impact on adaptive culture and organizational resilience. They found that adaptive culture partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational resilience. Similarly, Valero et al. (2015) illustrated that the transformational leadership style significantly and positively influenced perceived organizational resiliency. Dimas et al. (2021) provided additional support for the positive link between transformational leadership and team resilience, indicating that team resilience served as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and multiple aspects of team effectiveness. Additionally, Shuja and Abbasi (2016) emphasized the direct positive effect of transformational leadership on the development of resilient NGOs. However, they observed that the indirect effect of organizational learning as a mediator was insignificant, particularly during crises when transformational leaders tend to support individuals and organizations in navigating challenges and recovering effectively.

### 3.6.2 | Transformational Leadership and Innovation

Transformational leadership has been consistently linked to fostering organizational innovation. Leaders who exhibit transformational characteristics, such as vision, inspiration, and empowerment, are likelier to encourage creativity and risk-taking among their team members, leading to new ideas and approaches. By promoting a culture of innovation and supporting experimentation, transformational leaders create an environment conducive to exploring novel solutions to challenges and seizing opportunities for improvement. Research has shown that organizations led by transformational leaders tend to be more innovative, developing new products, services, and processes that drive competitive advantage and organizational success (Cuevas-Vargas et al. 2023, Chen et al. 2023). Therefore, transformational leadership is crucial in stimulating and sustaining innovation within organizations contributing to their growth and long-term viability. Cuevas-Vargas et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership significantly influences innovation, with a noteworthy indirect effect on firm performance. Their results suggest

that innovation is a full mediator in the relationship between TL and firm performance, indicating that TL stimulates innovation, subsequently enhancing business performance. Likewise, Chen et al. (2023) proposed that green transformational leadership positively impacts green innovation, particularly in green product and process innovation domains. This implies that leaders demonstrating green transformational leadership qualities may promote innovative approaches to create environmentally sustainable products and processes within their organizations.

### 3.6.3 | Transformational Leadership and Adaptability and Survival

Transformational leadership significantly influences organizational adaptability and longevity. Leaders who demonstrate transformational attributes, including vision, inspiration, and individualized attention, empower their teams to embrace change and manage uncertainty adeptly. Fostering a culture of innovation, openness, and flexibility, transformational leaders can empower their organizations to respond proactively to environmental shifts and emerging challenges (Atuahene-Gima and Amuzu 2019, Kucharska and Rebelo 2022a). Studies indicate that under the guidance of transformational leaders, organizations demonstrate improved adaptability to evolving market dynamics, technological shifts, and competitive challenges. This fosters greater resilience and enhances their prospects for survival amidst the complexities of dynamic business landscapes (Żywiótek et al. 2022, Kim Quy et al. 2023). Transformational leadership may encourage continuous learning, collaboration, and strategic thinking, enabling organizations to thrive amidst uncertainty and emerge stronger from adversity (Kim Quy et al. 2023, Lissillour et al. 2022). Therefore, transformational leadership is crucial in facilitating organizational adaptability and long-term survival in today's fast-paced and unpredictable business landscape. For instance, (Kucharska and Rebelo 2022a) discovered that tacit knowledge sharing and adaptability to change, fostered by a learning culture, are crucial mechanisms linking transformational leadership to innovation. A study by Żywiótek et al. (2022) found that hotel transformational leadership initiates employee creativity and positively influences their adaptiveness. The results also confirmed that employee adaptiveness mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity in the hotel industry in developing nations. Khoshlahn and Ardabili (2016) reported that transformational leadership positively impacts service recovery, suggesting that effective implementation can lead to improved service recovery outcomes. Likewise, Kim Quy et al. (2023) illustrated the constructive impact of transformational leadership on service recovery performance and the cultivation of workplace spirituality. Furthermore, they identified employee resilience as a mediating factor in these associations.

### 3.6.4 | Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance

Transformational leadership significantly affects organizational performance by driving innovation. Leaders in this style inspire and encourage employees to think innovatively, question conventional approaches, and seek creative solutions to challenges. By fostering a culture of innovation within the organization, transformational leaders enable their teams to develop new products, processes, and strategies that enhance competitiveness and drive performance improvements (Amuzu et al. 2018c, Ng et al. 2016, Phung et al. 2023). The ability of transformational leadership to stimulate innovation contributes significantly to overall organizational performance and success. For example, Ng et al. (2016) discovered that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) effectiveness significantly hinge on owner-managers transformational leadership skills, entrepreneurial competence, and technical proficiencies. Similarly, Xenikou and Simosi (2006) unveiled that transformational leadership, coupled with a humanistic approach, indirectly boosts performance via achievement orientation. Furthermore, Permana et al. (2022) revealed that digital capabilities mediate the impact of transformational leadership on performance. Phung et al. (2023) underscored the critical role of transformational leadership in promoting internal and external integration within the supply chain, leading to increased responsiveness, visibility, and overall integration. Furthermore, transformational leadership indirectly influences supply chain risk management practices through supply chain integration, with integration dimensions partially mediating this connection. For example, Sengupta (2023) concluded that socioeconomic factors, varied work experiences, favorable traits, and transformational leadership positively influence organizational performance.

### 3.6.5 | Transformational Leadership and Individual Level Outcomes

Transformational leadership has been extensively linked to various positive outcomes at the individual level, including enhanced self-efficacy, greater role clarity, increased organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and improved employee performance (Tian et al. 2020, Lissillour and Ruel 2023). Research consistently demonstrates that transformational leaders inspire and empower their followers, fostering a sense of confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy) and providing clear direction regarding their roles and responsibilities (role clarity). Additionally, transformational leaders encourage employees to go above and beyond their formal job requirements, promoting OCB, which contributes to a positive organizational culture and overall performance. Furthermore, transformational leadership has been associated with higher levels of employee performance, as leaders motivate and support their followers to achieve their full potential, driving individual and organizational success. For example, Djourova et al. (2020) demonstrated that while two dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, directly influence self-efficacy,

surprisingly, the latter negatively affect self-efficacy, contrary to initial hypotheses. In a different context, Geier (2016) found that the transformational leadership style strongly predicts followers' performance in typical situations. However, leaders exhibit less transformational behavior during extreme events than in normal circumstances, indicating a shift in leadership behavior based on the context. Additionally, Mittal (2016) observed that transformational leaders effectively fostered psychological empowerment and trust among their employees, leading to heightened commitment and reduced turnover intentions. The study also revealed that psychological empowerment, trust, and commitment were mediators in this relationship. Similarly, Malik (2023) discovered a significant link between idealized transformational leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

## 3.7 | Research Gaps

The research gaps are examined based on issue or content, context, and method gaps.

### 3.7.1 | Issue Gaps

Transformational leadership is inherently dynamic, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of organizational contexts and leadership practices within them. In the management literature, transformational leadership is characterized by its adaptability and responsiveness to changing environments, necessitating constant updates and refinements to its conceptualization and application (Valero et al. 2015, Thomson III et al. 2016, Wang et al. 2011). As organizations face new challenges, technological advancements, and societal shifts, the qualities and behaviors associated with effective leadership evolve accordingly. Transformational leaders must demonstrate agility, innovation, and forward-thinking to inspire and motivate their followers amidst shifting landscapes. Additionally, the dynamic nature of transformational leadership requires ongoing research and exploration to uncover emerging trends, best practices, and novel applications (Judge et al. 2006, Konadu et al. 2023, Wang et al. 2011). Therefore, scholars and practitioners recognize the need for continuous updates and refinements to transformational leadership to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in contemporary organizational settings. Furthermore, concepts like green transformational leadership have emerged in the literature, signaling the need for scholarly attention. As organizations increasingly prioritize environmental sustainability and social responsibility, there is growing recognition of the importance of leadership styles that align with these values. Green transformational leadership integrates the principles of transformational leadership with a focus on environmental stewardship and sustainability initiatives (Chen et al. 2023, Lissillour et al. 2022). However, this concept still needs to be explored in the current literature despite its potential relevance in driving organizational sustenance and business continuity. Therefore, scholars need to delve deeper into the dynamics of green transformational leadership and its implications for

organizational success in an environmentally conscious world. The literature analysis reveals an imbalance in the concentration of studies between organizational and individual levels in the context of transformational leadership and business continuity. A disproportionate focus is observed on individual-level studies, with less attention given to organizational-level studies (Thomson III et al. 2016, Cuevas-Vargas et al. 2023). While individual-level studies provide valuable insights into the impact of transformational leadership on various outcomes, such as employee performance and self-efficacy, there needs to be a greater gap in understanding how transformational leadership influences broader organizational outcomes, such as resilience and sustainability. As organizations operate within complex environments, exploring the organizational-level effects of transformational leadership is essential to understanding its implications for business continuity (Lissillour and Rodríguez-Escobar 2020, Thomson III et al. 2016). Therefore, there is a need for future research to address this imbalance by examining the organizational-level dynamics of transformational leadership and its relationship with business continuity.

### 3.7.2 | Context Gaps

The analysis indicates a notable gap in the existing literature regarding applying transformational leadership theory within the African context, with a particular need for more studies on Ghana (Thomson III et al. 2016). Furthermore, more research needs to explore the role of transformational leadership within non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). This gap in the literature underscores the need for further investigation into how transformational leadership principles manifest and influence organizational outcomes within these contexts. Given the significant role that NGOs and CSOs play in addressing social challenges and driving community development across Africa, understanding the dynamics of transformational leadership within these settings is crucial for informing leadership practices and enhancing organizational effectiveness (Amuzu et al. 2018b, Frimpong 2017). Therefore, based on the principles of endogenous scholarship (Rodríguez-Escobar 2024), future research endeavors should bridge this gap by applying transformational leadership theory within Africa's unique socio-cultural and organizational contexts, particularly in Ghana and within NGOs and CSOs. Geographical contextual relevance emerges as a prominent theme in the reviewed transformational leadership literature, with many studies emphasizing the importance of understanding how the impact of transformational leadership varies across different contexts. Scholars have underscored the need to replicate studies in diverse geographical settings to ascertain the generalizability of findings and uncover potential cultural nuances that may influence leadership dynamics (Chen et al. 2022, Mohtady Ali et al. 2023). By examining transformational leadership within various cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional contexts, researchers aim to better understand its effects and effectiveness. This emphasis on geographical contextual relevance reflects a growing recognition of the importance of

considering local factors and cultural differences in leadership research, enriching the breadth and depth of knowledge in the field.

### 3.7.3 | Methodological Gaps

The analysis has highlighted a noticeable gap in the existing literature, particularly in longitudinal studies, conceptual papers, and mixed-method studies. While cross-sectional studies dominate the current literature landscape, their prevalence brings inherent limitations, particularly in generalizability. Cross-sectional studies, by their nature, provide only a snapshot of data at a single point in time, which may not capture the dynamic and evolving nature of phenomena like transformational leadership and its outcomes over time (Cuevas-Vargas et al. 2023, Kucharska and Rebelo 2022a). On the other hand, longitudinal studies offer the opportunity to track changes and developments over an extended period, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership influences organizational outcomes across different contexts and over time (Malik 2023, Djourova et al. 2020). Similarly, conceptual papers are crucial in advancing theoretical understanding and providing frameworks for future research, yet they must be more represented in the current literature (Philip 2021). Moreover, mixed-method studies, which integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches, offer a more holistic perspective on complex phenomena but still need to be included in the existing literature. Therefore, especially when based on collective research (Beaulieu et al. 2024) and practice-based research principles (Lissillour et al. 2023), addressing these gaps through longitudinal studies, conceptual papers, and mixed-method approaches would enrich our understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and its outcomes, contributing to more robust and nuanced theoretical and practical insights in this field.

## 4 | MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The systematic literature review on transformational leadership highlights its significant impact on organizational dynamics and individual outcomes. First, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in fostering resilience within organizations, both at the organizational and individual levels. Studies suggest that transformational leaders contribute to organizational resilience by promoting adaptive cultures, providing support during crises, and enhancing team effectiveness. Additionally, the literature underscores the positive relationship between transformational leadership and innovation, indicating that leaders who exhibit transformational characteristics foster a culture conducive to creativity and risk-taking, thereby driving organizational innovation and competitiveness. Second, transformational leadership is a key factor influencing organizational adaptability and survival. Leaders with transformational attributes empower their teams to embrace change, manage uncertainty, and respond proactively to challenges, ultimately enhancing organizational resilience and longevity. Moreover, transformational leadership is linked to improved organizational performance



through its ability to stimulate innovation and drive internal and external integration within the supply chain. By encouraging strategic thinking and collaboration, transformational leaders enable organizations to thrive amidst uncertainty and emerge stronger from adversity. Lastly, the literature emphasizes the positive impact of transformational leadership on individual-level outcomes such as self-efficacy, role clarity, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and employee performance. Transformational leaders inspire and empower their followers, fostering confidence, providing clear direction, and encouraging employees to go beyond their formal job requirements. Moreover, transformational leadership is associated with enhanced psychological empowerment, trust, and commitment among employees, leading to heightened organizational performance and reduced turnover intentions. Overall, this study addresses the gaps in the literature highlighted in the introduction section, providing answers to the extent of work done on transformational leadership and its impact on individual and organizational-based factors. The study also revealed some grey areas in the literature calling for research on transformational leadership, revealing the country-specific distribution, methodology and database distribution on the antecedents and impact of transformational leadership. This allows researchers to know areas where knowledge is lacking for its advancement and future theoretical contribution. This study underscores the multifaceted influence of transformational leadership on organizational dynamics and individual outcomes, highlighting its significance for business continuity and organizational success. This study focused on the use of empirical studies and not conceptual papers. This was based on using studies that have advanced theories through theory development and testing. Although this is anticipated to provide insight and help advance theory, there are conceptual papers that could also be a focus of future researchers' interest in investigating transformational leadership issues from a purely conceptual basis.

## 5 | IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The dynamic nature of transformational leadership necessitates ongoing updates to its conceptualization and application to adapt to evolving organizational contexts and leadership practices. While there is substantial focus on individual-level studies, there needs to be a greater gap in understanding the organizational-level effects of transformational leadership on outcomes such as resilience and sustainability (Kucharska and Rebelo 2022a). Future studies can delve deeper into the organizational-level effects of transformational leadership by examining its influence on broader outcomes such as organizational resilience, sustainability, and competitive advantage (Żywiołek et al. 2022). This could involve longitudinal studies that track the effects of transformational leadership over time and across different organizational contexts, providing valuable insights into its long-term implications for business continuity. Additionally, emerging concepts like green transformational leadership still need to be explored, highlighting the need for further investigation

into their implications for organizational success in environmentally conscious settings. Contextually, research on transformational leadership within the African context is scarce, particularly in countries like Ghana and within non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). There is a need for research that explores applying transformational leadership theory within specific organizational contexts, such as NGOs, CSOs, and African settings like Ghana (Amuzu et al. 2018c, Atuahene-Gima and Amuzu 2019, Arhin and Cobbah 2024). Investigating how transformational leadership principles manifest and influence organizational outcomes within these unique contexts can inform leadership development programs and practices tailored to these organizations' specific needs and challenges. Bridging this gap is crucial for informing leadership practices and enhancing organizational effectiveness, given these entities' significant role in addressing social challenges and driving community development across Africa. Moreover, geographical contextual relevance emerges as an important theme, emphasizing the need to consider local factors and cultural differences in leadership research to enrich the breadth and depth of knowledge in the field. Additionally, comparative studies across different geographical settings can shed light on the cultural nuances and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of transformational leadership, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of its application in diverse cultural and institutional contexts. Methodologically, the existing literature needs more longitudinal studies, conceptual papers, and mixed-method approaches (Atuahene-Gima and Amuzu 2019). While cross-sectional studies predominate, their limitations in capturing the dynamic nature of transformational leadership and its outcomes over time underscore the importance of longitudinal research. Conceptual papers are underrepresented despite their role in advancing theoretical understanding, while mixed-method studies, which offer a more holistic perspective, still need to be included. Future studies can address the gaps in the literature by adopting mixed-method approaches that integrate qualitative and quantitative methods (Quashigah and Amuzu 2024). This would allow researchers to capture the complexity of transformational leadership phenomena and provide a more holistic understanding of its effects on business continuity (Kim Quy et al. 2023). Furthermore, conceptual papers that develop theoretical frameworks and models based on empirical evidence can guide future research directions and provide a foundation for theoretical advancements in the field. Addressing these suggestions, further studies can contribute to the ongoing development of transformational leadership theory and its application in organizational settings, enhancing our knowledge of effective leadership practices for business continuity.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

The systematic literature review on transformational leadership highlights its significant impact on organizational dynamics and individual outcomes. First, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in fostering resilience within organizations, both at the organizational and

individual levels. Studies suggest that transformational leaders contribute to organizational resilience by promoting adaptive cultures, providing support during crises, and enhancing team effectiveness. Additionally, the literature underscores the positive relationship between transformational leadership and innovation, indicating that leaders who exhibit transformational characteristics foster a culture conducive to creativity and risk-taking, thereby driving organizational innovation and competitiveness. Second, transformational leadership is a key factor influencing organizational adaptability and survival. Leaders with transformational attributes empower their teams to embrace change, manage uncertainty, and respond proactively to challenges, ultimately enhancing organizational resilience and longevity. Moreover, transformational leadership is linked to improved organizational performance through its ability to stimulate innovation and drive internal and external integration within the supply chain. By encouraging strategic thinking and collaboration, transformational leaders enable organizations to thrive amidst uncertainty and emerge stronger from adversity. Lastly, the literature emphasizes the positive impact of transformational leadership on individual-level outcomes such as self-efficacy, role clarity, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and employee performance. Transformational leaders inspire and empower their followers, fostering confidence, providing clear direction, and encouraging employees to go beyond their formal job requirements. Moreover, transformational leadership is associated with enhanced psychological empowerment, trust, and commitment among employees, leading to heightened organizational performance and reduced turnover intentions. Overall, this study addresses the gaps in the literature highlighted in the introduction section, providing answers to the extent of work done on transformational leadership and its impact on individual and organizational-based factors. The study also revealed some grey areas in the literature calling for research on transformational leadership, revealing the country-specific distribution, methodology and database distribution on the antecedents and impact of transformational leadership. This allows researchers to know areas where knowledge is lacking for its advancement and future theoretical contribution. This study underscores the multifaceted influence of transformational leadership on organizational dynamics and individual outcomes, highlighting its significance for business continuity and organizational success. This study focused on the use of empirical studies and not conceptual papers. This was based on using studies that have advanced theories through theory development and testing. Although this is anticipated to provide insight and help advance theory, there are conceptual papers that could also be a focus of future researchers' interest in investigating transformational leadership issues from a purely conceptual basis.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, writing, data analysis, reviewing and editing of the manuscript.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author thanks the editors and anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments that greatly improved the manuscript.

## FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None reported.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interests.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of the article at the publisher's website.

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

**Dr. Mary Sabbah** is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana. She is a top-level Finance Management Leader and Business Consultant equipped with extensive experience in Strategic Business Planning, Financial and Management Accounting, Designing and Implementation of Modules for Integrated Internal Controls, Enterprise Risk Management Design, Development of mechanisms for Capacity Building in Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluations and many more. She has over 15 years of experience in financial leadership in the management of multi-lateral and bilateral international donor funded projects. She is the Head of Finance and Operations of Multi Donor CSO-STAR-Ghana Foundation and has consulted as technical expert and team leader on various International Agencies. Her research interest is Leadership, Business Continuity and Business Sustainability.

**How to cite this article:** Sabbah, M., Transformational Leadership and Business Continuity: A systematic review of empirical studies. *Management Research Quarterly* 2024;01(02):4–24.

## APPENDIX

**TABLE 1:** Literature Matrix Search key: "Transformational leadership"  
AND business continuity OR business survival OR business resilience.

Author(s)/Database/JournalTitle	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Mohtady Ali et al. (2023)	Enabling Transformational leadership to foster disaster-resilience hospitals	Australia, Health sector	The study revealed seven key component competencies: Governance and leadership' ('transformative agency' and 'decisive accountability'); 'Planning and risk assessment' ('risk navigation', 'disaster attunement', and 'planning agility'); and 'Communication and network engagement' ('communication accelerator' and 'collaboration innovator')
Chen et al. (2022)	Managing Hospital Employees' Burnout through Transformational Leadership: The Role of Resilience, Role Clarity, and Intrinsic Motivation	Pakistan, Health sector, 398 employees	TL significantly reduces burnout. The results further indicated that resilience and role clarity mediate this relationship significantly
Çop et al. (2021)	Achieving environmental sustainability through green transformational leadership policy: Can green team resilience help?	Turkey, Hotel industry, 352 employees	The result reviews that green transformational leadership has a positive effect on green work engagement and green team resilience, and green work engagement fully mediates the relationship between the variables.

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Cuevas-Vargas et al. (2023)	Transformational leadership and innovation to boost business performance: The case of small Mexican firms	Mexico, MSMEs, 225 MSMEs	The results reveal that TL has a significant influence on innovation and only a significant indirect effect on firm performance was demonstrated. Moreover, innovation demonstrated to play a fully mediating role in the relationship between TL and firm performance. TL leads to innovation, and innovation in turn leads to business performance.
Djourova et al. (2020)	Self-efficacy and resilience: mediating mechanisms in the relationship between the transformational leadership dimensions and well-being	Spain, Social services, 225 social service employees	Results showed that only two of the four transformational leadership dimensions have a direct impact on self-efficacy: inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, although contrary to our hypothesis, the latter had a negative effect on self-efficacy.
Geier (2016)	Leadership in extreme contexts: transformational leadership, performance beyond expectations?	U.S, Event Fire-fighters	Results showed that in normal contexts, transformational leadership style was the dominant predictor of followers' performance. Leader behaviors tended to change (adapt) between normal contexts and extreme events, as the same leaders were less transformational in their behaviors in extreme events as compared with normal contexts.

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Khoshlahn and Ardabili (2016)	The role of organizational agility and transformational leadership in service recovery prediction.	Iran, Government organisations, 149 random	The findings indicated that (1) transformational leadership and (2) organizational agility have a positive impact on service recovery. Moreover the findings indicated that suitable application of organizational agility and transformational leadership may lead the organization to better and suitable service recovery.
Kucharska and Rebelo (2022a)	Transformational leadership for researcher's innovativeness in the context of tacit knowledge and change adaptability	Poland, Higher education, 368 Polish scientific staff	Findings revealed that tacit knowledge sharing and change adaptability driven by learning culture are vital links connecting transformational leadership with innovativeness. Tacit knowledge sharing and transformational leadership are seen as fully mediated by the mistake acceptance factor in learning culture.
Madi Odeh et al. (2023)	The transformational leadership role in achieving organizational resilience through adaptive cultures: the case of Dubai service sector	Dubai service firms, 379 responses	The overall findings of this study supported that transformational leadership is positively associated with both adaptive culture and firm's resilience and significantly impacts them. Adaptive culture was found partially mediating the effect of transformational leadership on organizational resilience.

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings	
Mittal (2016)	Individual-focused transformational leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior: mediating and moderating mechanisms of job crafting and employee resilience	The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of transformational leadership (TL) on building trust and hence, its influence on the commitment level of the employees to achieve the desired work outcomes	India, SMEs IT, 420 employees	The findings of the study show that transformational leaders were able to create a higher level of PE and trust amongst their employees. Further, it was also found that this led to an increase in their commitment level and hence, a decrease in their TI. The findings of the study also suggest that trust, commitment and PE act as mediators.
Ng et al. (2016)	The role of transformational leadership, entrepreneurial competence and technical competence on enterprise success of owner-managed SMEs	The conceptualization of transformational leadership, entrepreneurial competence, and technical competence for owner-managed SMEs remains elusive and under-researched.	Malaysia, SMEs	The findings revealed that the transformational leadership, entrepreneurial competence, and technical competence of owner-managers have a positive, significant and substantial impact on the success of SMEs.
Philip (2021)	Viewing digital transformation through the lens of transformational leadership	This paper applies dimensions of transformational leader behaviors (TLB) to highlight the behavioral changes that pertain to digital transformation.	Multiple	This research proposes planned digital transformation and forced digital transformation as two classifications that organizational leaders must recognize and apply dimensions of TLB for successful transformations.
Valero et al. (2015)	Does transformational leadership build resilient public and nonprofit organizations?	The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of transformational leadership on the level of organizational resiliency	Korea, Fire and police stations of local government, 112	The results of the analysis indicate that transformational leadership style has a positive and statistically significant effect on perceived organizational resiliency. The findings also indicate that elected officials such as mayors are more likely to focus on building organizational resiliency than appointed officials and nonprofit leaders.



TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Xenikou and Simosi (2006)	Organizational culture and transformational leadership as predictors of business unit performance	Greece, Financial organisations, 300 employees	Transformational leadership and humanistic orientation had an indirect positive impact on performance via achievement orientation
Żywiótek et al. (2022)	Nexus of transformational leadership, employee adaptiveness, knowledge sharing, and employee creativity	Pakistan, Hotel industry, 561 employees from 126 hostels	The results revealed that employee creativity is initiated through TL in hotels and TL positively affects employee adaptiveness. The results of the mediating analysis confirmed the mediating role of employee adaptiveness between TL and creativity link in the context of hotel industry operating in developing nations. Moreover, the findings also revealed that knowledge sharing plays key role for TL and employee adaptiveness links.
Dimas et al. (2021)	Bouncing back from setbacks: On the mediating role of team resilience in the relationship between transformational leadership and team effectiveness	Portuguese companies, 445 employees from 40 companies	A positive relationship was also identified between transformational leadership and team resilience. Finally, support was found for the mediated effect of team resilience on the relationship between transformational leadership and the dimensions of team effectiveness considered. The findings of this study highlight the role of team resilience as an intervening process between transformational leadership and team effectiveness.

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Chen et al. (2023)	Green transformational leadership and green innovation in megaprojects: is green knowledge sharing a missing link?	China, Mega projects, 303 experts involved in megaprojects	GTL has a significant positive impact on two aspects of GI, including green product innovation (GPDI) and green process innovation (GPCI). Besides, GKS mediates the relationship between GTL and the two aspects of GI. Moreover, IC plays a significantly positive moderating role in the relationship between GTL and GKS and the relationship between GKS and the two aspects of GI.
Burawat (2019)	The relationships among transformational leadership, sustainable leadership, lean manufacturing and sustainability performance in Thai SMEs manufacturing industry.	Thailand, Automotive and non-automotive companies, 598 respondents from 374 companies	The model reported that lean manufacturing has a partial mediate effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and sustainability performance, and between SL and sustainability performance. The structural model is different in automotive and nonautomotive companies, and the structural model is different among the companies which implemented lean program for less than five years and above five years.
Kim Quy et al. (2023)	How transformational leadership, workplace spirituality and resilience enhance the service recovery performance of FLEs: a theoretical integration of COR theory and SDT.	U.S., Air Service providers, 371 frontline employees	Results demonstrated that transformational leadership had a positive impact on both service recovery performance and spirituality in the workplace. The positive connection between workplace spirituality and service recovery performance was also supported. Further, the mediating role of an employee's resilience in these relationships was established.

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Malik (2023)	Individual-focused transformational leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior: mediating and moderating mechanisms of job crafting and employee resilience.	India, ICT, 210 employee supervisor	The study results showed a significant association between IFTL and Ch-OCB. Furthermore, job crafting mediated the relationship between IFTL and Ch-OCB. Additionally, the findings indicate that the positive relationship between job crafting and Ch-OCB was found to be stronger when employee resilience levels were higher.
Permana et al. (2022)	Building Culinary Business Performance during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Transformational Leadership as a Trigger through Digital Capabilities.	Indonesia, Culinary businesses in Jakarta	The results show that the direct influence of transformational leadership on performance is less than the influence of transformational leadership on performance through digital capabilities.
Phung et al. (2023)	Transformational leadership, integration and supply chain risk management in Vietnam's manufacturing firms.	Vietnam, 261 companies	The characteristics of transformational leadership effectively facilitate the internal and external integration in supply chain with higher responsiveness, visibility and integration. Second, transformational leadership has indirectly effect to supply chain risk management practice (SCRMP) throughout supply chain integration (SCI). Additionally, three dimensions of integration enable SCRMP and partially mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and SCRMP

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal/Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Prabhu and Srivastava (2023)	CEO transformational leadership, supply chain agility and firm performance: A TISM modeling among SMEs.	India, Manufacturing SMEs	Results indicate that transformational leaders drive agile initiatives in the supply chain by setting and communicating a vision, encouraging supply chain members to think of innovative solutions for problems, and mentoring them individually to achieve high-performance standards
Sengupta (2023)	A turnaround fuelled by transformational leadership.	India, Research Dvt corporation	The study found that socio-economic factors have a bearing on leadership attributes. In this instance, the CMD's early years, diverse work experiences, bright traits and transformational leadership positively impacted organizational performance.
Shatila et al. (2023)	Impact of transformational leadership on leadership effectiveness: the mediating effect of emotional skills in the Lebanese small and medium-sized enterprises context	Lebanese, 350 respondents	Results indicated that transformational leadership positively impacts leadership effectiveness, and this relationship is partially mediated by emotional skills. Specifically, adaptability, assertiveness and relationship management partially mediate the relationship of transformational leadership to leadership effectiveness.
Shuja and Abbasi (2016)	An Experimental Investigation of the Mediating Effect of Organizational Learning on Transformational Leadership and Organizational Resilience.	Pakistan, Managerial level, NGOs	Transformational leadership has a direct positive effect on development of resilient NGOs, but the indirect effect, involving organizational learning as mediator, is insignificant. Under crisis contingencies, transformational leaders tend to support individuals and organizations in order to respond and recover from losses

TABLE 1: (continued)

Author(s)/Database/Journal Title	Objectives/purpose	Context/Sector	Findings
Sienkiewicz-Matyjerek (2022)	Social capital and transformational leadership in building the resilience of local governance networks.	Poland, Local government agencies, 199 local gov't in Poland	Transformational leadership impacts resilience indirectly
Wang et al. (2017)	Transformational leadership, adaptability, and job crafting: The moderating role of organizational identification.	Netherlands, Subordinates and supervisor, 185	Findings suggest that transformational leadership is associated with more expansion job crafting (seeking resources and seeking challenges) via adaptability, particularly for employees with lower organizational identification.